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# About the Journal

## JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation Review and Advancement* is to provide a forum for community engagement and outreach.

## CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Sociologists, demographers, psychologists, development experts, planners, social workers, social engineers, and economists, among others whose focus is on community development.

## JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

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## SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of community outreach and engagement. Communities are both defined in terms of people found in a given locale and defined cohorts, like the children, the youth, the elderly and those living with a disability. The strongest view is that getting to know each community or sub-community is a function of their deliberate participation in matters affecting them by the community itself. The journal is produced bi-annually.

# Guidelines for Authors for the Ngenani Journal

Articles must be original contributions, not previously published and should not be under consideration for publishing elsewhere.

**Manuscript Submission:** Articles submitted to the *Ngenani - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Community Engagement and Societal Transformation* are reviewed using the double-blind peer review system. The author's name(s) must not be included in the main text or running heads and footers.

**A total number of words:** 5000-7000 words and set in 12-point font size width with 1.5 line spacing.

**Language:** British/UK English

**Title:** must capture the gist and scope of the article

**Names of authors:** beginning with the first name and ending with the surname

**Affiliation of authors:** must be footnoted, showing the department and institution or organisation.

**Abstract:** must be 200 words

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# WORKFORCE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF ZIMBABWE

NICOLE K CHAWATAMA<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*This study focused on assessing the impact of workforce diversity on employee engagement at the National Railways of Zimbabwe. The consistent world changes raised by factors, such as globalisation, new technology development and the increase in migration movements, have generated an increasingly diversified workforce. A diversified workforce is an important organisational resource, regardless of whether the goal is to be an employer of choice, to provide excellent customer service or to maintain a competitive edge. The data used in this research was acquired from a sample of 30 respondents who represented various departments and, from the data that was collected using Likert scale questionnaires, the researcher discovered that there is a statistically significant positive relationship in elements such as gender and age diversity on the engagement of employees. Workforce diversity is an element that should not be overlooked in the functions of an organisation because it is a crucial aspect that can affect the engagement of employees. Organisations are not operating in a vacuum, hence an organisation operating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must acknowledge that the business world is changing and the calibre of employees that are being hired in organisations.*

**Keywords:** *employee, engagement, gender, age diversity, workforce mobility, millennial*

## INTRODUCTION

The world of work is gradually evolving because of high workforce mobility that has promoted a coalition of diverse individuals with different backgrounds in the modern-day working environment. This has posed major concerns in contemporary organisations in a bid to

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sustain competitiveness (Agrawal, 2016). It has called for organisations to embrace employee differences in championing the cause of sustainable growth of their entities. This means that in the ever-changing business world, characterised by stiff competition, employees have emerged as the sole competitive advantage for many organisations due to their inimitability. Hence organisations that value and embrace diversity, have managed to inculcate a high sense of creativity and innovation in their employees, leading to high organisational performance and a distinct competitive edge over its rivals (Kerga and Asefa, 2018).

Because of increased differences in the workplace in terms of gender and age, organisations are finding it hard to cope with diversity practices in managing and sustaining highly engaged employees (Marcus and Gopinath, 2017). One must observe that keeping diverse employees engaged in the workplace is a complex task that requires top management to pay particular attention to individual differences and devise effective measures to satisfy their diverse needs. The National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) is not immune from these adverse effects of workforce diversity. The awareness of diverse management is quite limited at the NRZ because of the patriarchal African culture that promotes gender and age imbalances.

## **BACKGROUND**

Employee engagement is defined by Santos (2017) “as the passion, energy or motivation that influences work-related activities”. When employees are actively engaged, they exert that discretionary effort that has a bearing on the quality of work that they produce. Employee engagement is a crucial aspect that affects both the organisation and the employees, resulting in researchers, such as Narayanan (2018), acknowledging the fact that the lifespan of an organisation is influenced by the level of engagement with the employees. The more employees are engaged, the more an organisation can last in this ever-changing business environment (Downey, 2015). Osborne (2017) revealed, that only 13% of employees in the world are actively engaged at work, which should be a major cause of concern for all the businesses. His research also showed that disengaged employees make

up almost twice the employees who are engaged and that disengaged employees are end up turning to deviant behaviours. A survey carried out by industrial psychology consultants in 2016 revealed that only 34% of the workers in Zimbabwe are engaged. The employees of an organisation contribute to the success of any organisation, hence there is need to determine ways of engaging the workforce to be creative and being profitable in the business environment.

