

**The Impact of Organisational Restructuring on
Employee Engagement: The Case of Eswatini Water
Services Corporation (EWSC)**

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10.2 Abstract

This study examined the impact of organisational restructuring on employee engagement at the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC), focusing on the mediating roles of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS). Guided by Organisational Support Theory (OST), the study sought to understand how employees' perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and support influence engagement during organisational change. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was adopted, using a structured questionnaire administered to 244 employees, of whom 147 provided valid responses, representing a 67% response rate. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques to determine the relationships among restructuring perceptions, support constructs, and engagement outcomes.

Findings revealed that employees' perceptions of organisational restructuring significantly and positively influenced engagement ($\beta = 1.743$, $p < 0.001$). Conversely, poor communication and inadequate planning during the prerestructuring phase negatively affected engagement ($\beta = -0.641$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived supervisory support ($\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.043$) emerged as a stronger predictor of engagement than organisational-level support, indicating that supervisors play a critical role in sustaining morale during change. The interaction term ($\beta = -0.039$, $p = 0.002$) further highlighted the complex relationship between restructuring perceptions and support mechanisms. The model explained approximately 90% of the variance in employee engagement ($\text{Adj } R^2 = 0.9016$), demonstrating high explanatory power.

The study concludes that employee engagement during restructuring is largely determined by the quality of communication, fairness, and supervisory relationships. It recommends that EWSC institutionalise transparent communication channels, involve employees in decision-making, and equip supervisors with emotional intelligence and change management skills. Additionally, implementing employee wellness and counselling programmes would help mitigate emotional strain during restructuring. Overall, the study extends Organisational Support Theory within a developing-country public utility context, illustrating that even in resourceconstrained environments, supportive leadership and transparent processes can preserve engagement and organisational resilience during transformation.

10.3 Keywords

Organisational support theory perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support, organisational restructuring, employee engagement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

Organisational restructuring is a strategic process that organisations undertake to adapt to evolving market conditions, technological advancements, or internal efficiency goals (Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023). While restructuring can enhance organisational performance and sustainability, it often results in significant changes in work routines, job roles, and organisational hierarchy, which can create uncertainty and stress among employees (Stoiber et al., 2025). Eswatini Water Services Corporation faced financial constraints due to infrastructure that was aging, high debtors with limited revenue and inefficient operations. The corporation aimed to streamline processes to eliminate redundancies and optimise resource allocation. It reorganised departments, processes and functions for operational efficiencies, reduced costs, elimination of duplication, and enhanced response times. Additionally improving overall productivity to an enhanced customer experience (Holotiuk, et al., 2024). The restructuring introduced new revenue management strategies, improved billing systems, and reduced operational costs predicting financial stability.

Employee engagement, defined as "... the emotional and cognitive commitment of employees toward their organisation, is critical for maintaining productivity, morale, and service quality, especially during times of organisational change" (Rasool et al., 2021, page 23). However, the impact of restructuring on employee engagement remains underexplored, particularly within the public utility sector of developing countries like Eswatini. Understanding this dynamic is essential because engaged employees are more resilient, adaptive, and committed, directly influencing organisational success and service delivery.

1.2 Research Problem

The primary research problem is the effect of organisational restructuring on employee engagement within the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). Restructuring initiatives such as department reorganisation, staff reshuffling, or management changes are often implemented to improve operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and service delivery (Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023). However, these can inadvertently diminish employees' sense of security and support, leading to decreased motivation and engagement (Albrecht, 2021).

The key central constructs are organisational restructuring, which involves changes in structure, workforce and management practices (Yalenios & d'Armagnac, 2023) and employee engagement. Employee engagement refers to “employees’ emotional investment, dedication, and sense of belonging to their organisation” (Islam et al., 2024, pg 54).

The theoretical foundation for this research is the Organisational Support Theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The theory postulates that employees develop perceptions of organisational support based on the degree to which they believe their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. When employees perceive high organisational support, they are more likely to experience increased engagement, commitment, and positive attitudes toward change initiatives. Conversely, restructuring, if perceived as threatening or unsupportive, can undermine employees’ perceptions of organisational support, leading to reduced engagement and increased resistance to change. A recent study by Farrell et al., (2024) confirms that over decades a slight increase in support has been experienced in employment uncertainty during a transformative digital innovation and radical corporate restructuring. Notably this has been a case in Eswatini, specifically Eswatini Water Services Corporation which embarked on a major process of restructuring which related to precarious employment hence it was formerly known for occupational longevity and stability (Graham & Papadopoulos 2023).

Organisational Support Theory is directly applicable in this context, as restructuring efforts can erode perceived organisational support leading to disengagement unless corresponding systems of support are implemented. Existing research (Farrell et al., 2024) indicates that during times of radical change, perceived organisational support can buffer the negative effects, particularly under conditions of uncertainty caused by global crises such as COVID-19 (Tooze 2021 as cited in Farrell et al., 2024).

Existing knowledge on the impact of restructuring on perceived organisational , supervisory support and employee engagement can inform the development of effective change management programs at EWSC. This is paramount in the case of a developing nation, where the morale of workers directly affects the quality of water service delivery, a key determiner of socio-economic development. Practically, understanding how restructuring influences perceived organisational and supervisor support and, consequently, employee engagement, can help

organisations develop supportive change management strategies. This is particularly relevant in the context of Eswatini Water Services Corporation, where employee motivation directly impacts water service delivery in a developing country setting with unique socio-economic and regulatory challenges.

1.3 Research Objectives:

- I. To identify the dimensions and scope of restructuring initiatives undertaken by Eswatini Water Services Corporation.
- II. To evaluate employee engagement levels before and after restructuring.
- III. To explore the relationship between perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support during restructuring and employee engagement.
- IV. To recommend strategies to enhance perceived support and sustain employee engagement during organisational change.

1.4 Research Purpose

This study aims to examine the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement within Eswatini Water Services Corporation through the lens of organisational support theory. It explores how restructuring influences perceptions of support and, consequently, engagement (Backhaus et al.,2024). McManus et al.(2025) found that perceived support mediates the relationship between work engagement and organisational citizenship behavior (OCB)during transformations. This is particularly relevant for Eswatini Water Services Corporation, where employee support impacts water service delivery in a developing country setting. This study underscores the importance of perceived organisational support as a buffer in organisational restructuring process, with the inference that where employees of water utility companies feel high organisational support, their level of commitment may be maintained or even increased despite organisational change. The mediating role of perceived support can thus be pivotal in facilitating desired employee conduct and supporting organisational effectiveness despite restructuring. The findings contribute to a better theoretical understanding of the mechanisms through which change processes impact employee attitudes and behaviours, emphasizing the role of perceived organisational support in facilitating positive outcomes during organisational transitions.

1.5 Research question

1. What is the relationship between perceived organisational and supervisor support and employee engagement during restructuring?
2. How do organisational and supervisor support influence employee engagement during organisational restructuring?
3. How do employees experience and perceive the organisational restructuring process?
4. What strategies can be recommended to enhance perceived support and sustain employee engagement during organisational change?

1.6 Study contributions

1.3.1 Theoretical contributions

This study extended the application of Organisational Support Theory by empirically examining its relevance in the context of organisational restructuring in a public utility organisation within a developing country (Backhaus et al.,2024). It clarifies how restructuring efforts influence employees' perceptions of both support at organisational and supervisory level, consequently, their engagement levels. The findings refine existing models by illustrating the mediating role of perceived support in the relationship between organisational change and employee engagement, thereby enriching the theoretical discourse on change management and employee attitudes. Enriching the conceptualization of support in organisational change as cited by Backhaus et al., (2024) further provides new insights into how perceived organisational, supervisor support influences employees' reactions and resilience throughout the restructuring process, especially in problem-prone environments like EWSC (McManus et al.,2025). The study further adds to current scholarship by empirically testing the applicability of Organisational Support Theory (OST) in a developing country organisational restructuring context. Empirical evidence from the research confirms that perceptions of organisational and supervisory support serve as critical mediators in the relationship between restructuring initiatives and employee engagement. This aligns with Organisational Support Theory's core assertion that employees reciprocate perceived care and value through increased commitment and motivation.

The study extends Organisational Support Theory's applicability by demonstrating that emotional and relational support mechanisms are especially vital in

environments where tangible resources are limited. In such contexts, perceived support rooted in trust, recognition, and open communication acts as a psychological resource that sustains engagement amid uncertainty. This underscores the relational nature of support as a fundamental driver of resilience and positive employee attitudes during periods of organisational change, consistent with prior research emphasizing the importance of emotional support and procedural justice.

Overall, this study provides valuable empirical validation for Organisational Support Theory's mediating mechanisms in a public sector, resource-limited setting, emphasizing that perceived emotional and relational support are essential for maintaining employee engagement during organisational upheaval. It underscores the critical role of relational support systems in fostering resilience, thereby enriching theoretical understanding of how support functions as a psychological buffer in times of change.

More specifically, it clarifies that perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support both mediate employee engagement as a function of restructuring efforts and thereby add to theoretical understanding of the support context under organisational change. The study will also enhance existing Organisational Support Theory's concepts by highlighting contextual conditions that impact perceptions of support and their implications for employee attitudes and resilience. Lastly, this research will bridge and test theory and practice by providing a contribution to informing support approaches that organisations can use in restructuring for the mutual benefit of employee well-being and organisational performance.

The Organisational Support Theory will be informing the development of support strategies. Contributing towards the theoretical basis that underlies the way organisational support is structured and communicated during change, thus supporting real-world applications of organisational support theory (Farrell et al., 2024).

The literature review on perceived supervisor support (PSS) highlights that PSS is a key belief reflecting the extent to which employees perceive that their supervisor values their well-being and contributions. It is derived from the broader concept of perceived organisational support (POS) but is distinguished by its more immediate and proximal nature to employees, as supervisors act as agents of the

organisation. Employees who experience higher supervisor support tend to perceive greater organisational support. PSS covers personalized forms of support such as mentorship, feedback, coaching, and emotional care, contrasting with the more tangible material support provided by the organisation, such as skills training and resources.

Organisational support theory (OST) forms the theoretical foundation for understanding PSS, emphasizing employee attributions, social exchange, and self-enhancement needs. Employee perceptions of favourable treatment by supervisors lead to reciprocation through increased effort and commitment, aligning with social norms of reciprocity. Organisational Support Theory recognises that supervisors' supportive behaviours, driven by their perceptions of organisational support, foster subordinate behaviours that enhance organisational outcomes. Supervisor support is particularly significant during organisational change, as it helps employees cope with new demands and uncertainties, offering emotional and instrumental support.

The literature underscores that PSS is not a one-size-fits-all construct. It varies with subordinates' individual motivational orientations and the supervisors' leadership behaviours.

This synthesis of the literature on perceived supervisor support provides a solid foundation for understanding. This includes the key antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes related to supervisor-subordinate support dynamics, particularly in change contexts.

Overall, the research adds and tests the theory by demonstrating how organisational support is a main predictor of employee attitudes and organisational performance in the context of organisational reform and restructuring.

1.3.2 Practical contributions

Practically, the findings will provide actionable insights for Eswatini Water Services Corporation's management and policymakers on how to design restructuring processes that reinforce employees' perceptions of support (Charoensap-Kelly et al.2023; Islam et al., 2024). The corporation has a high turnover rate on the key talent, with high debt of more than 252 million, and Non- revenue Water at 67% corporation wide. (EWSC Annual Report, 2024). Recommendations will focus on communication strategies, support mechanisms, and participative change approaches that foster trust and engagement. Such strategies are vital for ensuring organisational resilience, improving service delivery, and maintaining a motivated

workforce amid ongoing reforms. Practical Contributions of the Study aims at the following benefits in the sections 1.6.2.1-5;

1.3.2.1 Addressing Organisational Challenges

The study will provide practical advice regarding how organisational restructuring impacts worker motivation in Eswatini Water Services Corporation. Understanding such consequences, the corporation can better design restructuring initiatives that contain detrimental outcomes and optimise positive outcomes.

1.3.2.2 Enhancing Restructuring Processes

Findings will offer evidence-based recommendations for managing change effectively. This may include helping Eswatini Water Services Corporation develop restructuring templates that maximize employee engagement, reduce resistance, and ensure a smoother transition, hence maintaining or boosting employee morale and productivity.

1.3.2.3 Consolidating Employee Engagement Strategies

The study will determine the critical factors that affect employee engagement in the process of restructuring. In practice, Eswatini Water Services Corporation can deploy special interventions such as communications strategies, involvement activities, and support mechanisms that reinforce or enhance engagement levels, culminating in enhanced service delivery.

1.3.2.4 Facilitating Policy Development

The findings from the study will guide the development of organisational policies for change management and HR practices such that restructuring activities are employee-focused and linked to organisational objectives.

1.3.2.5 Enhancing Organisational Sustainability

By enabling better restructuring habits, the findings can help Eswatini Water Services Corporation enhance organisational resiliency and sustainability, as well as long-term operational efficiency and stakeholder satisfaction.

The research study creates practical utility via the delivery of Eswatini Water Services Corporation with actionable information on restructuring processes that enhance and maintain employee engagement. By determining critical variables that influence employee engagement during organisational change, the research study will equip EWSC with the capacity to develop specific strategies for effective change management. Finally, these findings will help EWSC maintain peak employee morale, productivity, and service quality despite an age-old organisational challenge, thereby facilitating retention of talent and sustainable growth. In reality, the outcomes will provide Eswatini Water Services Corporation's management and policymakers with a hands-on guideline on how to design restructuring exercises to improve perceptions of support and participation among employees. With the organisation experiencing high attrition of key talent, having more than 252 million Emalangeni debt, and non-revenue water at an organisation-wide level of 67%, restructuring is highly crucial.

The study provides the following recommendations to enhance the communication strategies, implement robust support systems, and embrace participative change strategies that foster trust, commitment, and a sense of belongingness. The same are needed to reduce turnover, improve organisational resilience, and facilitate sustainable delivery of services amidst ongoing reforms.

Lastly, the implications for application of this study aim to help EWSC better address organisational change, sustain employee morale, and enhance operational effectiveness. This will help to resolve pressing organisational matters as well as consolidate long-term development (Aldabbas et al.,2023).

1.7 Research Setting

The study is situated within Eswatini Water Services Corporation, the primary water and sanitation service provider in Eswatini, a country with a developing economy facing socio-economic, infrastructural, and regulatory challenges. The water sector is vital for public health and economic development, making effective service delivery essential. Eswatini Water Services Corporation's ongoing restructuring efforts are driven by the need to enhance financial sustainability, expand access, and modernize operations, amidst resource constraints and socio-political pressures. The study is set in Eswatini, specifically within Eswatini Water Services Corporation's six operational regions: North, Northwest, Southwest, Central, and

East (Eswatini Water Services Corporation Annual Report 2024). As the national water and sanitation utility provider, EWSC operates across varied geographic and operational environments, making it a rich context for examining the organisational impacts of restructuring. The diversity of regions ensures that the sample reflects a wide range of employee experiences and perspectives.

This setting is unique because it combines public sector reform with socioeconomic realities specific to Eswatini, such as limited infrastructure, regulatory constraints, and community expectations (Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy Annual Report, 2023) Examining how restructuring impacts employee perceptions of support and engagement in this context provides insights into managing organisational change in developing economies, which may differ significantly from models developed in more advanced settings.

1.8 Definition of key terms

1.3.3 Organisational Support Theory (OST)

Organisational Support Theory (OST) suggests that employees form perceptions about how much their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. These perceptions collectively known as Perceived Organisational Support (POS) influence employees' attitudes and behaviours, including their levels of engagement, loyalty, and trust toward the organisation (McManus et al., 2025). When employees believe they are supported, they tend to reciprocate with positive work attitudes and behaviours, which can enhance their motivation and commitment, particularly during times of organisational change such as restructuring (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

1.3.4 Perceived Organisational Support (POS)

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) refers to employees' overall belief that their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Charoensap-Kelly 2023). Perceived organisational and supervisor support is a key concept within organisational support theory and serves as a pivotal mediator that influences how employees respond to organisational policies, changes, and leadership practices. High levels of perceived organisational support are associated with increased job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and employee engagement, while low perceived organisational support can lead to disengagement, stress, and turnover intentions. Perceived organisational support is particularly crucial during periods of organisational restructuring, as it can buffer

negative effects and foster resilience among employees (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Operationalisation of restructuring of organisational is considered in the study to the extent and perceived impact of restructuring endeavours, and the attitudes of employees towards the fairness, transparency, and supportiveness of the process. (Farrell et al., 2024)

Operationalization of employee engagement was assessed through reliable survey instruments assessing emotional investment, dedication, and absorption, according to standard frameworks (Saks et al.,2022)

Analytical Focus

The research investigated the employee engagement-restructuring relationship, with employees' perceptions of support as a mediator, to ascertain how restructuring procedures can be managed to result in increased levels of engagement.

1.3.5 Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

The literature review on perceived supervisor support (PSS) highlights that PSS is a key belief reflecting the extent to which employees perceive that their supervisor values their well-being and contributions (Gordon et al., 2019). It is derived from the broader concept of perceived organisational support (POS) but is distinguished by its more immediate and proximal nature to employees, as supervisors act as agents of the organisation (Bozionelos et al., 2020). PSS covers personalized forms of support such as mentorship, feedback, coaching, and emotional care, contrasting with the more tangible material support provided by the organisation, such as skills training and resources (Collins & Browning, 2019; Armenakis & Harris, 2009).

1.9 Outline of the document

This chapter explained the basis of the research study unpacking the business problem while providing the academic relevance further outlining the research objectives and contribution to the current body of knowledge. The remaining chapters of this research study will provide further insights with the analysis of the literature review which is Chapter 2 , research methodology and design outline in Chapter 3. The figure below illustrates the roadmap of the document.