Narayanan (2018) states that old workers in an organisation are often a stigmatised group and that affects their identity in the organisation and influences their level of engagement. The stigmatisation of old workers has led to research revealing that these employees exhibit lower engagement levels. However, a study carried out by Lapoint and Liprie-Spence (2017) revealed that employees that were satisfied with their colleagues younger than 40 and older than 55 years of age also tended to report greater engagement. If employees are subjected to discrimination because of their age, it might affect the way they work because they will not be comfortable engaging in the activities of the organisation. The old employees are associated with lower productivity most of the time, resulting in them being stigmatised whereas they can work despite their ages.

Moreover, old employees are stereotyped mostly because they are associated with an increase in health problems as they age, which affects their output as argued by Busolo (2017). Old employees are perceived to be unable to adapt to changes in technology and, at the end of the day, are associated with poor returns. Macdonald and Levy (2016) revealed that old employees want to secure their jobs because it is difficult for the old generation to be employed in new organisations, so one has no choice but to be engaged. Old employees might have no choice but to be engaged because they have much to lose by leaving the present organisation since they would be about to retire.

In contrast, employees who are new entrants tend to be stereotyped as “job hoppers” as revealed by research carried out by Agrawal (2016), because younger employees have ample options when it comes to the career paths they can explore. As a result, generation Y workers tend



to have lower engagement compared to generation X and baby boomers who are associated with loyalty to the organisation. This shows how different generations perceive the workplace because generation Y is driven by curiosity and the drive to explore compared to other generations that have established themselves in their careers, hence the differences in the levels of engagement are noticed.

Furthermore, apart from age affecting the engagement levels of employees, Marcus and Gopinath (2017) suggest that as employees grow older they have fewer opportunities to attain employment elsewhere, apart from the organisation that they are serving, which leads to them valuing their current place of employment (Rizwan *et al.*, 2016). Hence this study revealed that employees are highly engaged when they reach the age of 60 compared to when they were younger. Most of the time, the old generation would have acquired the skills that make them relevant in that particular organisation. For example, an employee at the NRZ cannot use the skills they acquired as a train driver in many places in Zimbabwe. Hence, their skill is limited and customised and it becomes difficult for them not to be engaged because they have no other choice than to be engaged if they are working.

#### **THE EFFECTS OF GENDER ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

Garg (2014) asserts that gender differences have been found to determine an employee's engagement level in the organisation. The issue of who is more engaged, male or female, is a controversial issue leading to research being conducted by researchers such as Narayanan (2018), who reveal that male employees in the manufacturing industry are relatively more highly engaged within the workplace than female employees. This could be because of different aspects that include stereotyping and female employees not being given equal opportunities to advance themselves in the organisation. However, Rizwan *et al.* (2016) asserts that organisations that had mixed gender were found to be performing extremely well compared to organisations that had homogenous gender groups. This might be true considering that society views women as inferior. It is hard for women to advance because it has been a norm that a woman's place in society

is specialising in domestic chores rather than a boardroom. Hence women might end up facing challenges when they are working because they would be stereotyped which might affect the way they work and get disengaged in the process.

Further, Industrial Psychology Consultants (2016) reveal that board compositions in companies in Zimbabwe is male-dominated. Their research showed that in executive positions. Mutangi (2016) has acknowledged that women are represented mostly in lowly paid and low-skilled occupations as those jobs happen to be characterised by low job security. This contrasts with males who happen to have a large representation in all the spheres of the job, from executive positions to lowly paid jobs in the organisation. Hence this can reflect how, in some research, it is found that women are more engaged in their workplaces. It can be attributed to women having to work hard when they want to be part of executive positions. However, Nair and Vohra (2015) acknowledge that it is not the case that female employees are discriminated against in the workplace, but that female and male employees in organisations happen to be treated equally in the workplace and there are no “exceptions” when it comes to that. The research also argues that in organisations, male and female employees are competing for similar jobs because companies are operating in a global environment that promotes the equality of all genders. Hence one can say that both men and women are engaged in the workplace because they get equal opportunities in the workplace and can work well together.

A report that was written by Mutangi (2016) for UNICEF reveals that in Zimbabwe, men are earning more than their woman counterparts for the same job. The Global Gender Gap Report (2018) shows that Zimbabwe ranks number 71 out of 115 countries in terms of wage differences between females and males in an organisation. This reveals that women are still facing hurdles in the industry because of the

inherent patriarchal societal beliefs that have also been practised in organisations. Fapohunda (2016) alludes to the view that existing social norms have affected the way women work by stating how women should act and spend their time. This has led to women, particularly in Zimbabwe, being undervalued. This view shows the discrepancies between females and males in organisations, which may have an impact on how women and men are engaged.

#### **THE BENEFITS THAT AN ORGANISATION STANDS TO GAIN FROM AN ENGAGED WORKFORCE**

Agrawal (2016) is of the notion that employees that are engaged are more inclined to stay in the organisation than leave it. That can provide employees with opportunities to contribute to the work that they are doing. Adding on. Nair and Vohra (2015) assert that employees actively engaged in an organisation are said to be a “key ingredient” when an organisation needs to maximise its productivity. One should realise that engaged employees have the basic knowledge of key activities in the business and how to attain favourable results in those activities. When employees are engaged, they are attached emotionally and work with a passion in advancing the mission, vision and goals of that firm.

A firm that has an engaged workforce stands to enhance its organisational image by keeping its talented employees from leaving the organisation. Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) posit that an engaged workforce impacts the organisation positively by portraying the image of an ideal and responsible company. In most instances, if an organisation is an employer of choice, most people would want to be associated with it, even the employees in the organisation are proud to be working for that particular organisation, leading to increased productivity, the ultimate goal that must be attained in a firm.

An engaged employee provides improved services and benefit both the individual and the organisation (Osborne, 2017). Engaged

employees are associated with profitability, customer loyalty and business growth which is the aim of organisations at the end of the day. Itam (2018) indicates that a study carried out by Tower Watson on 50 companies revealed that organisations that had an engaged workforce experienced a 19% increment in share price, compared to the firms that had low engagement levels. Companies that low engagement levels had a drop in their share price by a margin of 32%. Rizwan *et al.* (2016) suggest that when employees are engaged, they are more likely to have feelings of satisfaction with their current occupation in the organisation. When they possess these traits, employees are motivated to improve their performance, by exceeding their set targets and will be persuaded not to leave the organisation in the long run.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY**

The Social Exchange Theory was propounded by Homans in 1958. The theory predicts that in “reaction to positive initiating actions, targets will tend to reply in kind by engaging in more positive reciprocating responses and fewer negative reciprocating responses” Cropanzano, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2014). Employees who feel appreciated in the organisation will perform well and if they are not treated well, they will retaliate and show signs of deviant behaviour. This theory is based on a relationship between two individuals through a cost-benefit analysis.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework is a concept that assists in clarifying the research that is being undertaken (Dickson, Adu-Agyem and Emad Kamil, 2018). The conceptual framework is going to be premised on the notion that workforce diversity is an independent variable that influences employee engagement. Employee engagement is going to be

a dependent variable in the research. The moderating variable in this study is going to be culture, which may be a dominant factor in the structure of the organisation in terms of age and gender.

### **RESEARCH APPROACH**

The quantitative research approach was used in the study. Silverman (2013) asserts that the deductive approach develops a hypothesis from a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it. The study used a cross-sectional research design. The researcher carried out the study at the NRZ to find out the influence of workforce diversity on employee engagement. The target population were employees in managerial and non-managerial positions at the NRZ Headquarters in Bulawayo.