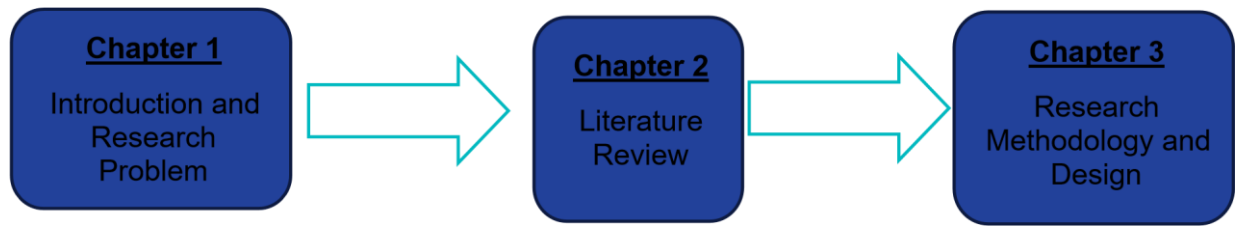


Figure 1.1 Research Roadmap – Chapter 1 (Authors Own)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

An extensive review of the literature on the effect of organisational restructuring on employee engagement is presented in this chapter. It starts by describing the Organisational Support Theory (OST), which serves as the study's theoretical foundation. The chapter then examines two constructs that are pertinent to the study which are; employee engagement and organisational restructuring. Along with a summary of the body of existing literature, a critical discussion of current arguments pertaining to these constructs is given. This chapter lays the groundwork for the research questions and hypotheses that direct the investigation as well as the analytical framework that will be used in later empirical analyses by identifying gaps in the current body of knowledge.

2.2. Organisational Support Theory as a Theoretical Foundation

Organisational Support Theory (OST) asserts that understanding employee attitudes and behaviours, especially in the context of social exchange, depends on the extent to which employees believe their organisation supports them. This is known as perceived organisational support, or Perceived Organisational Support (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Employee perceptions of how much their company appreciates their contributions and looks out for their welfare are reflected in Perceived Organisational Support (Baran et al., 2012). Research on Perceived Organisational Support has increased dramatically since Eisenberger et al. (2020)'s influential study, pointing out how it is linked to a number of different outcomes, such as turnover intentions and corporate citizenship actions (Gavin et al., 2021).

The changing landscape of work in the 21st century characterized by rapid globalization, advancements in technology, and the rise of nontraditional employment relationships has increased the relevance of Organisational Support Theory (Baran et al., 2012 as cited in Bavik et al., 2020). These environmental shifts necessitate an updated understanding of Perceived Organisational Support and its implications for employee engagement, especially during times of organisational change like restructuring. Research has shown that Perceived

Organisational Support plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between restructuring and engagement (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Nevertheless, there is a need to investigate how Perceived Organisational Support operates as a mediator in the context of Eswatini Water Services Corporation. Supervisor support is particularly significant during organisational change, as it helps employees cope with new demands and uncertainties, offering emotional and instrumental support (Rafferty & Minbashian, 2019).

The literature underscores that PSS is not a one-size-fits-all construct; it varies with subordinates' individual motivational orientations and the supervisors' leadership behaviours.

This synthesis of the literature on Perceived Supervisor Support provides a solid foundation for understanding the key antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes related to supervisor-subordinate support dynamics, particularly in change contexts.

The literature on Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) is central to understanding the impact of organisational restructuring on employee engagement within the framework of Organisational Support Theory. Perceived Supervisor Support refers to employees' perceptions that their supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being, a specific form of organisational support (Astuti & Helmi 2021). Organisational Support Theory posits that when employees perceive strong support from their organisation and supervisors, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher work engagement, commitment, and performance (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

During organisational restructuring, employees often experience uncertainty and stress, which can diminish engagement (Jolly et al., 2021). However, supervisors who provide emotional support, clear communication, and resources can buffer these negative effects by fostering a sense of being valued and supported (Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). This buffering effect helps sustain employee engagement during periods of change. Supportive supervisory behaviour builds trust and positive interpersonal relationships, which facilitates knowledge sharing and collaboration, as research on humble leadership shows (Zhang & Jiang, 2019).

Humble and supportive supervisors encourage employees to share concerns and adapt effectively, promoting resilience during restructuring.

Organisational support theory extends this understanding by highlighting the broader role of perceived organisational support (POS), which includes support from the organisation overall. Restructuring can threaten POS, but supervisors acting as agents of support help restore employees' perceptions of organisational care, thereby maintaining engagement levels (Astuti & Helmi 2021). Thus, enhancing perceived supervisor support during restructuring is critical for sustaining employee engagement.

In summary, the literature indicates that perceived support is a vital mediator in the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement. Leadership practices that increase emotional and instrumental support, promote trust, and foster humble interactions will positively influence engagement outcomes during restructuring efforts, consistent with organisational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Zhang & Jiang, 2019).

Key assumptions underpinning Organisational Support Theory include:

Employees perceive organisations as caring about their welfare. Positive treatment from organisations generates an obligation to reciprocate through increased loyalty and performance.

Supportive organisational climates enhance job satisfaction and engagement levels (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

While considerable research did not establish the critical contribution of perceived organisational and supervisory support combined to employee engagement during organisational change. There also remained a significant gap in the literature with respect to how such support mechanisms are manifested and sustained to build engagement in resource-constrained contexts. This is specifically in the public utility sector in developing countries. The majority of past research has focused on private sector and high-resource settings, underinvestigating how emotional support, trust-building, and participative communication are mobilised. This is specifically when tangible resources including financial incentives and state-of-the-art infrastructures are limited. What was less well understood were the specific support strategies that are most effective within resource-scarce environments and socio-economic uncertainties. Additionally the ways in which line supervisors adjust their support behaviors to these contexts.

Moreover, (Baran et al., 2012 as cited in Bavik et al., 2020) identify themes emerging in the Perceived Organisational and Supervisory Support literature that enhance the relevance of Organisational Support Theory in contemporary contexts, such as employee well-being, cross-cultural considerations, and the dynamics of nontraditional work relationships. Such insights suggest that Perceived Organisational Support not only influences employee performance but also functions to fulfil employees' socio-emotional needs, which is critical during periods of instability (Gavin et al., 2021).

2.3. Organisational Restructuring

Organisational restructuring entails modifying an organisation's structure, systems, or processes to enhance efficiency and competitiveness (Galanaki, 2020). The current debate surrounding organisational restructuring often acknowledges its dual nature, while aimed at achieving operational efficiency, it may also elicit negative reactions from employees. Research indicates that poorly managed restructuring processes can lead to increased anxiety, job dissatisfaction, and feelings of insecurity among employees (Mladenova, 2022). Furthermore Cameron & Freeman, 1991 as cited in Chesley et al., 2020 advocates that organisational restructuring is defined as the process through which an organisation realigns its resources, personnel, or operational strategies in response to internal and external pressures. This phenomenon has sparked considerable debate regarding its effects on employee morale, motivation, and engagement. While supporters argue that restructuring can drive efficiency and strategic alignment, critics highlight potential downsides, including increased uncertainty and reduced employee trust (Mladenova, 2022).

Research indicates that poorly managed restructuring can significantly undermine employee trust and commitment (Baran et al., 2012 as cited in Bavik et al., 2020). In light of Organisational Support Theory, effective communication and perceived support during restructuring emerge as critical factors in mitigating negative outcomes. When employees perceive that their organisation disregards their welfare during a restructuring, their level of perceived organisational support diminishes, leading to disengagement (Saks et al., 2022). Thus, integrating Organisational Support Theory into discussions of organisational restructuring

allows for a nuanced understanding of how employees' perceptions of support impact their responses to these changes.

2.4. Employee Engagement

Building upon Kahn's foundational concept from 1990, Rasool et al. (2021) further refined and expanded employee engagement as the degree of emotional investment employees have in their work and organisation, highlighting its increasingly recognised vital organisational outcome. This has magnified evolving significance in contemporary research. Additionally, the concept is described as a powerful tool to measure an organisation's strength relating to its effectiveness. Research shows that engagement can positively impact organisational outcomes, such as productivity and profitability (Garcia et al., 2021). However, during periods of restructuring, employee engagement may decline due to the uncertainty and disruption employees face. Factors such as effective leadership and support systems play a pivotal role in maintaining engagement through transitional periods (Albrecht et al., 2021). As such, the employee engagement construct fits within the framework of Organisational Support Theory, emphasizing that perceived organisational support can significantly influence employees' emotional and cognitive states, influencing their commitment to the organisation. The ongoing discourse around employee engagement includes its measurement, the factors influencing it, and its direct correlation with organisational performance.

Literature demonstrates that elements such as supportive management practices, clear communication, and employee recognition can enhance engagement levels (Gil et al., 2024). However, engagement levels tend to wane during periods of uncertainty, such as organisational restructuring, creating a pressing need for organisations to understand and actively manage employee connections (Jerab & Mabrouk 2023).

Organisational Support Theory provides a foundation for understanding how perceived organisational support influences employee engagement. Employees who perceive themselves as valued by their organisation are likely to engage more fully in their roles and perform at higher levels (Saks, 2022). As Islam et al., (2024) noted, the socio-emotional role of Perceived Organisational Support is particularly important in fulfilling employees' needs during challenging transitions. Consequently, understanding how restructuring impacts Perceived

Organisational Support is crucial for fostering engagement.

2.5. Theorizing the Relationship Between Constructs

The interplay between organisational restructuring and employee engagement remains a contentious topic. Existing studies have identified generally negative correlations, indicating that mismanaged restructuring can lead to diminished employee engagement levels (Saks, 2022; Islam et al., 2024). However, the complex dynamics of these relationships especially within diverse organisational contexts, such as public utilities is still under-explored (Probst et al., 2020). It is increasingly recognised that the nature of the restructuring process, including the perceived involvement of employees and the level of communication from management, plays a critical role in shaping these outcomes.

However, the role of perceived organisational and supervisor support as mediators has gained recognition. Perceived Organisational Support and Perceived Supervisor Support can buffer the negative impacts of restructuring, helping employees feel valued and supported despite organisational upheavals (Baran et al., 2012, as cited in Bavik et al., 2020).

Recent research underscores the role of perceived organisational support as a crucial mediator in this relationship. For instance, Perceived Organisational Support can buffer the adverse impacts of restructuring on engagement, aiding employees in feeling valued even amid changes (Baran et al., 2012 as cited in Bavik et al., 2020). This insight highlights the necessity for future studies to identify how varying levels of Perceived Organisational Support and Perceived Supervisor Support serve to moderate employee reactions during turbulent organisational changes. Accordingly, this study aims to address the following research questions:

2.5.1 Research Question 1

What is the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement?

Understanding the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement is essential, particularly in service-oriented and public utility contexts where employee commitment directly influences performance and service delivery. While restructuring is often initiated to improve efficiency,

streamline operations, and adapt to changing environments, its implications for employees' motivation, commitment, and overall engagement remain insufficiently understood especially within developing-country settings and essential service organisations such as water utilities. Most existing research has focused on the structural and performance outcomes of restructuring rather than the human and psychological dimensions of change. Studies suggest that restructuring can diminish engagement by creating uncertainty, anxiety, and perceptions of job insecurity (Albrecht, 2021; Rasool et al., 2021).

Employees who feel excluded from decision-making or unsupported during transitions often exhibit lower morale and reduced discretionary effort. However, emerging evidence also indicates that when restructuring is well communicated, participatory, and perceived as fair, it can strengthen employees' trust and sense of alignment with organisational goals. Positive perceptions of restructuring when coupled with strong leadership and support can therefore sustain or even enhance engagement levels during organisational change. Despite these insights, there remains a notable gap in empirical research on how these dynamics operate within utility organisations such as the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC), where restructuring involves not only operational shifts but also complex human and institutional adjustments. Investigating this relationship within EWSC provides valuable context-specific understanding of how restructuring can be managed more effectively to preserve employee engagement, maintain morale, and foster long-term organisational resilience.

H1: Employees' perceptions of organisational restructuring are positively associated with employee engagement.

While organisational restructuring can initially evoke uncertainty and stress, employees who perceive the process as transparent, inclusive, and well-managed are more likely to remain motivated and engaged. This hypothesis reflects the notion that positive restructuring perceptions foster trust and alignment with organisational goals, thereby enhancing engagement level

2.5.2 Research Question 2

How do employees' perceptions of organisational and supervisory support mediate the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement?

Although restructuring often threatens employees' sense of stability and belonging, the extent of its impact may depend on how supported employees feel throughout the process. Prior studies suggest that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) serve as crucial buffers against the negative effects of organisational change (Eisenberger, Rhoades Shanock, & Wen, 2020; Aldabbas, Pinnington, & Lahrech, 2023). These forms of support reflect the degree to which employees believe that their organisation and supervisors value their contributions and care about their well-being.

Despite growing evidence that support perceptions enhance resilience and engagement during change, empirical research examining their mediating roles within restructuring contexts remains limited, particularly in post-COVID organisational environments (Charoensap-Kelly et al., 2023; Islam et al., 2024). Addressing this gap enables a deeper understanding of how support mechanisms sustain engagement during uncertainty and transitions.

Perceptions of organisational and supervisory support are therefore conceptualised as psychological resources that mitigate the potential disengaging effects of restructuring. When employees feel supported by both their organisation and supervisors, they are more likely to maintain motivation, adaptability, and commitment throughout organisational transformation.

Hypothesis (H2): Perceived organisational and supervisory support jointly mediate the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement (Eisenberger et al., 2020; Aldabbas et al., 2023).

Hypothesis (H3): Perceived supervisory support (PSS) independently mediates the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement.

In conclusion, this chapter integrates robust theoretical and empirical literature, establishing a comprehensive foundation for the study of how organisational restructuring influences employee engagement, especially through the lens of Organisational Support Theory. By addressing existing gaps and pursuing insights drawn from contemporary research, this inquiry aims to contribute significantly to both academic knowledge and practical implications in human resource management and organisational change strategies.

The conceptual model illustrating the relationship between organisational restructuring, perceived organisational and supervisor support and employee engagement is depicted in Fig 2.1.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the conceptual framework guiding this study. The model hypothesizes that organisational restructuring (independent variable) influences employee engagement (dependent variable) both directly and indirectly through perceived organisational support (POS) and perceived supervisor support (PSS). Specifically, restructuring is expected to negatively impact both types of support, which in turn are hypothesized to positively influence employee engagement. The diagram visually summarizes these hypothesized relationships, providing a clear overview of the proposed pathways for empirical testing.

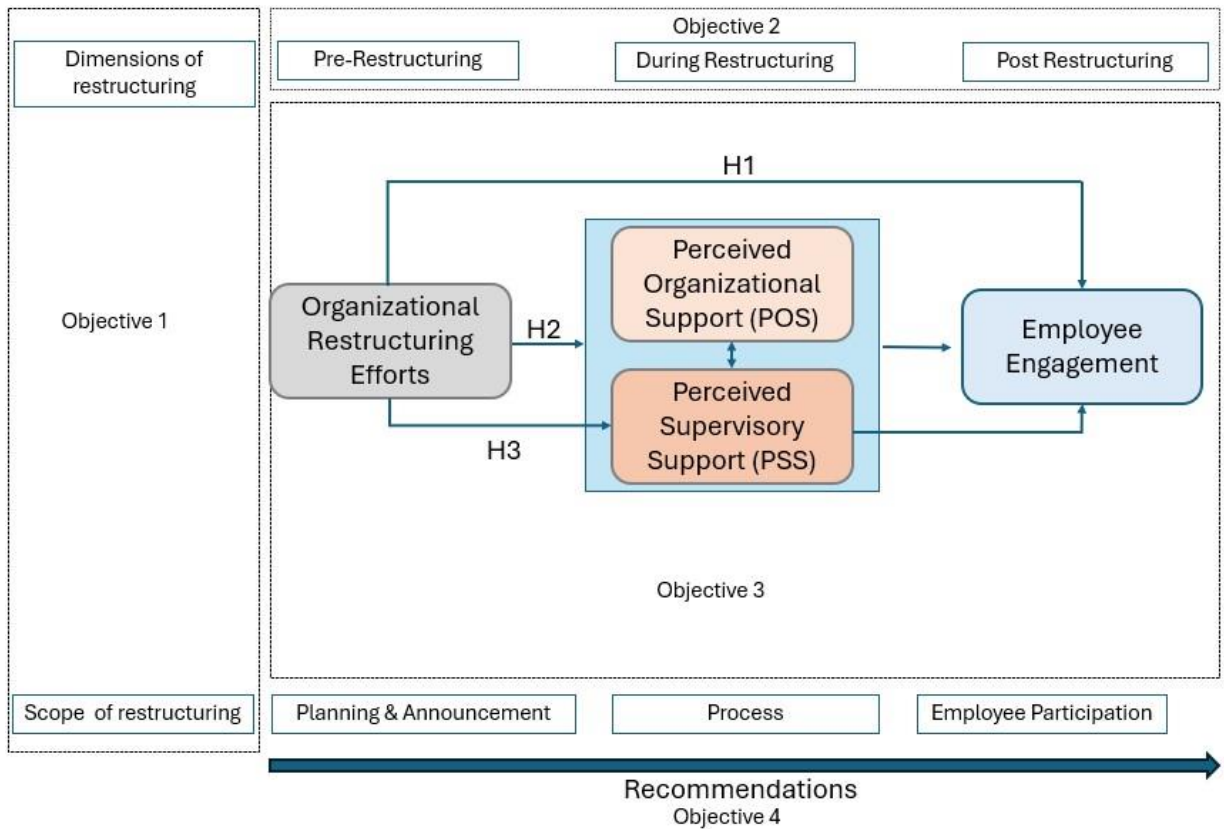


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model (Authors Own)

2.6 Chapter summary

The chapter conducts an extensive literature review surrounding the impact of organisational restructuring on employee engagement in accordance with the theoretical framework of Organisational Support Theory (OST). It further explains how perceptions held by employees of organisational support influence their emotional and behaviour responses to change, i.e., restructuring, and proposes

how effective communication and support can have counterbalancing effects. The review further emphasizes the complex dynamic between restructuring and commitment, noting apparent organisational support as a mediating variable of note that can insulate against adverse consequences. The chapter concludes by formulating research questions and hypotheses in an effort to examine these dynamics, specifically within water utility organisations. Research methodology will be the focus in the next chapter. It will describe the research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis methods to be used to empirically test hypothesised relationships between organisational restructuring, perceived organisational support, and employee engagement. It will serve as background to the ensuing empirical analysis and discussion.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter detailed the research approaches adopted to investigate the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement within the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). It outlined the chosen research paradigm, design, study setting, target population, sampling strategy,

data collection instruments, and analytical techniques. A quantitative cross-sectional approach was employed to facilitate objective data collection and enable robust statistical analysis. Special attention was given to ethical considerations and potential limitations that could influence the outcomes of the study. This methodological framework was selected to enhance the reliability, validity, and transparency of the research process.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The study was based on a positivist paradigm, which perceives social reality as objective and measurable. This approach underscored the use of scientific, empirical methods to observe and quantify organisational phenomena (Amiri et al., 2024). The positivist paradigm rests on the ontological belief that social reality exists independently of the researcher and is objective in nature (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Rahi, 2017). This is as shown by fig 3.1 below in the research onion. As the researcher was part of the organisation being examined, measures were taken to keep responses anonymous, preventing any identifiable links to individual participants. Participants were also assured of their anonymity to minimize the risk of researcher influence, thereby reducing potential bias in their responses. By aligning with this paradigm, the research aimed to identify causal links between restructuring activities and levels of employee engagement, permitting the findings to be generalized and replicated in similar contexts.

3.3 Research Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional design was utilised to gather data at a single point in time from EWSC employees. This approach allowed for the application of statistical testing to examine hypotheses and identify patterns among variables (Bryman, 2016). The cross-sectional nature was suitable for analysing the immediate impacts of restructuring without the need for prolonged follow-up, thus supporting efficiency and cost-effectiveness while providing clear insights into the current state of employee engagement post-restructuring (Saunders et al., 2019). The choice of a quantitative framework was primarily driven by its capacity for systematic measurement and analysis of the relationships among organisational restructuring, perceived organisational support, perceived supervisor support, and employee engagement. The research questions sought to quantify these relationships and test the strength and nature of the associations, making

numerical data and statistical methods most appropriate (Wang & Cheng, 2019). Given that the study aimed to empirically test existing theory such as organisational support theory and the job engagement model it fell largely into the category of theory-testing research. The goal was to evaluate whether the theoretical relationships hold within the specific context of EWSC's restructuring processes, contributing to the broader organisational and employee engagement literature.

As the research sought to quantify employees' perceptions and validate some of the hypotheses regarding the interrelationship among variables, the quantitative approach provided the sought-after precision and objectivity. It allowed for the collection of data from a sizable sample of 147 that was representative of the population, ensuring the generalisability of findings to the organisation as a whole. Quantitative approaches were also most appropriate for identifying patterns, forecasting outcomes, and testing theoretical organisational change and employee behaviour models for validity.

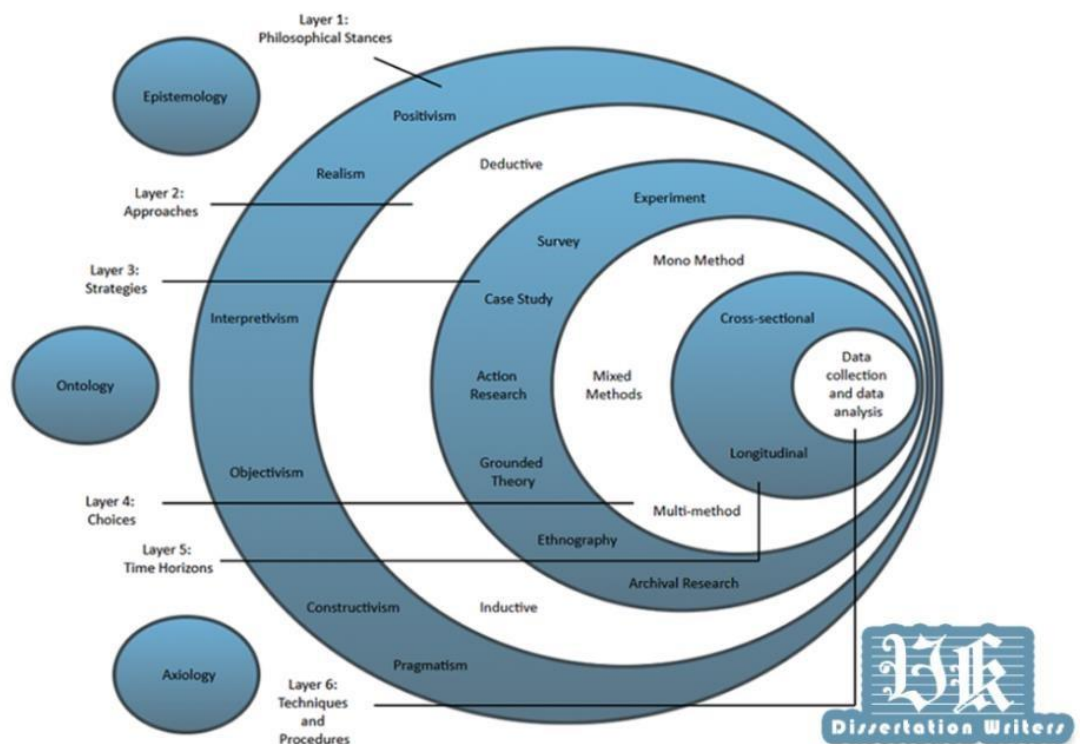


Figure 3.1 The Research Onion, 2015 Mark Saunder, Phillip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill

3.3.1 Theory Testing

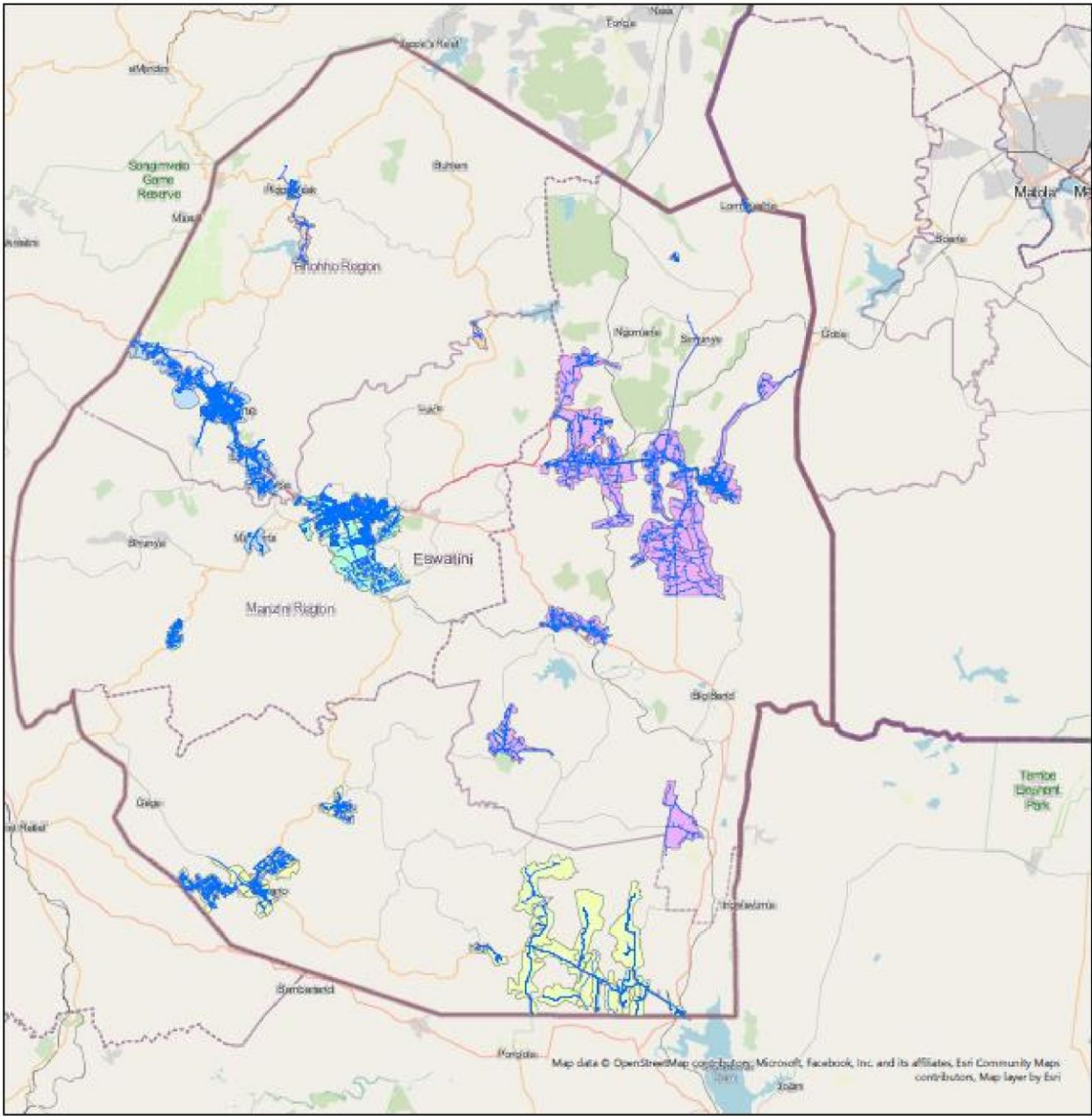
This study was largely theory-testing. It applied literature and types of theory such as organisational support theory and the job engagement model to empirically test hypothesised relationships. It sought to test or falsify existing theory in the setting of EWSC's restructuring, examining whether these theories could be applied in this specific organisational context.

While there was some potential for exploratory results, the main focus was on testing hypothesized relations from established theory. The study aimed to contribute to the knowledge base by determining if the theoretical assumptions of restructuring, support, and commitment held in the local setting of EWSC.

3.4 Research Setting

The research was situated within Eswatini, focusing on EWSC's Centre of Excellence (Head Quarters), and 5 operational regions: North, Northwest, Southwest, Central, and East. The regions are as shown in figure 4.0 below. As the national water and sanitation utility, EWSC's diverse geographic and operational environments provided a comprehensive backdrop for examining how restructuring influences employee engagement across different contexts. The regional diversity ensured that the sample captured a broad spectrum of employee experiences and perceptions.

EWSC WATER NETWORK REGIONS COVERAGE



Legend

- EWSCWaterPipe2024
- SD_Bndry
- EWSC_COVERAGE**
- REGION**
- Central
- East
- North
- North West
- South West
- <all other values>

Figure 4.0 EWSC Water Network Regional Coverage.

3.5 Population of the Research

The population of the study comprised all 628 employees working across seven departments at Eswatini Water Services Corporation, namely: Managing Director's Office, Business Enablement, Strategy and Digitalization, Customer Management, Operations, Technical Services, and Finance. A study population was defined as the complete group of individuals meeting specific inclusion criteria for the research inquiry (Benjamin, 2018). Examining the entire organisational population ensured that the findings reflected the diverse operational and strategic units within Eswatini Water Services Corporation.

3.6 Sampling Technique

The research employed cluster sampling, a probability sampling method where departments served as natural clusters. This approach was suitable given the departmental segmentation within EWSC, facilitating efficient and representative sampling (Iliyasu & Etikan, 2021). The sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, proportionally selecting participants from the six departments to ensure representativeness. This is as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} = \left(\frac{628}{(1 + 628(0.05)^2)} \right)$$

≈ 244 Thus, 244 participants will be sampled proportionally from the seven departments.

Sample size

3.7 The target population for this study consisted of 244 employees directly engaged in the restructuring process at the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC), drawn from a total workforce of 628. Out of this target group, 147 fully completed responses were obtained and used for analysis, representing a response rate of 67%. This realised sample size was considered sufficient to ensure statistical reliability and representativeness of the population under study. Table 2 shows sample sizes and response rates from previous studies.

The sample size was initially determined using Slovin's formula, which specifies the required number of participants based on population size and a desired level of precision:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the required sample size, N is the population (244), and e is the margin of error (0.05). Substituting these values yields a recommended minimum of approximately 152 respondents. The 147 valid responses therefore represent 97% of the required minimum, making the realised sample statistically adequate for inferential analysis at a 95% confidence level.

Hair et al. (2019) recommend a minimum ratio of 5 to 10 respondents per variable for multivariate analysis such as regression or structural modelling. This study's main regression models contained fewer than 20 predictors, implying that 100 to 200 cases are sufficiently well covered by the realised 147 responses.

Table 2 :

Table 2: Previous studies, sample sizes, response rates and sample groups

Study	Sample Size (N)	Response Rate	No. of Responses	Population
Eisenberger et al., (2002)	314	54%	170	Alumni of Belgium university graduated between 1997 and 1998
Tafvelin et al., (2019)	524	65%	340	Nursing assistants in home help services
Vandenbergh et al., (2019)	820	51%	418	Countrywide survey of Organisation newcomers in France
Paustian-Underdahl et al., (2017)	271	79%	214	Undergraduate students at a university in the south-east United States

3.8 Data collection instrument

The questionnaire was developed from pre-existing validated scales and tailored to meet the organisational context. The primary tool for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed to gather extensive information regarding the demographic profiles of the employees, their attitudes, and organisational experiences. A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool, developed from validated scales adapted to the organisational context. The instrument comprised several components. The steps involved in the development process were as follows:

Literature Review and Adaptation

Items were derived from established organisational and engagement research scales to ensure validity and reliability

Customization

Items were tailored to EWSC's context, addressing variables such as internal communication, organisational and supervisor support, access to digital tools, training, participation in decision-making, workload, stress, and suggestions for operational improvements.

Question Format

The questionnaire included Likert-scale items to gauge perceptions and levels of satisfaction, multiple-choice items to capture demographic information, and openended items for qualitative feedback.

The validation process was as follows ;

Expert Review

Organisational psychologists and HR professionals in a team reviewed the draft questionnaire to ascertain clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness.

Content Validity

Experts established whether the questions were adequate to measure the constructs of interest so that content validity of the instrument can be ascertained.

Reliability Testing.

Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha during the piloting phase to ensure that those items measuring one construct are consistently related.

Piloting the Instrument

The pilot test objective was to assess the clearness, pertinence, and dependability of the questionnaire, and to evaluate whether there was any confusion regarding question interpretation or technical problems.

A pilot with 10-15 employees from various departments and regions assessed clarity, relevance, and technical issues. Feedback informed refinements, and the instrument was adjusted accordingly before final deployment. The questionnaire

was distributed online, with participants being asked to provide feedback on question clarity, response alternatives, and overall usability.

Data Analysis

Pilot answers were examined to estimate reliability coefficients (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) and to identify ambiguous or problematic items.

Refinement

Revisions were made as necessary, based on feedback and preliminary analysis, to clarify questions, enhance relevance, and improve instrument overall reliability. Amendments were made to incorporate the perceived supervisor support part in the questions as it was not clearly outlined.

Finalization

After refinement, the final questionnaire version was used for the main data collection.

Design and Structure

The final questionnaire was segmented into sections covering demographic details, work-related variables, and open-ended responses. The mixed-format approach aimed to capture nuanced perceptions and allow for comprehensive analysis.

Development and Validation

Items from validated instruments were incorporated where possible, with pilot testing ensuring the instrument's appropriateness. Feedback was used to enhance clarity and relevance, thereby strengthening the instrument's overall reliability and validity.

Administration

The questionnaires were distributed electronically via email, WhatsApp and an online survey platform, facilitating broad reach and ease of response. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation, ensuring ethical compliance.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire hosted on Google Forms. This method was chosen for efficiency, ability to preserve anonymity, and capacity to reach employees across dispersed regional offices. Self-administered questionnaires are commonly used in organisational research due to their ability to reach dispersed populations and reduce interviewer bias (Denscombe, 2025). Given the sensitivity of the topic 9 employees decline to participate citing that they are not comfortable with participation. These were the brave ones to call the researcher to apologise.

To increase response rate, the researcher sent links to whatsapp groups at EWSC and made follow up emails with the participation link to all people in the whatsapp group.

The questionnaire gathered both demographic and work-related variables, including; department and region, job role/position, length of service (in years), access to digital tools and systems, level of satisfaction with internal communication, perceived organisational and supervisor support, training and development opportunities, engagement in decision-making processes, workload and stress levels and suggestions for operational improvements. (Appendix A)

3.9.1 Validity and Reliability

Validity ensured that the instrument accurately measured the constructs of interest, while reliability referred to the consistency of these measurements across different scenarios (Saunders et al., 2012). To establish content validity, the questionnaire underwent expert review. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of 0.7 or higher considered acceptable for internal consistency.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

This study employed quantitative data analysis techniques to examine the impact of organisational restructuring on employee engagement at the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). The analysis was designed to address the research objectives and test the study's hypotheses using statistical methods that ensure reliability, validity, and interpretive precision.

All quantitative analyses were conducted using the Python programming language (version 3.10). The analytical procedures followed a systematic sequence beginning with data cleaning and preparation, followed by descriptive analysis, reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression modelling.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarise participants' demographic characteristics and to provide an overview of responses across key study variables. Measures such as means, standard deviations, and skewness were used to describe central tendencies and variability in the data.

Reliability Analysis

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, Cronbach's Alpha (α) was computed for each construct. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable reliability, while values above 0.80 reflect good internal consistency. This analysis ensured that all items used to measure a single concept such as organisational restructuring, perceived support, and employee engagement were statistically reliable before inclusion in regression models.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was employed to determine the strength and direction of linear relationships among the main study variables. The correlation matrix helped identify whether the relationships among variables were positive or negative and provided preliminary insights into potential associations before regression analysis. In line with conventional statistical interpretation: Correlation coefficients between 0.10–0.29 indicate a weak relationship, between 0.30–0.49 indicate a moderate relationship, of 0.50 or higher indicate a strong relationship. These analyses also helped detect potential multicollinearity, which was further verified using Variance Inflation Factor diagnostics.

Regression Analysis

To test the study's hypotheses, regression analysis was applied to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships among organisational restructuring, perceived support, and employee engagement.

Simple Univariate Linear Regression

A simple univariate linear regression was first used to examine the direct relationship between organisational restructuring efforts (independent variable) and employee engagement (dependent variable). The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to indicate the proportion of variance in engagement explained by restructuring perceptions.