The sample size of 30 employees for this research, including managerial and non-managerial staff, was extracted from the headquarters of NRZ because of ease of accessibility. Probability sampling was used in the study because, in a population, every item has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Hemed, 2015). The sampling technique used is the simple random sampling technique.

The researcher used a questionnaire to conduct the research. The research was based on structured questionnaires. The reason the study was based on a structured questionnaire was because a structured questionnaire is quantitative in nature and quantitative data needed to be utilised to get quantitative output that is going to be used for data analysis (Maponga, 2015). The study's questionnaire was guided by a Likert scale questionnaire.

The validity of the research design was measured using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Validity is a critical aspect of research as it addresses issues to do with the quality of the

research design and how accurate, clear and concise it must be. Reliability is when results in a quantitative study are found to be having attributes of consistency and stability (Heale and Twycross, 2015). The results in the study must be consistent in identical situations. In this study, data was checked using Cronbach's Alpha which is calculated using the SPSS software. The researcher used the Likert scale questionnaire for the respondents in that the questions will be structured the same way, and the respondents will be given the same amount of time to answer the questions.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	N of Items
.719	.654	9

Reliability testing was done in this research using the SPSS 23 software. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in SPSS 23 was utilised to determine the reliability of the Likert scale questionnaire used. Cronbach's Alpha is used in most studies as a way of determining the consistency of the instrument. Taherdoost and Group (2017) state that for a research instrument to be considered in the category of high reliability, it must fall in the range 0.70 to 0.90. The questionnaire used in this research totalled 0.719 Cronbach's Alpha which shows that the research questionnaire is reliable.

Table 2 illustrates the reliability of each instrument per construct. The lowest item in the table has a value of 0.646 and the highest is 0.738. The reliability of these constructs is positive as it ranges between moderate and high in the context (Taherdoost and Group, 2017).

**Table 2: Total Item Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
What is your gender?	27.97	17.606	.075	.232	.734
What is your age?	26.14	10.695	.618	.748	.646
What is your current level of education?	26.03	11.606	.601	.476	.647
Indicate the range of years you have been working in the organisation.	26.69	11.436	.738	.742	.610
Female employees who perform better are promoted.	26.10	15.596	.258	.222	.720
Employee engagement promotes organisational growth.	24.86	16.623	.311	.336	.710
Employee engagement increases the profitability of the organisation.	24.93	15.924	.493	.456	.691
Employee engagement reduces labour turnover.	24.90	15.882	.428	.283	.695
The policies in the organisation necessitate equality in terms of gender	27.41	18.394	-.161	.136	.738

### FACTOR ANALYSIS

A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) and Bartlett's factor analysis test was done. The adequacy test showed that it was 0.705, falling in the range that is satisfactory for this particular study. The significance level is 0.001, showing a significant value. The significance value should be <0.5 and the results of the factor analysis show that the significance is satisfactory.

**Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.705
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	669.277
	Df	15
	Sig.	.001

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

**Table 4 Gender composition**

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Female	17	56.7	56.7	56.7
Male	13	43.3	43.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The gender composition of the respondents who answered the questionnaires distributed particularly for managerial and non-managerial staff at the NRZ showed that 57% of the respondents are female employees and 43% are male. There are more female than male employees which might mean that more women are getting opportunities to work in the organisations. Even though women are found in the workplace, they happen to be occupying low positions (Sathyanarayana and Nair, 2018).



### THE AGE OF THE EMPLOYEES

Generation Y employees range from 19 to 39 years of age. Employees aged in the range 18-24 years account for 16.7%. Those in the millennial generation are in the range 25-35 years (13%). Generation X employees comprises those aged from 40 to 54, followed by the Baby Boomers who are in the age range of 55 to 75 years. In the railways, the baby boomer generation (56- 60 years) in this research makes up 20% of the population. These results show that there is a representative of each generation at the NRZ making it diversified.

### THE CURRENT LEVEL OF EDUCATION

**Table 5 Level of Education**

Valid	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Ordinary level	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
Advanced level	6	20.0	20.0	26.7
Diploma	8	26.7	26.7	53.3
Degree	8	26.7	26.7	80.0
Post Graduate Qualification	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The questionnaire intended to find out the current level of education possessed by employees in the NRZ. Results show that 6.7% of the employees have an Ordinary Level certificate and 20% have an A Level certificate. While 26.7% of the employees have a Diploma, the same percentage (26.7%) as those of the employees who possess degrees. A fifth (20%) of employees have a postgraduate qualification.

### INDICATE THE RANGE OF YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE ORGANISATION

The study intended to find out the number of years that employees have been in the company. Almost seventeen percent (16.7%) of the employees have been working for one to five years, followed by 27% of the employees who have worked for six to 10 years. Most the

employees have been working in the organisation for more than 10 years. Some employees (23%) have been with the company for 11-20 years and 33% of the employees have been working for 21-25 years. The employees who have been working for a few years in the organisation could be the new entrants in the organisation.

### **OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS**

The research used the SPSS version 23 to do cross-tabulation to see the relationship between the variables to be researched. The researcher cross-tabulated the variables that were found to be reliable by Cronbach's Alpha on SPSS 23 in Table 2. The researcher followed the order of the set objectives and the questionnaire to get accurate results.

SPSS 23 was used to establish the relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. The questionnaire directed a question to the employees where they were supposed to indicate whether they found it hard to bond with their colleagues from different generations. The results show that 14 (47%) employees agree that they find it hard to bond with other age groups. Of those 14 employees, four (13%) of them, who are the majority, are millennials. Three of the employees from the population were neutral, meaning they were not sure whether they find it hard or easy to bond with other age groups at work. Twelve (40%) of the employees disagree that they find it hard to work with others and only one (3%) strongly disagreed that it is difficult to be bonding with other employees from different generational backgrounds. These results are consistent with Deloitte (2019), who did a study on the engagement of millennials in the workplace, revealing that millennials found it hard to bond with the older generation in the workplace. Five (17%) of the employees in the age range 18-24 agree that they find it hard to relate to the older generation. This could be because of the way the different generations are socialised. Younger employees have the zeal to explore and were brought up in an environment where they can embrace change easily

whereas the older generation is believed to be loyal and committed to their organisation. Hence employees tend to associate themselves with other similarities.

**Table 6: Emotional conflicts caused by generational differences**

What is your age	Emotional conflicts caused by generational differences				Total
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
18-24	1	0	3	1	5
25-35	1	0	2	1	4
36-45	3	1	3	0	7
46-55	4	1	2	1	8
56-60	2	0	4	0	6
Total	11	2	14	3	30

The relationship between age and emotional conflicts that may occur was established using SPSS. Fourteen (47%) employees agreed that there are emotional conflicts that are caused by differences in age. Three (10%) strongly agreed, two (7%) were neutral and 11 (37%) employees disagreed that there is a relationship between the two. Most of the employees agreed that there are emotional conflicts which means that different generations behave in different ways that could contribute to employees not understanding how to relate to others. This concurs with Kerga and Asefa (2018) who show that, if there are emotional conflicts in the organisation, it affects the level of engagement of employees.

**Table 7: Female employees who perform better are promoted**

What is your gender	Female employees who perform better are promoted				Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Female	1	3	6	7	17
Male	0	2	3	8	13
Total	1	5	9	15	30

From the questionnaire, 15 (50%) employees agreed that female employees who performed better in the organisation were promoted at work, nine (30%) were neutral, five (17%) disagreed and only one(3%) respondent strongly disagreed. These results are constant with Nair and Vohra’s (2015) research that states that in the workplace, male and female employees are treated fairly. Hence, this research reveals that female employees getting opportunities to advance themselves might contribute to them being engaged in the organisation. Sathyanarayana and Nair (2018) corroborate the results of this research stating that male and female employees are given the same platform to compete for open vacancies in the organisation.