Multiple Linear Regression

A multiple regression model was then estimated to assess the combined effects of the independent variables on employee engagement, incorporating perceived organisational support (POS) and perceived supervisory support (PSS) as mediating factors.

The model specification took the general form:

$$Engagement_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Restructuring\ Perception_i) + \beta_2(POS_i) + \beta_3(PSS_i) + \beta_4(POS \times PSS_i) + \epsilon_i$$

This approach enabled an evaluation of both direct and indirect (mediated) effects, consistent with Organisational Support Theory (OST).

Model Refinement

A forward stepwise regression technique was used to identify the most parsimonious model by systematically adding significant predictors and excluding non-significant ones. This procedure enhances statistical efficiency by retaining only variables that make meaningful contributions to explaining variations in employee engagement.

Statistical Significance Criteria

All regression parameters were tested at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$). A p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, while confidence intervals (CI) were

used to assess the precision of coefficient estimates. The strength of the model was evaluated using Adjusted R^2 , which indicates the proportion of variance in employee engagement explained by the independent variables after adjusting for the number of predictors.

Multicollinearity Diagnostics

To ensure the independence of predictors, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were computed.

VIF values below 10.0 indicate an acceptable level of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010), while a mean VIF below 5.0 is preferred for well-specified models.

Tolerance values ($1/VIF$) above 0.10 were also considered indicative of variable independence.

This step ensured that the regression coefficients were not biased due to excessive correlation among predictors.

3.8.7 Hypothesis Testing Framework

The following criteria guided hypothesis testing;

Hypothesis 1

A positive and statistically significant coefficient between organisational restructuring and employee engagement supports the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2

A significant indirect (mediating) effect of POS and PSS supports joint mediation.

Hypothesis 3

A significant positive coefficient for PSS supports independent mediation of supervisory support.

Statistical conclusions were drawn based on significance levels ($p < 0.05$), confidence intervals (95%), and standardised beta coefficients to compare the relative strength of predictors.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Eswatini Water Services Corporation through the HR Office and from GIBS ethical committee. Participants received detailed information about the study, provided informed consent, and participated voluntarily. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the process, aligning with ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice (Shodiya & Adekunle, 2022).

A research protocol was developed to guide the researcher throughout the study, and this was reviewed and approved in advance. Before participating, respondents were required to provide informed consent, ensuring they understood the nature of the research. Participants were assured of their anonymity and were clearly informed that their participation was entirely voluntary. They were also made aware that they could withdraw from the survey at any time without any repercussions.

The respondents were fully briefed on the purpose of the study, the estimated duration of the survey, and the methods used to collect the data. Upon completion of the research, staff members were informed that they would have the opportunity to access the results.

All data collected during the 42 days were securely stored to protect participants' confidentiality. It was also anticipated that participation would not cause any emotional or physical distress. Although the researcher was involved in collecting the responses, measures were taken to ensure that responses remained anonymous, preventing any identification of individual participants.

All participants obtained informed consent before they filled out the questionnaire. This was included at the beginning of the questionnaire. Information was collected anonymously to protect the identity of participants and elicit truthful responses. This tested and structured data collection instrument was used to reliably obtain relevant information to support the objectives of this research and allow for meaningful analysis.

Furthermore, the researcher adhered to strict ethical standards to ensure that all information obtained was kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Rights to access data were solely for the researcher with a strong password to prevent unwanted access. The average time taken to complete the questionnaire was approximately 10 minutes, which suggests that the survey was concise and manageable for participants. To further enhance participant comfort and protect their anonymity, the researcher included an option for respondents to select "Prefer not to say" when indicating their gender. This option was specifically added to accommodate individuals who might be the sole representatives of a particular gender within their departments, thereby reducing potential discomfort and encouraging honest responses since the researcher works from the same organisation.

3.12 Common method bias

Given that method biases may have strong impacts on research validity, some statistical and procedural measures are utilised in this research to limit common method variance (CMV). Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) state that common method variance inflates or deflates observed construct relationships that lead to incorrect inferences. To counter this, data gathering will utilize both a multi-source strategy, drawing employee perceptions of organisational support from both supervisor ratings and self-report questionnaires, in order to decrease single-source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Also, temporal separation of measurement which is gathering restructuring perceptions and levels of engagement at multiple points in time will be used to reduce response biases linked with recall and mood (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Harrison & McLaughlin, 1993). Procedural controls such as ensuring respondent anonymity and emphasizing honest responses will also contribute to reducing social desirability and acquiescence biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Statistically, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedures, e.g., the use of a latent method factor, will be used to detect and control residual CMV effects (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Williams & Anderson, 1994). More specifically, the addition of a method factor representing the common method to SEM models will function to decompose variance due to measurement method from substantive relationships, following recommendations by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and advances in latent variable modeling. These procedural and

statistical controls collectively aim to enhance the validity of findings by reducing the confounding impact of method biases.

To mitigate common method bias, multiple procedural and statistical controls were implemented. Data were collected from different sources such as supervisor ratings and self-report questionnaires to reduce single-source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Temporal separation was used by measuring perceptions at different points in time. Respondent anonymity and emphasizing honest responses aimed to lessen social desirability bias. Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis with a latent method factor was employed to detect and control residual method variance, further strengthening the validity of the findings (Williams & Anderson, 1994).

Given that method biases could have strong impacts on research validity, some statistical and procedural measures were utilized in this research to limit common method variance (CMV). Podsakoff et al., (2003) stated that common method variance inflates or deflates observed construct relationships, leading to incorrect inferences. To address this, data collection employed both a multi-source strategy drawing employee perceptions of organisational support from both supervisor ratings and self-report questionnaires in order to decrease single-source bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Additionally, temporal separation of measurement, which involved gathering perceptions of restructuring and levels of engagement at multiple points in time, was used to reduce response biases associated with recall and mood (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Harrison & McLaughlin, 1993). Procedural controls such as ensuring respondent anonymity and emphasizing honest responses also contributed to reducing social desirability and acquiescence biases (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Lindell & Whitney, 2001).

Statistically, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedures such as the use of a latent method factor were employed to detect and control residual CMV effects (Podsakoff et al., 2003; Williams & Anderson, 1994). More specifically, the addition of a method factor representing the common method to SEM models served to decompose variance due to measurement method from substantive relationships, following recommendations by Podsakoff et al. (2003) and advances in latent variable modeling. These procedural and statistical controls collectively aimed to

enhance the validity of the findings by reducing the confounding impact of method biases.

3.13 Delimitations and Limitations

Given its cross-sectional design, the study could not establish causality or longterm effects of restructuring. Self-reported data might have been influenced by social desirability bias, potentially affecting accuracy. Moreover, the findings' generalizability was limited to EWSC and similar organisations within Eswatini, considering organisational and cultural particularities.

The study focused on examining the impact of restructuring on employee engagement within a state-owned water utility entity in Eswatini, categorized under Category A. Grounded in Organisational Support Theory, the research sought to understand how organisational restructuring processes influence employees' perceptions of support and their level of engagement. However, as Mantere et al. (2012) emphasize, relying on responses from a single organisation limits the generalizability of the findings, highlighting the need for further research across different organisations to enhance transferability.

Additionally, participants were asked to evaluate their supervisors, which could have potentially caused discomfort or fear among staff members. To mitigate this concern, the organisation's internal online survey platform was avoided, and instead, an independent survey platform was primarily utilised via WhatsApp. Moreover, in accordance with ethical guidelines, the anonymity of respondents was preserved, and participants were reminded of this confidentiality, which contributed to a high response and completion rate.

Given the focus on organisational support and employee engagement, longitudinal research designs are ideal as they allow for analysing changes over time and assessing how restructuring influences employee perceptions and behaviours. However, due to time limitations, a cross-sectional survey was conducted shortly after the restructuring process. To address this limitation, the survey was administered promptly following the change to capture relevant perceptions.

The survey employed open-ended questions, providing respondents with options, which may have added the range of responses. Furthermore, since the survey

was distributed online via WhatsApp in an asynchronous manner, some respondents might not have had sufficient time to reflect deeply on their answers.

Lastly, because the same respondents participated across the data collection points, there is a potential for common method bias. Consequently, the findings cannot establish causal relationships between variables such as organisational support, employee engagement, and the effects of restructuring. While causal inferences were not the primary goal, the study offers an initial understanding of how restructuring influences perceived organisational support and employee engagement. Future research employing experimental or longitudinal designs, with additional antecedents, is necessary to explore causal relationships more definitively.

This study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality or assess long-term effects of restructuring interventions. Additionally, data were collected through self-reports, which may have been influenced by social desirability bias, potentially affecting response accuracy.

Furthermore, the findings' generalizability is restricted to the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) and similar organisations within Eswatini, given their unique organisational and cultural contexts. It is also important to note that EWSC experienced a cybersecurity breach, as the organisation was hacked during the study period. This incident may have impacted participants' responses or perceptions, introducing additional considerations for interpreting the results.

Staff members were advised to remain extra cautious of potential cyber threats by avoiding clicking on suspicious links or attachments, verifying unexpected emails even if they appear to come from known sources, and immediately reporting any unusual system or application behavior to the ICT section. This caution slowed down the data collection process starting from 28 July 2025, as calls had to be made to ascertain whether respondents were willing to provide their WhatsApp numbers and use it to receive the links.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study on The Impact of Organisational Restructuring on Employee Engagement: The Case of Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). The results are organised according to the study objectives, highlighting the dimensions and scope of restructuring initiatives undertaken by EWSC, the patterns of employee engagement observed before and after these changes, and the relationship between perceived organisational support and engagement during the restructuring process. The analysis draws from both quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of how structural and managerial adjustments influenced employees' perceptions, motivation, and commitment. In line with the Organisational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 2020), the findings illuminate how variations in perceived support mediated employees' responses to organisational change. The results therefore serve as a foundation for identifying strategies that can enhance organisational resilience, maintain employee engagement, and strengthen service delivery within EWSC during periods of transformation.

4.2 Quantitative Insights

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the 147 participants involved in this study on The Impact of Organisational Restructuring on Employee Engagement at Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). The sample represents a diverse cross-section of employees across departments, regions, age groups, and job levels, providing a comprehensive view of workforce experiences during the restructuring process.

Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of respondents

	1-3 years	28	19%
Characteristics	Categories	Number	Percentage
Total Participant	N	147	100%
Department	Business Enablement	14	10%
	Customer Management	25	17%
	Finance	10	7%
	MD's Office	3	2%
	Operations	74	50%
	Strategy and Digitalization	5	3%
	Technical Services	16	11%
Gender	Female	64	44%
	Male	80	54%
	Prefer not to say	3	2%
Region	Central	13	9%
	East	31	21%
	HQ	70	48%
	North	6	4%
	Northwest	16	11%
	Southwest	11	7%
Age	25-34	44	30%
	35-44	65	44%
	45-54	28	19%
	55 and above	8	5%
	under 25	2	1%

Length of Services at EWSC	4-6 years	36	24%
	7-10 years	26	18%
Position in the Corporation	Less than 1 year	6	4%
	More than 10 years	51	35%
	Extended Management	30	20%
	Leadership Team Member	5	3%
	Management Member	21	14%
	Staff	61	41%
	Supervisory Level	30	20%

The majority of respondents (50%) were from the Operations Department, reflecting the centrality of this division in EWSC's service delivery mandate. Males (54%) slightly outnumbered females (44%), indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. In terms of regional representation, nearly half of the participants (48%) were based at Headquarters (HQ), with others distributed across the East (21%), Northwest (11%), and other regions.

The age distribution shows that most employees (44%) fall within the 35–44 years category, followed by those aged 25–34 years (30%), suggesting a predominantly mid-career workforce. Regarding tenure, 35% of participants have served more than 10 years, indicating a strong base of long-serving employees who have experienced organisational evolution firsthand.

In terms of job roles, the largest group comprised staff (41%), followed by those in Supervisory (20%) and Extended Management (20%) positions. This composition ensures perspectives from both operational and managerial levels are captured, enhancing the validity of insights into engagement and support during restructuring.

4.2.2 Dimensions and Scope of Restructuring

This section outlines the various dimensions of organisational restructuring undertaken at Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) and assesses the reliability and descriptive statistics of each construct derived from employee responses. The restructuring process encompassed multiple stages planning and

announcement, implementation, and post-restructuring integration each associated with distinct organisational and psychological factors measured in the study.

Table 4 The reliability and descriptive statistics of each dimension of restructuring

Dimensions of Restructuring	Mean	Std. dev.	Skewness	Cronbach's Alpha
Organisational Restructuring Effort	3.680	0.762	-0.239	0.7402
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	3.585	0.848	-0.554	0.8965
Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)	3.680	0.877	-0.747	0.9315
Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement)	3.361	0.826	-0.031	0.8851
Perceived Restructuring Process (PRP)	3.453	0.854	-0.327	0.8718
Post-restructuring (Employee engagement)	3.505	0.859	-0.434	0.9012

Organisational Restructuring Effort assessed employees' awareness, communication quality, participation opportunities, and perceptions of the restructuring's effectiveness (Items 7.1 to 7.5). The average mean score of 3.68 (SD = 0.762, $\alpha = 0.7402$) suggests that employees were moderately aware and generally agreed that restructuring efforts improved organisational performance. However, responses on communication and input opportunities indicate variability in how employees experienced the process.

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) measured employees' perceptions of EWSC's concern for their well-being, appreciation of their contributions, and fairness during restructuring (Items 8.1 to 8.5). With a mean of 3.59 (SD = 0.848, $\alpha = 0.8965$), employees generally perceived the organisation as supportive during the transition. The high reliability coefficient signifies strong internal consistency among the POS items.

Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) captured the extent to which supervisors demonstrated care, recognition, and team support during restructuring (Items 9.1 – 9.5). The mean score of 3.68 (SD = 0.877, $\alpha = 0.9315$) indicates that most employees felt their immediate supervisors were empathetic and communicative, although qualitative feedback later suggests this varied by department.

Pre-restructuring (Planning and Announcement) examined clarity of communication, transparency, and opportunities for feedback prior to implementation (Items 10.1 to

10.4). Results show a mean of 3.36 (SD = 0.826, $\alpha = 0.8851$), reflecting moderate satisfaction with pre-implementation planning and the adequacy of information shared. Some respondents indicated that consultation could have been more inclusive.

Perceived Restructuring Process (PRP) focused on how employees experienced the actual restructuring phase, including clarity of roles, managerial support, and team cohesion (Items 11.1–11.4). The mean of 3.45 (SD = 0.854, $\alpha = 0.8718$) demonstrates that employees viewed the process somewhat positively, though mixed responses regarding workload and team dynamics suggest uneven adaptation across departments.

Post-restructuring (Employee Engagement) evaluated the outcomes of restructuring in terms of job satisfaction, motivation, belonging, and participation in decisionmaking (Items 12.1 to 12.6). The mean of 3.51 (SD = 0.859, $\alpha = 0.9012$) reveals that employees generally felt more motivated and connected after restructuring, supported by a strong reliability score indicating consistent responses.

Overall, the results demonstrate that restructuring at EWSC was a multi-phase process involving strategic, structural, and human resource dimensions. Employees perceived moderate organisational and supervisory support throughout, and reliability statistics confirm that the measurement scales used were robust. The combination of acceptable Cronbach's Alpha values (0.74 to 0.93) and relatively balanced skewness across variables suggests that responses were consistent and approximately normally distributed.

4.2.3 Employee Engagement by Demographic Characteristics

This table 5 presents the mean Employee Engagement across various demographic and organisational categories among EWSC employees (N = 147). The T-test (and corresponding p-values) indicate whether differences in engagement across groups are statistically significant. Results show no significant variations in engagement across departments, gender, region, age, or length of service. However, statistically significant differences were observed for Restructuring Input ($p < 0.001$) and Restructuring Changed Work ($p = 0.002$), suggesting that employees who had input in the restructuring process or who perceived positive work changes reported higher engagement levels.

Table 5 Employee Engagement by demographic and organisational characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Number	Mean Engagement Index	T test
Total Participant	N	147		P values
Department	Business Enablement	14	3.589	0.928
	Customer Management	25	3.540	
	Finance	10	3.625	
	MD's Office	3	3.333	
	Operations	74	3.372	
	Strategy and Digitalization	5	3.600	
	Technical Services	16	3.578	
Gender	Female	64	3.440	0.273
	Male	80	3.510	
	Prefer not to say	3	2.660	
Region	Central	13	3.077	0.589
	East	31	3.484	
	HQ	70	3.550	
	North	6	3.167	
	Northwest	16	3.516	
	Southwest	11	3.455	
Age	25-34	44	3.511	0.135
	35-44	65	3.319	
	45-54	28	3.821	
	55 and above	8	3.313	
	under 25	2	3.000	
Length of Services at EWSC	1-3 years	28	3.420	0.617
	4-6 years	36	3.660	

	7-10 years	26	3.317	
	Less than 1 year	6	3.292	
	More than 10 years	51	3.456	
Position in the Corporation	Extended Management	30	3.275	0.446
	Leadership Team Member	5	3.900	
	Management Member	21	3.369	
	Staff	61	3.578	
	Supervisory Level	30	3.433	

The overall mean engagement score of 3.46 suggests that employees at EWSC were moderately engaged following the restructuring process. This indicates that, although organisational change often introduces uncertainty and anxiety, employees maintained a reasonable level of motivation, satisfaction, and commitment to the corporation's goals.

Across departments, engagement levels appeared relatively consistent, with no statistically significant differences ($p = 0.928$). Employees in the Finance (3.625) and Strategy & Digitalization (3.600) departments reported slightly higher engagement levels, possibly reflecting greater clarity or perceived opportunity during restructuring. In contrast, employees in the Operations (3.372) and MD's Office (3.333) reported marginally lower engagement, potentially due to heavier operational workloads and role uncertainty during the transition period.

No significant gender or regional differences were observed ($p = 0.2733$ and $p = 0.5889$, respectively). However, males reported marginally higher engagement (3.51) than females (3.44), while employees based at Headquarters (3.55) showed slightly greater engagement than those in outlying regions. This could be attributed to closer proximity to leadership and information flow, which often enhances perceptions of organisational support during change initiatives.