**Table 8: Employee engagement promotes organisational growth**

What is your gender	Employee engagement promotes organisational growth			Total
	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Female	0	10	7	17
Male	1	4	8	13
Total	1	14	15	30

The results show that 15 (50%) respondents strongly agreed and 14 (47%) agreed that employee engagement promotes organisational growth. Only one respondent disagreed with this statement. This shows that when employees are engaged, they tend to channel their energy into making the organisation successful. This is consistent with the results from Rizwan *et al.* (2016) who reveal that even if an organisation is facing economic challenges the organisation can grow, as long as the employees are engaged.

**Table 9: Employee engagement increases profitability of the organisation**

		Employee engagement increases profitability of the organisation		Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	
What is your gender	Female	9	8	17
	Male	7	6	13
Total		16	14	30

The next question was whether employee engagement can be said to increase an entity’s profitability. From the responses, SPSS showed that 16 (53%) people agreed and 14 (47%) strongly agreed that an organisation's profitability is enhanced by the engagement of employees. This is consistent with the Gallup report conducted of companies in the 500 Fortune that showed that companies that had an engaged workforce realised an increment in terms of the profits.

**Table 10: Employee engagement reduces labour turnover**

What is your gender		Employee engagement reduces labour turnover				Total
		Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
	Female	0	1	7	9	17
	Male	1	0	6	6	13
Total		1	1	13	15	30

This cross-tabulation reveals if employee engagement reduces labour turnover. From the responses obtained, 13 (43%) agreed and 15 (50%) strongly agreed that if employees are engaged, they are less likely to leave the organisation. One respondent (3%) was neutral, and another one disagreed with the statement. Research conducted by Bibi (2016) shows that when employees are engaged in the organisation, they tend to be committed and loyal and tend to think less of leaving the organisation.

## REGRESSION

Regression analysis refers to a method that is used to establish a relationship that exists between two or more variables (Schaufeli, 2018). The analysis was conducted to assess the relationship found between workforce diversity and employee engagement. The regression analysis is based on Pearson regression where  $P < 0.005$  and  $R > 0.5$ , signifying the strength between correlations in the study. The analysis is going illustrated using linear graphs showing the regression equation based on the equation  $y = a + bx$ . In this particular equation,  $Y$  represents the dependent variable and is a value linked to  $Y$  when  $X = 0$  and  $b$  in the equation represents the slope of the line.

**Table 11: Regression Analysis**

*Regression analysis for factors of workforce diversity and employee engagement*

### Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 <sup>a</sup>	.566	.224	.223

*a. Predictors: (Constant), BOE5, BOE4, BOE3*

*b. Dependent Variable: FWD4*

The relationship found between the variables tested how policies used in an organisation can influence employee engagement. The model summary shows that there is a positive strong relationship because the value of  $R^2$  is 0.566. ANOVA test shows the significance level of the relationship that is found between policies in the organisation and employee engagement. The statistically significant value of  $P$  is 0.022 of that  $P > 0.05$ . This shows that there is a relationship between these two variables. The coefficients table was then used to determine the significance level of the different variables that determine engagement in an organisation. The relationship that exists between the two concurs with the study conducted by Shifnas and Sutha (2016). If an organisation wants to reduce factors like labour turnover and increase

its profitability, then there is need to adjust the policies in the organisation to accommodate different employees.

**REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR AGE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT**

SPSS 23 tested the coefficients and showed a strong relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. The value of  $R^2$  is 0.270, showing a 27% difference between the two variables, the significance level is 0.024. The coefficients are constructed using the **B** section to show the regression equation  $y = a + bx$ . The dots in Figure 1 are seen to be dotted on the line, which shows a significantly strong relationship between these two variables. The results concur with results from research by Surekha (2019) that revealed that the engagement of employees in the organisation depended on their age. The older generation seemed to have lower levels of engagement during the course of their career but when they are close to retirement age, their engagement levels would be high.