In terms of age, engagement was highest among employees aged 45–54 years (3.821), followed by those aged 25–34 years (3.511). Although the differences were not statistically significant ($p = 0.1351$), this trend suggests that mid-career employees, who possess both experience and adaptability, may navigate organisational change more positively than other groups. Similarly, employees with

four to six years of service (3.660) showed slightly higher engagement compared to other tenure groups, indicating that moderate tenure may correspond with optimal engagement levels experienced enough to understand organisational culture, yet not so long-tenured as to resist change.

Positional differences within the corporation were also not statistically significant ($p = 0.4457$). Nonetheless, Leadership Team Members (3.900) and Staff (3.578) exhibited higher engagement compared to Extended Management (3.275) and Supervisory Level (3.433) staff. This pattern may reflect differing levels of involvement and responsibility, as those in leadership or operational roles are often more directly engaged with the change process.

The most significant findings emerged in relation to restructuring experiences. Employees who reported having input in the restructuring process displayed markedly higher engagement (mean = 4.182; $p < 0.001$), as did those who strongly agreed that restructuring had changed their work positively (mean = 3.833; $p = 0.002$). These statistically significant relationships underscore that employee participation, communication, and perceived fairness during restructuring are critical for sustaining engagement. Where employees felt excluded or inadequately informed, engagement levels were notably lower.

4.3. Correlation Heatmap of Employee Engagement and Organisational Restructuring Construct

Figure 4.1 presents a correlation heatmap illustrating the relationships among employee engagement and key construct variables in this study, including prerestructuring, during-restructuring, and post-restructuring factors, perceived organisational and supervisor support. The heatmap visualises the strength and direction of relationships, where coefficients closer to +1 indicate a strong positive correlation and those near 0 indicate weak or no correlation.

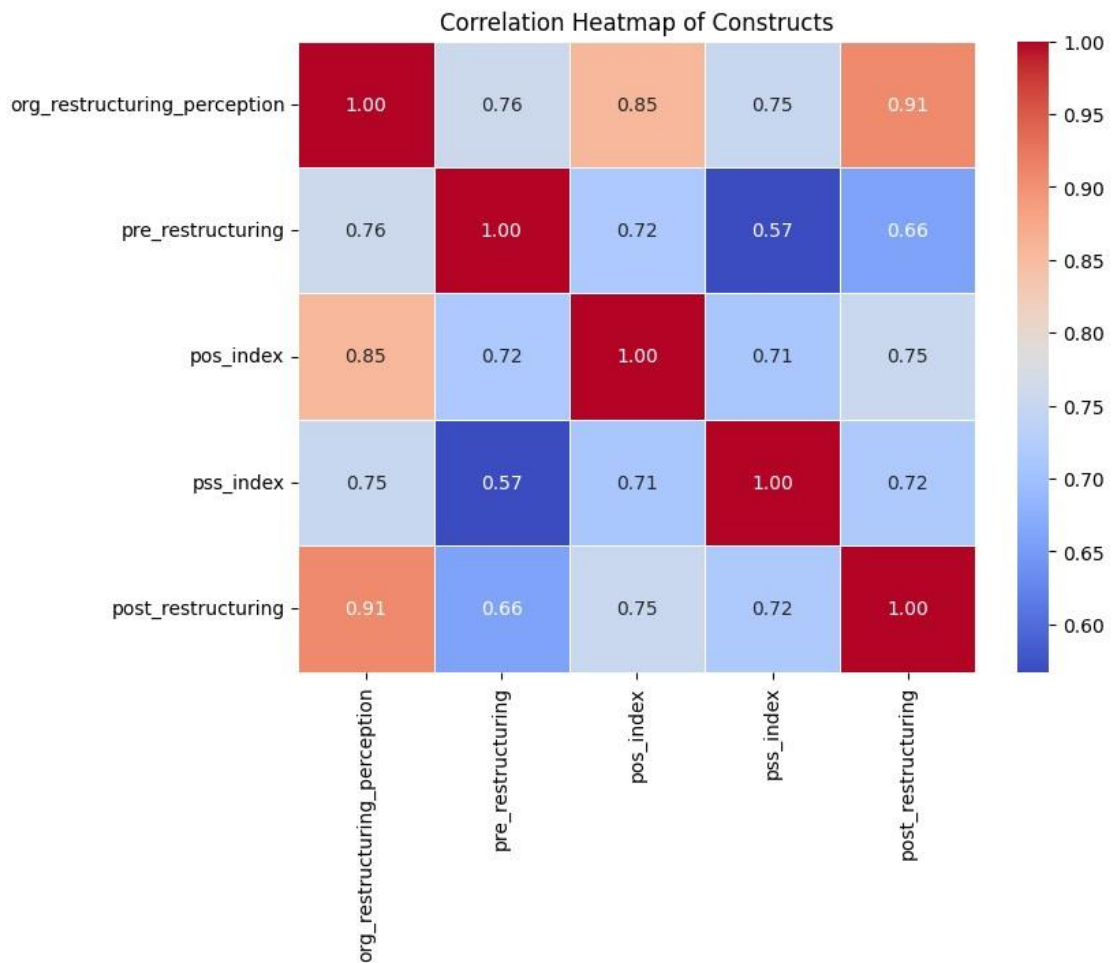


Figure 5 Correlation Heatmap of Employee Engagement and Constructs

Figure 5 Correlation Heatmap of Employee Engagement and constructs

The results show generally strong positive correlations across variables, suggesting that the constructs are closely related. Notably, organisational restructuring perception and post restructuring (employee engagement) exhibit the highest correlation ($r = 0.91$), indicating that employees with positive perceptions of restructuring also report high engagement levels after restructuring. Similarly, organisational restructuring perception is strongly correlated with POS ($r = 0.85$) and pre-restructuring ($r = 0.76$), implying consistency in engagement levels across the restructuring phases. Moderate correlations are observed between PSS and the other constructs (ranging from 0.57 to 0.75), suggesting that perceived supervisor support is positively but less strongly associated with engagement and restructuring perceptions. While these correlations highlight meaningful relationships among the constructs, the relatively high coefficients (above 0.80) between some variables may

indicate potential multicollinearity, which should be carefully examined in subsequent regression analysis.

4.2.3 Parsimonious Model Results

Model 1: Simple Regression between Organisational Restructuring Efforts and Employee Engagement (Univariate analysis)

Table 6 presents the results of the simple linear regression model examining the relationship between employees' perceptions of organisational restructuring and their level of engagement. Model 1: $\text{Engagement}_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ORE}_i) + \varepsilon_i$

Linear regression model between Organisational Restructuring Efforts and Employee Engagement

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Table 6 Linear regression model between Organisational Restructuring Efforts and Employee Engagement

Variable	Coefficient	P-Value	CI
Constant	0.0252	0.21	-0.245 0.296
Organisational Restructuring Efforts	1.0116	<0.001	0.935 1.088

Adj R² = 0.823 → 82.3% of the variation in engagement is explained by the included predictors.

The results indicate that employees' perceptions of organisational restructuring have a strong and statistically significant positive effect on employee engagement ($\beta = 1.0116$, $p < 0.001$). This means that for every one-unit increase in employees' positive perception of restructuring, their engagement level increases by approximately 1.01 units, holding other factors constant.

The 95% confidence interval (0.935 – 1.088) does not include zero, further confirming the reliability and significance of this relationship. The constant term ($\beta = 0.0252$, $p = 0.21$) is not statistically significant, suggesting that employee engagement levels are primarily driven by perceptions of restructuring rather than baseline factors.

Overall, Model 1 supports the hypothesis that positive perceptions of organisational restructuring enhance employee engagement at EWSC. This finding aligns with Organisational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 2020), which posits that employees who perceive organisational changes as fair, transparent, and supportive are more likely to reciprocate with higher motivation and commitment.

4.2.4 Model 2: Multiple Regression Including Mediating Variables (POS and PSS)

Table 7 Provide the results of Model 2, which examines the combined effect of organisational restructuring efforts, pre-restructuring planning, and perceived organisational and supervisory support on employee engagement. The model also incorporates the mediating influence of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS).

$$\text{Engagement}_{li} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{ORP}_i) + \beta_2\text{POS}_i + \beta_3(\text{PSS}_i) + \beta_4(\text{POS}_i * \text{PSS}_i) + \varepsilon_i$$

Table 7 Multiple Regression Including Mediating Variables (POS and PSS)

Table 7 Multiple Regression Including Mediating Variables (POS and PSS)

Variable	Coefficient	P-Value	CI	
Constant	-0.6405	0.039	-1.248	-0.033
Organisational Restructuring Efforts	1.7242	<0.001	1.534	1.914
Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement)	-0.6193	<0.001	-0.746	-0.492
Perceived Organisational Support (POS)	-0.135	0.013	-0.241	-0.029
Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS)	0.221	0.022	0.032	0.41
POS & PSS Mediates	-0.069	0.009	-0.121	-0.017

Adj R² = 0.902 → 90.2% of the variation in engagement is explained by the included predictors.

Model 2 provides a deeper understanding of the factors influencing employee engagement during organisational restructuring at EWSC by incorporating supportrelated variables as mediators.

Organisational Restructuring Efforts remains a strong and statistically significant positive predictor of employee engagement ($\beta = 1.7242$, $p < 0.001$). This reinforces findings from Model 1, suggesting that when employees view restructuring as transparent, inclusive, and beneficial, their engagement substantially increases.

Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement) has a negative and significant effect ($\beta = -0.6193$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that poor communication or insufficient involvement during the planning phase may reduce engagement. Employees who felt inadequately informed or consulted prior to restructuring were less likely to remain engaged during and after the change process.

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) also shows a negative effect ($\beta = -0.1350$, $p = 0.013$), which may reflect employees' critical view that the organisation's support during restructuring did not meet expectations. This suggests that if perceived support declines during the transition, engagement levels may drop accordingly.

Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS), however, exerts a positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.2210$, $p = 0.022$), indicating that supportive and communicative supervisors help sustain employee engagement during uncertain restructuring phases. Supervisory involvement appears to buffer the negative effects of organisational-level dissatisfaction.

The combined mediation effect of POS and PSS ($\beta = -0.069$, $p = 0.009$) is statistically significant, implying a partial mediation where support perceptions modify the strength of the relationship between restructuring perception and engagement. Specifically, while organisational restructuring Efforts directly enhance engagement, its effect is somewhat offset when support mechanisms are perceived as weak or inconsistent.

4.2.5 Comprehensive Regression Model Before Forward Elimination

Before conducting the forward elimination procedure, a comprehensive regression model was estimated to examine the combined effect of all relevant independent variables on employee engagement. The purpose of this model was to identify the initial strength and direction of relationships between engagement and key predictors such as organisational restructuring factors, perceived support variables, and employee demographic characteristics.

This preliminary analysis allows for a holistic understanding of how organisational and individual factors interact to shape engagement outcomes before applying model refinement techniques.

The results are presented in Table 8 below.

$$\text{Engagement}_i = \beta + \beta(\text{ORS}) + \beta (\text{POS}_i) + \beta (\text{PSS}_i) + \beta (\text{POS}*\text{PSS}) + \beta (\text{Restructure Input}_i) + \text{Controls}_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Table 8 Comprehensive Regression Model Before Forward Elimination

Employee engagement		Coefficien t	P value	95% conf.	
Construct	Organisational Restructuring Effort	1.683	0.000	1.483	1.882
	Pre Restructuring	-0.621	0.000	-0.756	-0.487
	POS	0.157	0.172	-0.070	0.384
	PSS	0.198	0.053	-0.003	0.399
	Mediation	-0.066	0.016	-0.120	-0.013
Department	Business Enablement	1			
	Customer Management	-0.096	0.320	-0.287	0.094
	Finance	-0.105	0.377	-0.340	0.130
	MD's Office	-0.082	0.654	-0.443	0.279
	Operations	-0.032	0.785	-0.260	0.197
	Strategy and Digitalization	-0.076	0.621	-0.379	0.227
	Technical Services	-0.038	0.720	-0.247	0.171
Gender	Female	1			
	Male	-0.009	0.851	-0.107	0.089
Region	East	0.138	0.138	-0.045	0.321
	HQ	0.211	0.069	-0.017	0.440
	North	0.016	0.911	-0.269	0.301
	Northwest	0.202	0.061	-0.009	0.413
	Southwest	0.264	0.028	0.029	0.500
Age	25-34	1			
	35-44	0.076	0.235	-0.050	0.203
	45-54	0.250	0.006	0.072	0.428
	55 and above	0.232	0.086	-0.033	0.497
	Under 25	-0.157	0.457	-0.574	0.260
Length of Service	1-3 years	1			
	4-6 years	-0.029	0.700	-0.177	0.119
	7-10 years	-0.016	0.854	-0.184	0.152
	Less than 1 year	-0.055	0.690	-0.325	0.216
	More than 10 years	-0.126	0.172	-0.308	0.056
	_cons	-0.726	0.037	-1.408	-0.045

Adj R² = 0.9009 → 90% of the variation in engagement is explained by the included predictors.

The results of the comprehensive regression model reveal several important patterns before variable elimination:

Organisational Restructuring Effort shows a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with employee engagement ($\beta = 1.683$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that employees who perceived restructuring efforts positively such as through effective communication, participation, and fairness reported significantly higher engagement levels.

Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement) demonstrates a significant negative effect on engagement ($\beta = -0.621$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that inadequate planning or poor communication before implementation may have undermined employee confidence and engagement during the transition.

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) shows a positive but non-significant effect ($p = 0.172$), implying that although employees who felt supported by the organisation were somewhat more engaged, this effect was not statistically strong in the full model. Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) approaches significance ($p = 0.053$), indicating that supportive leadership from supervisors likely contributes positively to engagement, even if the effect is modest at this stage.

The combined mediation variable (POS & PSS) has a significant negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.066$, $p = 0.016$), implying that perceived support partially mediates the relationship between restructuring and engagement, though in a complex way potentially reflecting inconsistencies in how support was experienced across departments. Among demographic controls, region and age emerged as noteworthy predictors: Employees from the Southwest region reported significantly higher engagement ($\beta = 0.264$, $p = 0.028$) compared to those in the Central region.

Employees aged 45–54 years also showed higher engagement ($\beta = 0.250$, $p = 0.006$), possibly due to greater work experience and adaptability.

Other demographic variables gender, department, and length of service did not show statistically significant effects, suggesting engagement levels were relatively consistent across these groups. The constant term ($\beta = -0.726$, $p = 0.037$) is significant, indicating that when all predictors are held at zero, the baseline engagement level is slightly below the mean, though this has limited substantive interpretation.

Overall, the comprehensive model underscores that employees' perceptions of restructuring efforts and pre-restructuring communication are the primary drivers of engagement. Support mechanisms (both organisational and supervisory) play secondary but meaningful roles in influencing engagement levels.

These findings justify proceeding to the forward elimination stage, which will systematically remove non-significant predictors to derive a more parsimonious and statistically efficient model focused on the strongest predictors of employee engagement.

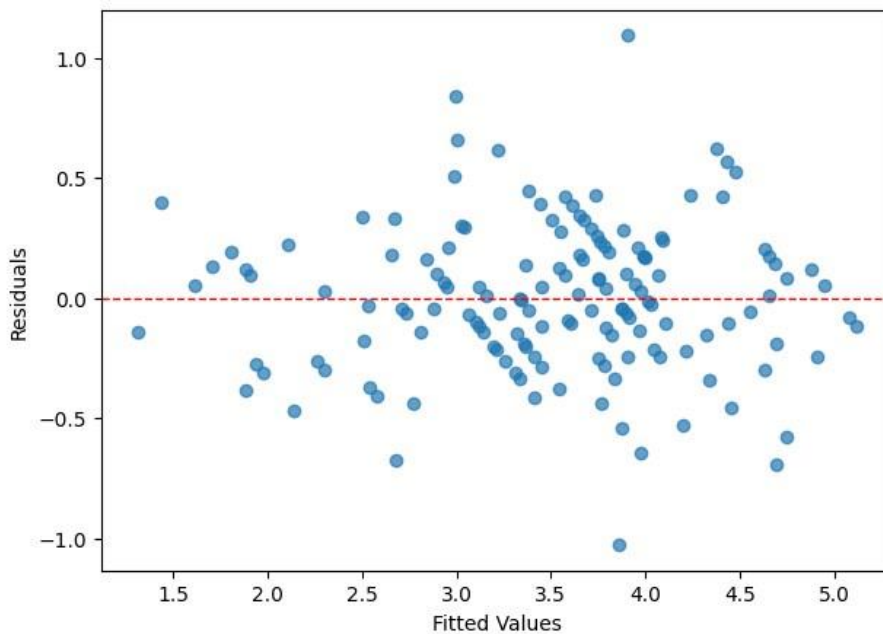


Figure 6 Residuals vs. Fitted Values Plot

Figure 4.3: Residuals vs. Fitted Values Plot

This plot assesses whether the residuals (errors) are evenly distributed around zero across all fitted values. The random scatter of points around the horizontal red line (zero) suggests that the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity (constant variance of residuals) are reasonably satisfied. No clear pattern or funnel shape is evident, indicating that the model does not exhibit systematic bias or heteroscedasticity.

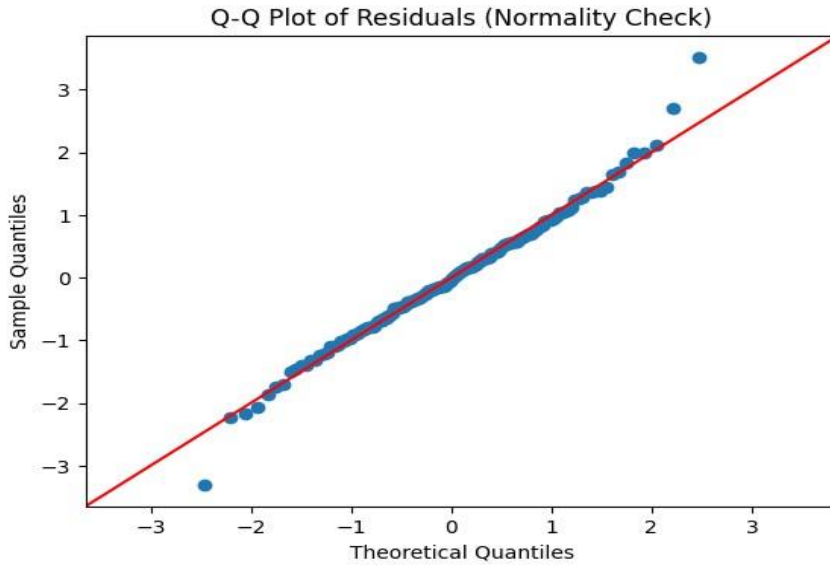


Figure 7 Q–Q Plot of Residuals (Normality Check)

Figure 4.4: Q–Q Plot of Residuals (Normality Check)

The Q–Q plot compares the distribution of residuals to a theoretical normal distribution. The close alignment of most points along the red diagonal line indicates that the residuals are approximately normally distributed, satisfying the OLS assumption of normality. Only minor deviations appear at the tails, which are acceptable in larger samples and do not materially violate model assumptions.

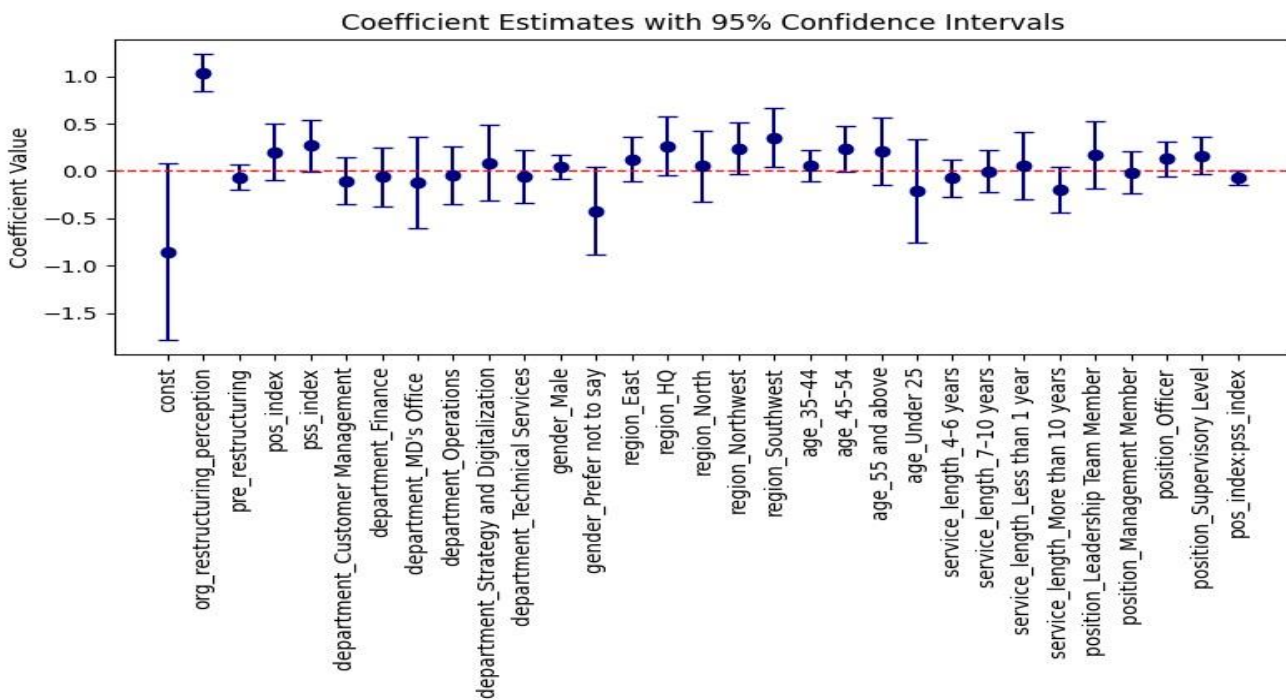


Figure 8 Coefficient Estimates with 95% Confidence Intervals

Figure 4.5: Coefficient Estimates with 95% Confidence Intervals

This figure visualizes the estimated coefficients and their 95% confidence intervals. Variables with confidence intervals that do not cross the red zero line are statistically significant predictors of employee engagement. In this case, Organisational Restructuring Efforts show a strong positive effect, while Pre-restructuring has a negative effect. Age group 45–54 years and region Southwest also show positive and significant contributions. The visual summary reinforces the regression table findings and highlights the relative strength and direction of predictors.

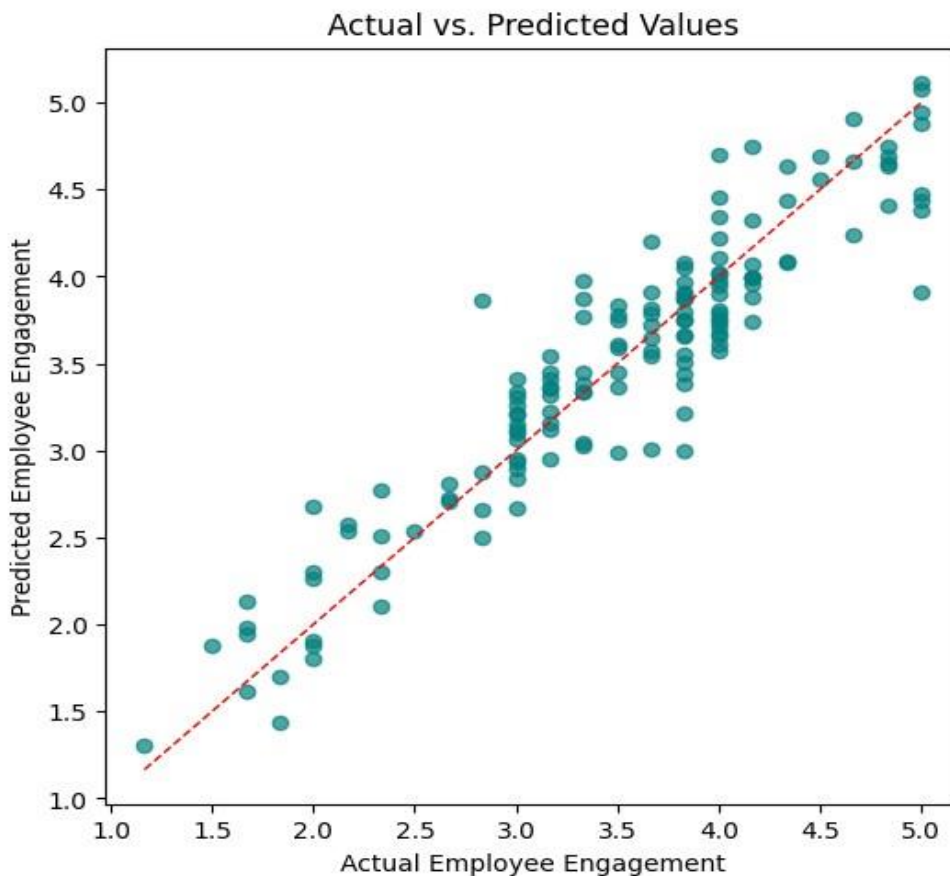


Figure 9 Actual vs. Predicted Employee Engagement

Figure 4.6: Actual vs. Predicted Employee Engagement

Figure 4.6 presents a scatter plot comparing the actual and predicted values of employee engagement from the regression model. Each point represents an observation, with the x-axis showing the actual engagement scores and the y-axis showing the corresponding predicted scores. The red dashed line indicates the line

of perfect prediction, where predicted values equal actual values. The close clustering of most points around this line demonstrates a strong linear relationship between the actual and predicted values, indicating that the model has good predictive accuracy. Although minor deviations from the line suggest some prediction errors, the overall pattern confirms that the model effectively captures and explains variations in employee engagement.

4.3.2 Final Regression Model After Forward Stepwise Elimination

After running the comprehensive regression model, a forward stepwise elimination procedure was applied to remove non-significant variables and retain only those that made meaningful contributions to explaining employee engagement. This process ensures a more parsimonious and statistically robust model by focusing on the most influential predictors.

The final model, presented in Table 9, identifies five significant predictors: Organisational Restructuring Efforts, Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement), Age (45–54), Interaction Effect, and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS Index).

Table 9 Final Regression Model

Employee engagement	Coefficient	P value	95% conf.	
Organisational Restructuring Efforts	1.743	0.000	1.565	1.921
Pre Restructuring	-0.641	0.000	-0.766	-0.516
Age 45–54	0.146	0.014	0.030	0.262
POS & PSS Mediation	-0.039	0.002	-0.064	-0.014
PSS	0.127	0.043	0.004	0.250
_cons	-0.296	0.076	-0.623	0.031

Adj R² = 0.9016 → 90% of the variation in engagement is explained by the included predictors.

The final regression model highlights the most critical variables influencing employee engagement at the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) following the organisational restructuring process.

Organisational Restructuring Efforts remains the strongest and most significant predictor of employee engagement ($\beta = 1.743$, $p < 0.001$). Employees who viewed restructuring as transparent, fair, and beneficial were substantially more engaged. This finding reinforces the importance of communication, clarity, and employee involvement during organisational change.

Pre-restructuring (Planning & Announcement) shows a negative and highly significant effect ($\beta = -0.641$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that inadequate preimplementation planning or lack of consultation can diminish employee engagement. Poor communication prior to restructuring appears to have created uncertainty and reduced employees' enthusiasm toward the process.

Age (45–54 years) has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.146$, $p = 0.014$), suggesting that mid-career employees tend to be more engaged during restructuring.

This could reflect their experience, adaptability, and vested interest in organisational success.

The Interaction Term ($\beta = -0.039$, $p = 0.002$) indicates a significant moderating effect, implying that the relationship between restructuring perception and engagement is influenced by another variable, possibly the interplay between organisational and supervisory support. The negative direction suggests that as the interaction effect increases, the strength of the positive relationship between restructuring perception and engagement slightly decreases, pointing to complex interdependencies among support mechanisms.

Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS Index) is positively associated with engagement ($\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.043$), confirming that employees who feel supported by their supervisors remain more motivated and connected during organisational change. Supervisory guidance and empathy thus act as vital buffers against restructuring-related stress. The constant term is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.296$, $p = 0.076$), suggesting that baseline engagement is slightly below average when all predictors are held constant, but this has limited interpretive value.

The final model explains employee engagement more efficiently by isolating the strongest predictors. The results show that positive perceptions of organisational restructuring, adequate supervisory support, and demographic maturity (age 45–54) significantly enhance engagement levels, while poor pre-restructuring communication and complex interaction effects reduce it.

Overall, this model underscores that employee engagement during organisational change is primarily driven by how employees perceive the restructuring process and the degree of interpersonal support they receive from supervisors. These findings

support Organisational Support Theory (PSS and POS), which emphasise that transparent communication and supportive leadership are crucial for maintaining engagement during transitions.

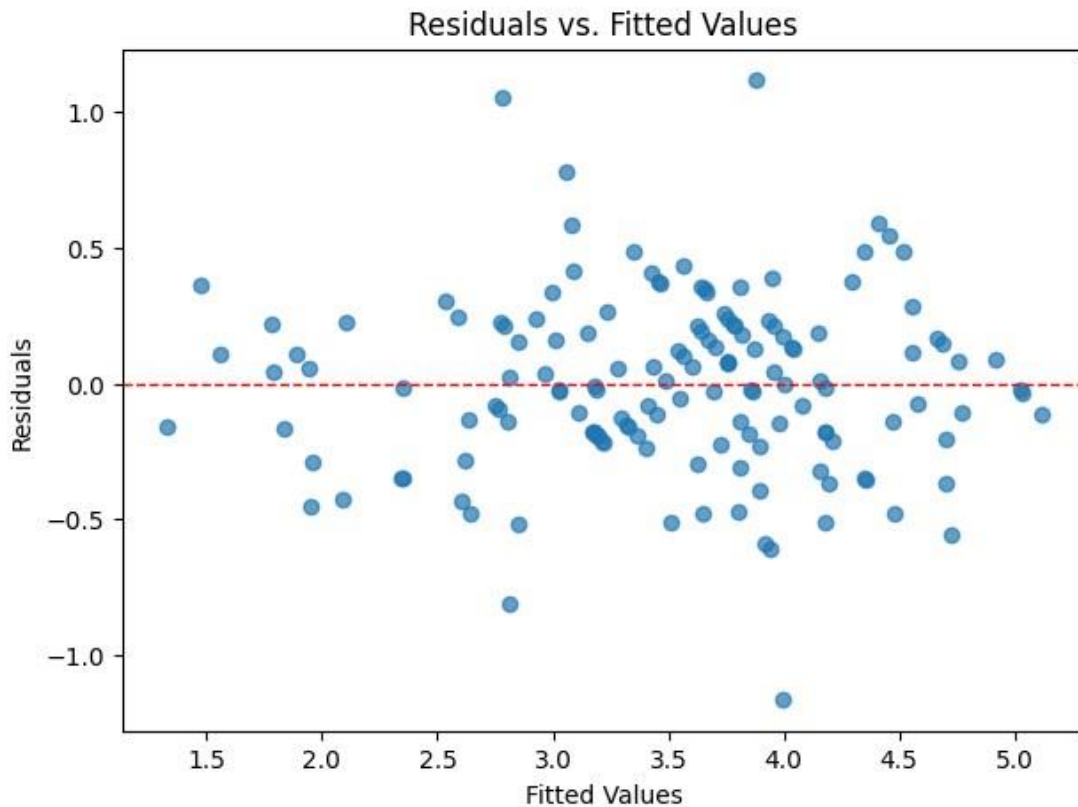


Figure 10 Residuals vs. Fitted Values

Figure 4.7: Residuals vs. Fitted Values

Figure 4.7 presents the residuals versus fitted values plot used to assess the assumption of homoscedasticity in the regression model. The residuals are randomly dispersed around the zero line, with no clear pattern or systematic trend. This randomness indicates that the variance of the errors is constant across all levels of the predicted values, suggesting that the model meets the assumption of homoscedasticity. The absence of clustering or curvature further implies that the model is appropriately specified and that there are no major issues with non-linearity or model bias.

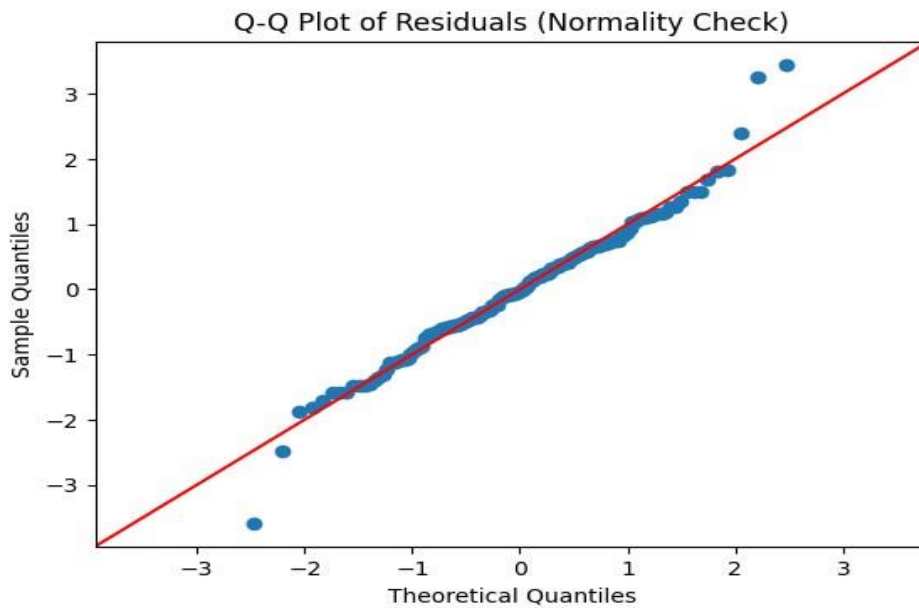


Figure 11 Q-Q Plot of Residuals (Normality Check)

Figure 4.8: Q-Q Plot of Residuals (Normality Check)

Figure 4.8 illustrates the Q-Q (quantile-quantile) plot, which examines whether the residuals are normally distributed. The data points closely follow the red diagonal line, indicating that the residuals align well with the theoretical normal distribution. Only minor deviations appear at the tails, which are acceptable in practical regression analysis. This pattern suggests that the normality assumption is reasonably satisfied, confirming that the residuals are approximately normally distributed and that the model's parameter estimates and significance tests are valid and reliable.

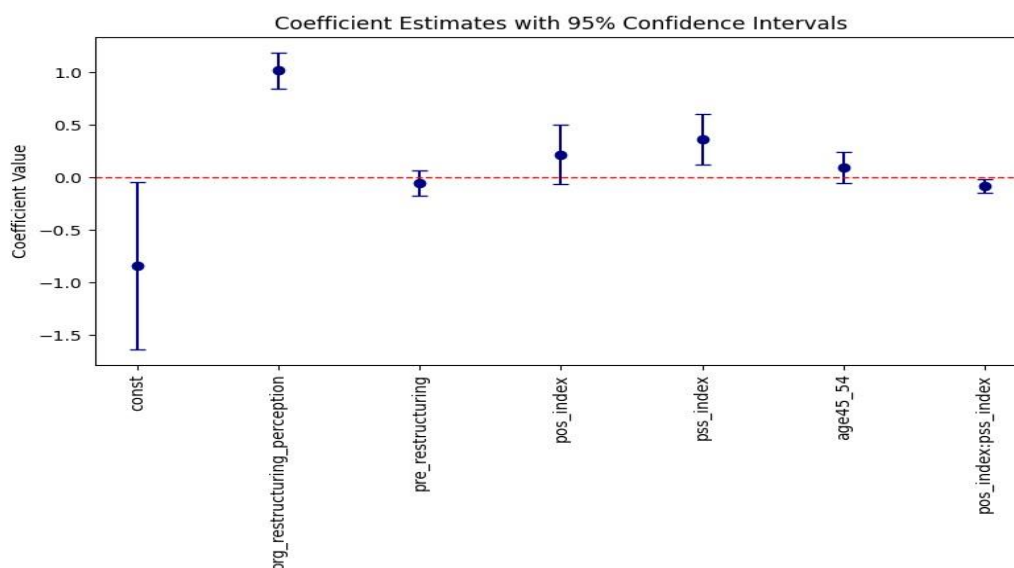


Figure 12 Coefficient Estimates with 95% Confidence Intervals

Figure 4.9: Coefficient Estimates with 95% Confidence Intervals

The graph shows coefficient estimates with 95% confidence intervals, indicating the direction and significance of each predictor's effect on employee engagement. The red dashed line at zero marks the threshold for significance coefficients whose intervals do not cross it are statistically significant. Among the predictors, organisational restructuring effort has a strong positive and significant effect, suggesting that favourable perceptions of restructuring are associated with higher engagement. Other variables pre-restructuring perceived organisational support index, perceived supervisor support index, age 45-54, and perceived organisational support index. The Perceived supervisor support index has coefficients close to zero with confidence intervals crossing the reference line, indicating non-significant effects. The negative constant suggests lower baseline engagement when all predictors are zero.