**Table 12: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.520 <sup>a</sup>	.270	.044	.777

a. Predictors: (Constant), AGE4, AGE1, AGE3, AGE2

b. Dependent Variable: BOE1

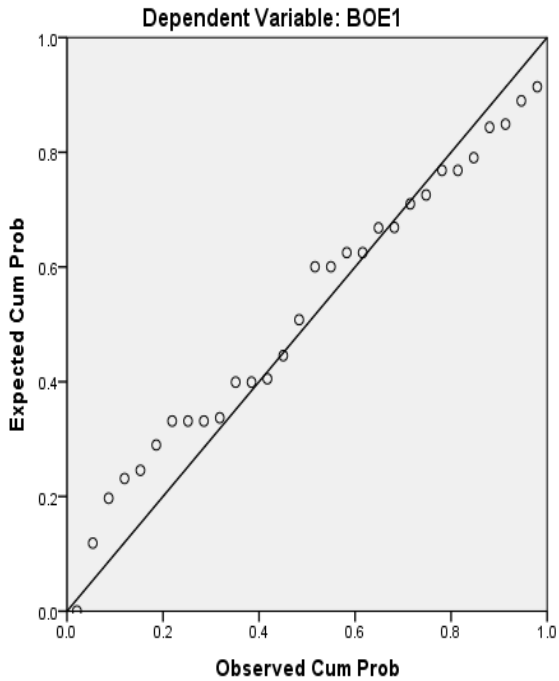
**Table 13: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.223	4	.806	1.336	.024 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	15.077	25	.603		
	Total	18.300	29			

a. Dependent Variable: BOE1

b. Predictors: (Constant), AGE4, AGE1, AGE3, AGE2

### Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



**Figure 1**

#### *REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR GENDER DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT*

The model summary reveals the relationship between gender and employee engagement. It shows that  $R^2$  is of the value 0.584, which shows a positively strong relationship. The ANOVA test showed that there is a significance level of 0.001, giving a reason for acknowledging that there is a relationship between gender diversity and employee engagement. The coefficients table shows the different constructs under gender diversity and employee engagement and their significance. The results show that if female employees are given a chance to perform in the organisation, they are competitive. If female employees are not presented with the opportunities to perform in the organisation it can affect their engagement levels, leading to negative



outcomes such as absenteeism, high labour turnover and low productivity. The other factors that affect the engagement of female employees are factors (GEE3, GEE4, GEE5 and GEE6) that have significance levels of 0.002, 0,005 and 0,065. B values are 0.068, 0.81 and 0.006, respectively, which shows the regression line in Figure 2. This shows that there is a relationship between gender diversity and employee engagement using the regression equation formula  $y = a + bx$ . The graph shows the dotted lines that are close to the line in the graph showing a positive strong relationship between the variables.

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

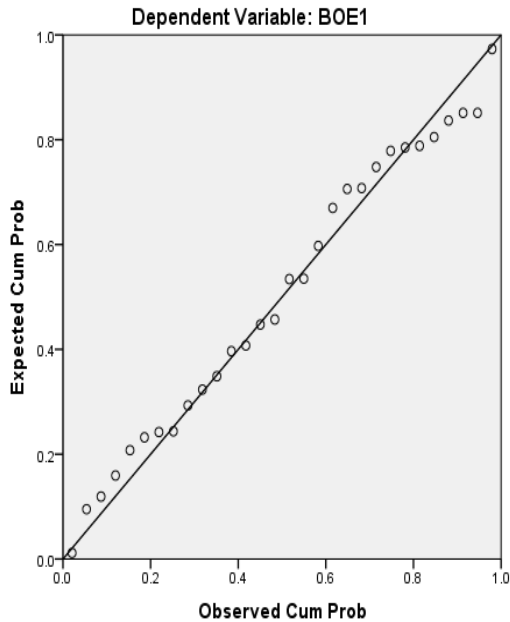


Figure 2  
Table 14 Hypothesis Test Summary

Dependant Variable	Independent variable	Significance	Accept/ Reject
Gender diversity	Employee engagement	0.001	Accept
Age Diversity	Employee engagement	0.284	Accept
Diversity policies	Employee engagement	0.022	Accept