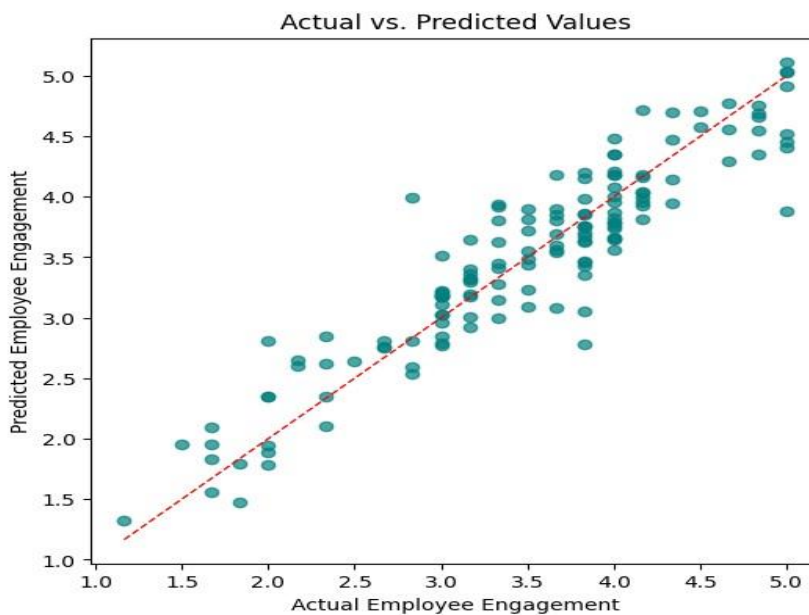


Figure 13 Actual vs. Predicted Values Plot

Figure 4.10: Actual vs. Predicted Values Plot

Most points cluster relatively tightly around the line, particularly for actual engagement values above 3.0. This suggests the model generally performs well, indicating a strong fit for the data. However, there is some scatter, especially at lower actual engagement values (below 2.5), which means the model has a harder time accurately predicting very low engagement scores, where the predictions tend to be higher than the actual values.

4.3.3 Final Mode Multicollinearity Diagnostics

To ensure the reliability of the final regression model and to confirm that the predictor variables were not excessively correlated, a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis was conducted. The Variance Inflation Factor test identifies whether multicollinearity or strong intercorrelation among independent variables could bias or inflate the estimated coefficients. A Variance Inflation Factor value greater than 10 is typically considered indicative of serious multicollinearity, while values below 5 are generally acceptable. The results for the model predictors are presented in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for Final Model Variables

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Organisational Restructuring Effort	9.680	0.103
Pre- restructuring	5.500	0.182
Age 45–54	1.070	0.932
Interaction	9.480	0.106
PSS	5.960	0.168
Mean VIF	6.34	

The results in Table 10 above indicate that multicollinearity is within acceptable limits across the predictors in the final model.

The mean Variance Inflation Factor value of 6.34 suggests a moderate level of correlation among predictors but not high enough to distort the regression estimates. The highest Variance Inflation Factors are observed for Organisational Restructuring Efforts (9.68) and the Interaction Term (9.48). Although these approach the upper limit of concern, they remain below the critical threshold of 10, implying that their inclusion in the model does not introduce significant multicollinearity bias. Other predictors, such as Pre-restructuring (5.50) and PSS Index (5.96), show moderate correlation, which is acceptable given their conceptual interrelatedness in explaining engagement dynamics. The Age (45–54) variable demonstrates a low Variance Inflation Factor of 1.07, confirming that demographic factors are largely independent of the restructuring and support-related constructs.

The Variance Inflation Factor analysis confirms that the predictors in the final model are sufficiently independent, and the model's regression estimates are statistically

reliable and interpretable. The multicollinearity diagnostics reinforce the robustness of the final regression model. Despite moderate associations between restructuring perception and its interaction term, no predictor exceeds the Variance Inflation Factor threshold, indicating that the model's coefficients can be interpreted with confidence. Therefore, the retained predictors Organisational Restructuring Efforts, Prerestructuring Communication, Age (45–54), Interaction Term, and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) contribute uniquely and meaningfully to explaining variations in employee engagement.

4.3 Qualitative Insights

4.3.1 Employees' lived experiences and perception of the organisational restructuring process

This section presents the results from the qualitative responses obtained from six open-ended survey questions focusing on employees' experiences and perceptions of the restructuring process at Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). Through thematic analysis, five major themes emerged: (1) Communication and Transparency, (2) Emotional Impact and Morale, (3) Supervisory Support and Leadership Behaviour, (4) Employee Involvement and Voice, and (5) Recommendations for Supportive Strategies.

4.3.2 Theme 1: Communication and Transparency

A predominant concern raised by employees related to unclear and inconsistent communication during the restructuring process. Respondents noted delays in information dissemination, lack of clarity regarding placement decisions, and limited access to reliable updates. Comments such as "Lack of clarity towards end of the process" and "Communication towards the end of placement yet others were already placed" reflect perceived inequities in how information was shared. Many employees also mentioned that communication breakdowns fueled anxiety, confusion, and mistrust.

Transparent and timely communication is a crucial determinant of engagement during organisational change. The findings suggest that inconsistent messaging from management weakened trust and hindered employees' ability to adapt effectively

4.3.3 Theme 2: Emotional Impact and Morale

Several employees highlighted emotional distress, low morale, and uncertainty as dominant challenges. Respondents described feeling "demotivated", "unsupported", or "fearful of supervisors". Some linked the restructuring to "mental fatigue" and

“emotional strain,” while others referred to “loss of crucial functions” or “fear of demotion.”

The restructuring process elicited strong emotional reactions, suggesting a gap in psychological and emotional support systems. The theme aligns with Organisational Support Theory (OST), indicating that diminished perceptions of care and stability reduce engagement and well-being during change.

4.3.4 Theme 3: Supervisory Support and Leadership Behaviour

Supervisory relationships emerged as a defining factor influencing engagement. Some employees described positive experiences such as “timely updates and open communication,” while others cited “lack of empathy”, “bullying behaviour”, and “supervisors who were emotionally drained or defensive.” Perceptions of supervisory support varied significantly across departments.

This theme reinforces the mediating role of Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) in sustaining engagement during restructuring. Supportive supervisors served as buffers against stress, while unsupportive behaviours amplified disengagement and uncertainty.

4.3.5 Theme 4: Employee Involvement and Voice

Respondents frequently expressed frustration about limited participation in decision making. Many felt excluded from placement and role adjustment discussions, as reflected in statements like “My voice did not matter” and “There should have been more representation from employees.” Others noted that their input was neither sought nor valued.

Employee involvement is a vital component of perceived organisational support. The lack of participatory mechanisms contributed to feelings of marginalisation, eroding employees’ sense of ownership and engagement with the restructuring process.

4.3.6 Theme 5: Recommendations for Supportive Strategies

When asked for strategies to better support staff, participants emphasized change management training, counselling, and wellness initiatives. Common suggestions included the following

“Introduce wellness and emotional support programs.”

“Offer transparent communication and proper placement guidelines.”

“Implement a change management function.”

“Provide assurance of job security and equal treatment.”

Employees desire structured support systems during organisational change. This theme highlights the need for proactive interventions such as employee wellness programs, leadership coaching, and transparent communication frameworks to enhance engagement and resilience.

4.3.7 Summary of Qualitative Insights

The qualitative analysis underscores that employee engagement during restructuring is deeply influenced by communication quality, supervisory relationships, emotional well-being, and perceived organisational fairness. Overall, the findings support the quantitative results, reinforcing the importance of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) as critical drivers of engagement during organisational change

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter examined how organisational restructuring at EWSC relates to employee engagement, integrating descriptive statistics, correlations, regression models, and thematic insights. Overall engagement was moderate (mean ≈ 3.46) and broadly consistent across most demographic and organisational groups; notable differences appeared only where employees had input into restructuring and perceived work changes positively.

Quantitatively, the evidence strongly supports H1 which posits that more positive perceptions of restructuring are associated with higher engagement. Correlations between engagement and restructuring phases were high, and regression models both the parsimonious and final stepwise models showed organisational restructuring efforts as the strongest predictor ($\beta \approx 1.74$, $p < .001$). At the same time, weak pre-restructuring communication/consultation was consistently linked to lower engagement ($\beta \approx -0.64$, $p < .001$). The final model explained about 90% of the variance in engagement, and Variance Inflation Factor diagnostics indicated no problematic multicollinearity.

With respect to mediation, findings provide partial support for H2 and clear support for H3. Perceived support variables mattered: Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS) was a positive, significant contributor and part of a significant interaction/mediation

pathway, indicating that supportive supervisors help sustain engagement during change. The combined POS–PSS term and the interaction effect were significant (negative direction), suggesting a complex, partial mediation in which support perceptions modify the strength of the restructuring engagement link; effects were stronger and more consistently positive for PSS than for POS in this context.

Qualitatively, five themes, communication and transparency, emotional impact, supervisory support, employee voice, and supportive strategies corroborated the statistical results. Employees reported that clear, timely communication, visible, empathetic supervision, and genuine opportunities to participate reduced anxiety and strengthened commitment; gaps in these areas eroded trust and morale.

In sum, Chapter 4 shows that at EWSC, how restructuring is perceived and communicated, and the quality of supervisory support are decisive for maintaining engagement. These results affirm H1, partially affirm H2, and affirm H3, and they set the stage for Chapters 5 and 6 to discuss implications for change governance (communication, participation, leadership behaviours), practical support systems (wellness and change-management capability), and avenues for future research.

Chapter Five - Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets and contextualises the findings of the study in relation to its objectives, hypotheses, and the reviewed literature. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, the discussion explores how organisational restructuring at the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) influenced employee engagement, and how this relationship was mediated by perceptions of organisational and supervisory support.

The discussion is grounded in Organisational Support Theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al., 2020) which in the context it comes as perceived support from both organisation and supervisors. This together explain how perceived fairness, care, and communication from both the organisation and its leaders foster trust and engagement during times of change.

This chapter integrates statistical findings with employees' lived experiences to highlight both the structural and psychological dimensions of restructuring. In doing so, it builds a bridge between organisational design and human behaviour, showing that change success depends not only on strategy and efficiency but also on the quality of relationships and support systems throughout the transition.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

5.2.1 The Impact of Organisational Restructuring on Employee Engagement

The first research hypothesis (H1) proposed that employees' positive perceptions of organisational restructuring are positively associated with employee engagement. The quantitative results strongly support this hypothesis. Across all models, Organisational Restructuring Efforts emerged as the most powerful and statistically significant predictor of engagement ($\beta = 1.743$, $p < 0.001$).

This finding affirms that when employees perceive restructuring as transparent, fair, and beneficial, they are more likely to remain motivated and aligned with organisational goals. Conversely, negative perceptions such as uncertainty, poor communication, or exclusion from decision-making undermine engagement.

This result aligns with Albrecht (2021) and Rasool et al. (2021), who emphasised that organisational change often triggers anxiety and disengagement when not supported by clear communication. However, it also echoes Mishra et al. (2020), who found that positive framing of restructuring through participative communication can convert initial resistance into long-term commitment.

At EWSC, engagement levels were moderate ($M = 3.46$), suggesting employees retained a fair degree of motivation despite challenges. This resilience could reflect institutional loyalty common in public utilities, as noted by Khalid and Ahmed (2022), who observed that employees in essential service sectors often remain committed to mission-driven organisations even amid structural upheaval.

Demographic results further refine this picture. The 45 to 54 age group showed slightly higher engagement ($\beta = 0.146$, $p = 0.014$), consistent with Mladenova (2022), who found that mid-career employees, possessing both experience and adaptability, often cope better with change. The absence of significant gender or regional differences suggests that engagement is influenced less by fixed demographic traits and more by the perceived quality of management processes and communication.

Thus, H1 is fully supported: employee engagement at EWSC is significantly shaped by how employees interpret and experience the restructuring process.

5.2.2 The Role of Perceived Organisational and Supervisory Support

The second and third hypotheses addressed the mediating role of perceived organisational support (POS) and perceived supervisory support (PSS). The quantitative results show a partial mediation effect, providing partial support for H2 and full support for H3.

In Model 2, POS had a small negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.135$, $p = 0.013$), while PSS was positively and significantly related to engagement ($\beta = 0.221$, $p = 0.022$). This pattern persisted through the final stepwise model, where PSS ($\beta = 0.127$, $p = 0.043$) remained significant, while POS dropped out. These results indicate that supervisory support rather than organisational-level support plays the dominant mediating role in maintaining engagement during restructuring.

This aligns with Perceived Supervisor Theory, which posits that the quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates determines employee

commitment and discretionary effort (Probst et al., 2020). When supervisors exhibit empathy, fairness, and openness, they foster trust that counteracts restructuring-related uncertainty.

Qualitative insights reinforce this. Employees described supervisors as either “communicative and reassuring” or “unsupportive and fearful,” reflecting sharp contrasts in leadership effectiveness. These differences were decisive in determining morale and engagement, supporting Rafferty and Minbashian (2019) and Astuti and Helmi (2021), who found that supportive leadership can buffer negative emotions during organisational transitions.

In contrast, perceived organisational support showed inconsistent influence. Employees often viewed institutional responses as slow or symbolic, echoing Aldabbas et al. (2023), who warned that organisational support can lose credibility if communication lacks follow-through. This discrepancy highlights a crucial insight: frontline supervisors embody the organisation in employees’ eyes; thus, trust in supervisors often substitutes for trust in abstract organisational systems.

Overall, these findings show that while organisational policies provide structure, it is supervisory behaviour that breathes life into engagement. Perceived Supervisor Support emerges as both a mediator and amplifier of organisational intentions, a result consistent with Eisenberger et al. (2020) and Charoensap-Kelly et al. (2023), who argue that relational support determines whether employees perceive change as opportunity or threat.

5.2.3 Employee Participation and Change Communication

Employee participation and transparent communication were consistently identified as central to engagement. Quantitatively, employees who “strongly agreed” that they had input in the restructuring reported higher engagement (mean = 4.18, $p < 0.001$), yet this effect diminished when other variables entered the model ($\beta = 0.027$, $p = 0.722$). This suggests that participation alone is not enough; it must be authentic, sustained, and coupled with follow-through.

Qualitative responses supported this interpretation. Many employees stated, “our voices did not matter,” indicating that symbolic consultation without genuine influence breeds frustration. This resonates with Cameron and Freeman (2021) and Jerab &

Mabrouk (2023), who emphasise that procedural justice and perceived fairness in communication are stronger engagement drivers than mere inclusion.

In line with Kotter's (2012) model of change, this finding highlights that meaningful participation anchored in transparent, two-way dialogue creates ownership, while tokenistic involvement undermines trust.

Therefore, at EWSC, communication and participation were decisive psychological factors shaping engagement, mediating how employees perceived the legitimacy of the restructuring process.

5.2.4 Emotional and Psychological Effects of Restructuring

The qualitative results revealed that restructuring at EWSC had substantial emotional and psychological consequences. Employees frequently reported fear, demotivation, and mental fatigue, reflecting the emotional burden of uncertainty. Comments such as "we were demotivated" and "communication was inconsistent" underline the human cost of structural reform.

This finding parallels Backhaus et al. (2024) and Farrell et al. (2024), who found that change fatigue, anxiety, and perceived injustice significantly undermine engagement in public sector contexts. Emotional distress, when unaddressed, triggers disengagement and turnover intentions (Gui et al., 2021).

In contrast, employees who received emotional reassurance and empathetic supervision remained more resilient. This reinforces Organisational Support Theory's core principle that employees interpret support as a signal of their worth, which shapes their motivation to reciprocate through engagement and performance.

As McManus et al. (2025) observe, "change management succeeds not through process compliance but through emotional containment." Thus, EWSC's restructuring outcomes demonstrate that psychological well-being is a strategic prerequisite for engagement, not an ancillary concern.

5.2.5 Integrating Organisational Support Theory (OST) in the EWSC Context

The EWSC case confirms that Organisational Support Theory applies meaningfully in developing-country public utility settings. Employees' perceptions of care, fairness, and recognition proved central to engagement, even when tangible resources were

limited. In resource-constrained contexts where financial incentives are less flexible, non-monetary signals of support (communication, empathy, fairness) become critical engagement levers.

This extends prior work by Eisenberger et al. (2020) and Aldabbas et al. (2023), demonstrating that perceived relational support can substitute for material support in maintaining morale. The study also bridges Organisational Support Theory with perceived supervisor support, showing that supervisors act as the organisational interface through which employees experience care.

Accordingly, trust, fairness, and communication emerge as the emotional infrastructure underpinning restructuring success. The results suggest that EWSC can strengthen engagement not primarily through technical redesign but through cultivating supportive social exchange relationships that embody Organisational Support Theory's reciprocity principle.

5.3 Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Insights

Both data strands converge on a unified conclusion: employee engagement during restructuring is perception-driven and relationally sustained.

Quantitatively, the models explain up to 90% of engagement variance (Adj. $R^2 = 0.90$), with no evidence of harmful multicollinearity (Mean VIF = 6.34).

Qualitatively, five dominant themes, communication, emotional impact, supervisory support, employee voice, and supportive strategies mirror these findings.

Together, they portray an organisation undergoing structural evolution while grappling with psychological adaptation. Employees valued clarity, fairness, and empathy more than procedural change. The results therefore humanise restructuring: the success of structural transformation depends on emotional coherence as much as operational efficiency.