## FINDINGS IN ORDER OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### *WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT?*

The research intended to find out the nature of the relationship between age diversity and employee engagement. From the results analysed by SPSS 23, employees at the NRZ find it hard to associate with employees in different generations, 47% finding it difficult to bond with others which makes it most the respondents compared to the 40% of the employees who disagreed. Despite having a small difference (7%), significantly, employees at the NRZ find it hard to be engaged in the workplace. The findings also show that emotional conflicts caused by the differences in age are existent in the organisation. Nearly half (47%) of the respondents agreed that there were emotional conflicts in the organisation that could have had a direct impact on their engagement at work. Age diversity and employee engagement were regressed and the results showed a strong positive relationship between the two. This shows that, if age diversity in the organisation is not managed well, it can influence the engagement of employees at the NRZ.

The research also revealed that female employees who perform better in the organisation are being promoted. From the results, 50% of the respondents, comprising female and male employees, concurred that at the National Railways of Zimbabwe, employees are given opportunities to be promoted when they perform better in the organisation. In the questionnaires issued, 60% of the respondents acknowledged that female employees are competitive in their work roles. This shows that female employees can perform in the organisation despite their gender. There is a relationship that exists between gender and employee engagement because when employees are given opportunities for advancement, they tend to be actively engaged in their work roles.

The results show that the organisation can experience organisational growth from engaged employees. Respondents strongly agreed (46%) and 50% of them agreed that the organisation stood to have

organisational growth if employees were engaged. This is because when employees are engaged, they expend discretionary efforts at work. To add on, if employees are actively engaged, the organisation was bound to experience low labour turnover. This is shown through the results showing that 54% agree and 47% of the respondents strongly agreed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *GENDER EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES*

The National Railways of Zimbabwe can benefit from investing in gender empowerment programmes. These programmes help to reduce gender inequalities between men and women, which promotes productivity and efficiency within the organisation. This can be done through training because knowledge is power. The organisation can find ways of up-skilling or doing a cross skill to redefine roles and merge them into the broader scope of the work.

Entrusting individuals to small or big projects can be a way of empowering an employee. Letting an individual be accountable for their decisions can help them learn from their own mistakes and help the individuals if they need help.

This is because, as much as women who perform better are being promoted, there is need to have equal representation of men and women in the boardroom setup. Female employees in the organisation are found to be in lower-level occupations, whereas in managerial positions, women are less. The organisation can gain from having different perspectives from either female or male employees being incorporated into board positions and enhance its brand as well.

### *DIVERSITY TRAINING*

The National Railways of Zimbabwe needs to conduct diversity training initiatives for its employees. This is because the employees indicated that there is much stereotyping when it comes to gender and age diversity in the organisation. Hence employees will find it hard to be engaged when stereotyping is rampant in the organisation.

Employees need to know how to co-exist to achieve the mission, vision and goals of the entity.

### ***CULTURE CHANGE***

The organisation needs to formulate initiatives to change the culture of the organisation. The entity must acknowledge that the business is evolving, affecting the operations of the organisation also in terms of its human resource. Diversity exists because different people coexist in the organisation, hence the way that employees are engaged tends to differ.

### ***REVIEW OF POLICIES IN THE ORGANISATION***

The organisation needs to review its policies to accommodate its employees to keep abreast with the changes in terms of its workforce. When the organisation reviews its policies, the organisation stands to gain from it if they capitalise on finding ways of keeping its diversified employees engaged and integrating with the business objectives at the same time.

### ***RECOGNISING DIVERSITY AND IMPLEMENTING ANTI-OPPRESSIVE AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES INTO PRACTICE IN THE ORGANISATION.***

The management of the National Railways of Zimbabwe needs to have a buy-in into the policies that embrace diversity and equality to influence employees to embrace it. A code of ethics should be established that recognises that the workforce is multi-dimensional in terms of age and gender.

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