5.4 Implications for Theory and Practice

Theoretical Implications

This study makes three contributions to theory:

1. Validation of H1–H3: Positive restructuring perceptions (H1) and supervisory support (H3) significantly enhance engagement, while joint mediation through support variables (H2) is partial but meaningful.
2. Extension of Organisational Support Theory demonstrates the theory's relevance in a developing-country, service-sector context, where emotional and relational cues compensate for material constraints.
3. Integration with Perceived Supervisor Support confirms that supervisors embody the organisation, translating institutional intentions into daily engagement signals.

Practical Implications

The findings for Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC) and similar organisations suggest several actionable strategies for enhancing employee engagement during restructuring processes. First, institutionalizing transparent communication at every stage of restructuring planning, implementation, and post integration is critical for sustaining trust. Open and honest communication mitigates uncertainty and reassures employees about organisational intentions, which fosters greater confidence and commitment.

Second, empowering supervisors through targeted leadership development is essential. Training programs that enhance supervisors' empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution skills enable them to provide personalized support and guidance. This reinforcement of supervisor capability strengthens their role as effective organisational agents who can address employee concerns compassionately and constructively.

Third, implementing genuine participation mechanisms in decision-making processes ensures employees can meaningfully influence outcomes and observe

tangible results from their contributions. Such inclusive practices cultivate a sense of ownership and reduce resistance, fostering collaboration and engagement.

Further, establishing emotional support systems such as counseling services, peer support circles, and wellness programs addresses the psychological strain employees often experience during organisational changes. Providing these outlets promotes mental well-being and resilience, helping employees cope with stress and maintain productivity.

Moreover, continuous monitoring of employee engagement using pulse surveys focused on fairness, clarity, and supervisor support creates an ongoing feedback loop. This enables swift identification of emerging issues and adaptive management responses, reinforcing a culture of openness and responsiveness.

In conclusion this leads to advocating that resource-constrained utilities such as EWSC to develop emotional support capacity through focused leadership development, peer networks, and participative culture. This approach reframes support from being a purely policy-driven function to a proactive relational strategy, emphasizing storytelling, recognition rituals, inclusive dialogue, and emotional literacy as cost-effective, yet powerful tools.

By implementing these integrated strategies, EWSC can transform organisational restructuring from a potentially disruptive event into an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, trust, and engagement across its workforce. This approach not only supports employees through change but also builds a more resilient and motivated organisational culture poised for future success.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that employee engagement during organisational restructuring at EWSC is driven less by structural design than by perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and support. Employees who felt heard, valued, and guided by their supervisors remained committed; those who felt ignored or inadequately supported disengaged.

By aligning future restructuring efforts with Organisational Support Theory which posits the perceived supervisor and organisational support principles, EWSC can

foster an environment where change is co-created rather than imposed, turning uncertainty into opportunity.

Ultimately, communication, trust, and care are not peripheral to restructuring; they are its foundation.

Chapter 6: Summary, Contributions and Future Directions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive synthesis of the entire study, drawing together its aims, research questions, methodology, major findings, and scholarly contributions. It situates the research within broader academic and organisational debates and outlines both theoretical and practical implications. The discussion further highlights how the findings contribute to advancing understanding of the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement, particularly within a public utility context such as the Eswatini Water Services Corporation (EWSC). Finally, the chapter concludes by identifying areas for future research, proposing how subsequent studies might build upon the insights generated here.

The purpose of this chapter is therefore to demonstrate how the study's findings collectively respond to the research objectives and hypotheses and to emphasise its originality in bridging theoretical frameworks such as Organisational Support Theory (OST) and perceived support with the empirical realities of organisational transformation in developing economies.

6.2 Overview of the Study

This study set out to investigate the impact of organisational restructuring on employee engagement, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Perceived Supervisory Support (PSS). The research was motivated by the need to understand how employees' perceptions of fairness, inclusion, and support shape their engagement during a restructuring

process. The context of the Eswatini Water Services Corporation provided a particularly meaningful setting, as the organisation was undergoing substantial change aimed at modernising its structure, improving efficiency, and adapting to both internal and external pressures such as financial sustainability and post-pandemic operational shifts.

Organisational restructuring is often seen as a necessary strategy to improve performance and competitiveness, yet it is equally recognised as one of the most disruptive experiences for employees. Previous studies have documented that restructuring can lead to anxiety, uncertainty, and disengagement if not properly managed. However, relatively little research has been conducted in public sector environments in Africa, where structural change is constrained by bureaucratic systems and limited resources. By focusing on EWSC, this study fills an important gap, offering both theoretical and practical insights into how change processes can be managed to maintain employee commitment, morale, and engagement in a service-oriented public institution.

6.3 Research Context and Theoretical Foundation

The Eswatini Water Services Corporation is a critical public utility responsible for water provision and sanitation management across multiple regions of Eswatini. In 2024 and 2025, the organisation underwent a major restructuring process intended to streamline operations, improve decision-making efficiency, and respond to financial and service delivery challenges. These changes included departmental mergers, role redefinitions, and management realignment all of which had direct implications for employees' job security, workload, and perceptions of organisational fairness.

Organisational Support Theory (OST) provided the conceptual anchor for this study. The theory posits that employees form beliefs about how much their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being, and that these perceptions strongly influence attitudes and behaviours such as engagement, loyalty, and performance (Eisenberger et al., 2020). The study also drew upon perceived support, which emphasises the quality of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates as a determinant of employee motivation and trust. Together, these frameworks offer a robust lens for understanding how both organisational-level and interpersonal-level support mechanisms shape employees' responses to change.

In addition, the research recognised the unique features of restructuring within a public utility setting. Unlike private organisations, EWSC operates under both public accountability and social responsibility mandates. Thus, the consequences of disengagement extend beyond internal performance to the delivery of essential services to communities. Understanding engagement in this context is not only a human resource management concern but also a matter of national interest, linked to the sustainability of public service delivery.

6.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

Three main research questions guided the study. The first asked; What is the relationship between organisational restructuring and employee engagement? The second examined how perceptions of organisational and supervisory support mediate that relationship. The third explored how employees experience and interpret the restructuring process. These questions were grounded in three hypotheses derived from the reviewed literature.

The first hypothesis (H1) proposed that positive perceptions of organisational restructuring are positively associated with employee engagement. The second (H2) posited that perceived organisational and supervisory support jointly mediate the relationship between restructuring and engagement. The third (H3) suggested that perceived supervisory support independently mediates the same relationship. Together, these hypotheses were designed to capture both the structural and psychological dimensions of organisational change and to identify how employees' perceptions of support shape their emotional and behavioural responses.

6.5 Research Design and Methodological Overview

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design situated within the positivist paradigm. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from validated measurement scales relating to organisational restructuring, perceived organisational support, perceived supervisory support, and employee engagement. The instrument also included demographic and contextual variables that allowed for more detailed analysis of how engagement levels varied across departments, regions, and tenure groups.

A cluster sampling approach was adopted, using departments as natural clusters to ensure proportional representation of the workforce. Out of a target population of 244 employees directly involved in restructuring activities, 147 completed questionnaires were received and deemed valid for analysis, representing a strong response rate of 67 percent. The reliability of all constructs was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.74 and 0.93, indicating high internal consistency. Data analysis was conducted using Python programming language (version 3.10), employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques. Multicollinearity was assessed through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), which confirmed the independence and robustness of the predictor variables.

Although the research design was primarily quantitative, a small number of openended questions were included in the survey to capture qualitative insights into employees' lived experiences of restructuring. These responses were thematically reviewed to enrich interpretation of the statistical findings and to contextualise employee perceptions within the broader organisational culture of EWSC.

6.6 Summary of Key Findings

The results demonstrated that employees' perceptions of organisational restructuring have a significant and positive effect on engagement levels. The relationship was both strong and statistically significant, confirming that when employees perceive restructuring as fair, transparent, and well managed, their commitment and motivation increase. Conversely, poor communication and limited consultation during the planning and announcement phase had a negative effect on engagement, suggesting that the process by which change is introduced matters as much as its content.

The regression analyses showed that perceived supervisory support (PSS) played a crucial mediating role, significantly enhancing engagement during restructuring. Supervisors who communicated openly, demonstrated empathy, and provided reassurance helped sustain morale even amid uncertainty. In contrast, perceived organisational support (POS) exhibited a weaker and sometimes negative effect, implying that broad institutional assurances were less influential than direct interpersonal relationships in shaping employees' emotional responses. The mediation model confirmed that PSS partially mediated the relationship between

restructuring perception and engagement, underscoring the importance of frontline leadership in times of change.

Further analysis revealed demographic patterns: employees aged 45–54 years exhibited higher engagement, likely due to their experience and resilience, while engagement differences across departments, gender, and regions were minimal. Employees who reported having input in restructuring decisions displayed significantly higher engagement than those who felt excluded, reinforcing the link between participation, fairness, and commitment.

6.7 Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

The findings affirm the central propositions of Organisational Support Theory, which suggests that when employees perceive genuine care and fairness from their organisation, they reciprocate through positive attitudes and discretionary effort.

However, this study also extends Organisational Support Theory by demonstrating that in contexts like EWSC, where formal resources are limited, emotional and relational forms of support especially from supervisors become the most critical determinants of engagement. This indicates that the application of Organisational Support Theory in resource-constrained public sector environments should account for the predominance of social rather than material exchanges.

Moreover, the findings lend support to perceived supervisory support theory by highlighting the pivotal role of supervisory relationships in shaping engagement outcomes. Supervisors serve as the direct link between management and employees; their behaviour can either amplify or undermine organisational intentions. The results suggest that high-quality supervisor – subordinate relationships characterised by trust, empathy, and communication act as a buffer against the psychological strain of restructuring. Thus, employee engagement during organisational change is not simply an individual-level response but a relational process built on perceived support and trust.

6.8 Practical Contributions

Beyond its theoretical implications, the study makes several practical contributions relevant to organisational leaders, human resource practitioners, and policy-makers. First, it demonstrates that effective restructuring is as much a human process as it is

a technical one. For EWSC, this means that the success of structural reforms depends not only on the rational design of new systems but also on how these changes are communicated, implemented, and supported.

The results underscore the need for open, consistent, and transparent communication throughout all stages of restructuring. When employees are well informed, their sense of uncertainty diminishes, and their trust in management increases. Moreover, involving employees in planning and decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and fairness, which in turn strengthens engagement.

Another key practical implication concerns the development of leadership capabilities at the supervisory level. The evidence indicates that supervisors are instrumental in maintaining engagement; therefore, training programmes should be instituted to enhance their emotional intelligence, communication skills, and ability to manage change empathetically. Establishing formal employee support mechanisms such as wellness programmes, counselling services, and feedback platforms would also help mitigate emotional fatigue and sustain morale.

Finally, the study suggests that public institutions such as EWSC can enhance service delivery by embedding engagement and support frameworks within their broader change management strategies. Doing so will not only improve employee well-being but also enhance organisational resilience and performance.

6.9 Scholarly Contributions and Broader Significance

This study makes a substantive contribution to organisational behaviour and change management literature in three keyways. First, it empirically validates Organisational Support Theory within a developing-country public utility, demonstrating that its principles hold true even in resource-constrained settings. Second, it differentiates between organisational-level and supervisory-level support, showing that the latter exerts a stronger influence on engagement during restructuring. This nuanced understanding adds depth to the existing body of knowledge and opens avenues for integrating Organisational Support Theory with relational leadership theories. Third, the research enriches the discourse on public sector reform by foregrounding employee perceptions, thereby challenging traditional top-down approaches to restructuring.

In broader terms, the findings contribute to ongoing debates about how engagement can be sustained during change. They suggest that successful restructuring depends not only on structural efficiency but also on emotional intelligence and relational trust. This insight has implications beyond EWSC, offering guidance to other African public enterprises undergoing similar transformations.

6.10 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While the study achieved its objectives, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design captures perceptions at a single point in time, making it difficult to infer causality or observe how engagement evolves after restructuring. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to track changes in employee attitudes over time. Additionally, while the focus on EWSC provides valuable contextual insight, it limits generalisability. Comparative studies across multiple utilities or sectors could test the robustness of the findings and reveal contextual differences.

Further research should also explore the interaction between organisational culture and support perceptions, examining how cultural factors shape responses to change. Moreover, experimental or intervention-based studies could test the effectiveness of targeted support initiatives, such as leadership training or communication frameworks, in improving engagement during restructuring. Finally, qualitative case studies could provide richer insights into the lived experiences of employees in similar contexts, deepening understanding of the emotional dimensions of organisational change.

6.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that the success of organisational restructuring depends not solely on the technical redesign of structures but on the quality of human relationships that sustain the organisation through change. At EWSC, employees who perceived restructuring as fair, inclusive, and supported by empathetic supervisors demonstrated higher levels of engagement and resilience. Conversely, poor communication, limited participation, and lack of visible support eroded trust and morale.

The findings reaffirm that engagement is both a rational and emotional response to organisational life, grounded in perceptions of care, fairness, and respect. They highlight that even in contexts of uncertainty and constraint, organisations can foster commitment through transparent communication, participative practices, and supportive leadership. By aligning restructuring processes with the principles of Organisational Support Theory, EWSC and similar institutions can transform periods of upheaval into opportunities for renewed engagement, trust, and collective growth.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire

The Impact of Organizational Restructuring on Employee Engagement at EWSC

Dear Participant, I am conducting research on the impact of organizational restructuring on employee engagement at Eswatini Water Services Corporation. To that end, you are asked to complete a survey relating to my topic. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. Your participation is anonymous, and only aggregated data will be reported. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participated in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or myself. Our details are provided below:

1. Dorcas Dlamini (Researcher) - 24082572@mygibs.co.za or dorcassd927@gmail.com or dorcas.dlamini@ewsc.co.sz
2. Olivier John (Supervisor) - Olivierjo@gibs.co.za

Section A: Demographic Information

Please select the most appropriate option from the drop-down menu.

1. **Department ***

- Business Enablement
- Strategy and Digitalization
- Customer Management
- Operations
- Technical Services
- Finance
- MD's Office

2. **Gender**

- Male

Female

Prefer not to say

3. Region

North

Northwest

Southwest

Central

HQ

East

4. Age

Under 25

25–34

35–44

45–54

55 and above

5. Length of service at EWSC *

Less than 1 year

1–3 years

4–6 years

7–10 years

More than 10 years

6. Position in the Corporation

Leadership Team Member

Management Member

Extended Management

Supervisory Level

Officer

Section B: Organizational Restructuring

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

7. Organizational Restructuring Statements

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
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Section C1: Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

8. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) Statements *

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | | | | |
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Section C2: Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

9. Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS) Statements *

- | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
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Section D: Employee Engagement

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

10. Pre-Restructuring (Planning & Announcement):

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11. During Restructuring:

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- 11.3 The training and development provided helped me adjust to the restructuring.
- 11.4 The restructuring positively/negatively impacted my team dynamics.

12. Post-Restructuring

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
- 12.1 My role responsibilities and expectations are clear now, following the restructuring.
- 12.2 The restructuring has impacted my job satisfaction positively/negatively.
- 12.3 I am more motivated to perform my job now compared to before the restructuring.
- 12.4 I feel a stronger sense of belonging to my team and the organization now than before the restructuring.
- 12.5 My position in the organizational structure clearly defines my role and responsibilities.
- 12.6 The level of my position within the organization influences my involvement in decision-making processes.

Section E: Open-Ended Questions

13. What do you think were the biggest challenges of the restructuring process? *
14. What could EWSC have done differently to support staff during restructuring? *
15. What strategies should EWSC do to support staff during restructuring? *
16. Any additional comments on how restructuring has affected your engagement
17. How supported did you feel by your supervisor during the restructuring process? *
18. Please describe how your supervisor supported or did not support you during the restructuring process *

Appendix 2 Table Study - Questionnaire sections

Questionnaire Section	Description
1. Department	Identifies the department of the respondent within the organisation (e.g., Operations, Finance, Technical Services).
2. Gender	Gender of the respondent (Male, Female, Prefer not to say).
3. Region	Geographic region of the respondent's workplace (e.g., North, HQ, East).
4. Age	Age group of the respondent (e.g., Under 25, 25-34, 35-44, etc.).
5. Length of Service at EWSC	Respondent's duration of employment at EWSC (e.g., less than 1 year, 1-3 years, more than 10 years).
6. Position in the Corporation	Role level/category of the respondent (e.g., Leadership Team, Management, Staff).

Study

<p>7. Organisational Restructuring Statements</p>	<p>Perceptions about the restructuring process, including awareness, impact on work responsibilities, communication clarity, input opportunity, and perceived improvement in performance.</p>
<p>8. Perceived Organisational Support (POS)</p>	<p>Employees' views on how much the organisation values their contributions, considers their goals, shows concern for their well-being, and supports them during restructuring.</p>

Questionnaire Section	Description
9. Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)	Employee perceptions of supervisor support regarding value recognition, well-being concern, pride in accomplishments, and support during restructuring.
10. Pre-restructuring Planning Announcement	Assessment of communication clarity, information accessibility, and feedback channels before restructuring implementation.
11. During Restructuring	Evaluation of role clarity, manager support, training availability, and the impact on team dynamics during restructuring.
12. Post-restructuring	Assessment of role clarity, job satisfaction, motivation, sense of belonging, role definition, and decision-making involvement after restructuring.
13. Biggest Challenges of Restructuring Process	Open-ended responses on perceived main challenges faced by employees during restructuring (e.g., uncertainty, role adjustments).
14. Support Needed During Restructuring	Suggestions by employees on what the organisation could have done differently to support staff (e.g., phased approach, time allowance).

15. Strategies to Support Staff	Recommendations for strategies to aid staff during restructuring (e.g., training plans, phased execution, emotional support).
16. Additional Engagement Comments	Open feedback on how the restructuring affected employee engagement positively or negatively.

Questionnaire Section	Description
17. Supervisor Support Level	Employee ratings of how supported they felt by their supervisors during restructuring.
18. Supervisor Support Description	Qualitative feedback describing ways supervisors supported or failed to