

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Chum Ka Fong Stephen	Student ID number:	1812894
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Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

initiate and complete tasks, projects and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively, to a professional level; that you can use appropriate media to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms for a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

- Paper Presentation - you are required to deliver a professional presentation that would be worthy of an academic conference. You should present the important information from your research proposal, including the abstract, research questions, research philosophy, literature review, description of context and participants, explanation of data collection steps, explanation of data analysis, preliminary findings, discussion that emerged from findings, and personal reflection.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
Critique of literature	20	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
Understanding of research paradigms, approaches and methodologies	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
Analysis of literature	20	
Ability to develop a coherent, realistic qualitative project.		
4. Practical Application Skills		
Choice and justification of data collection methods	20	
Development of an achievable qualitative project		

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		
Presentation skills – visuals	20	
Presentation skills – general		
Writing in academic English		
Ability to write and present an academic article		
Referencing		

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (50% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

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Part I – Evaluation of Current Qualitative Research

Title

A Qualitative Investigation of Employee Business Awareness

Introduction of a Chosen Article

The title of a chosen article for evaluation is “A Qualitative Investigation of Employee Business Awareness” written by Haines III, Rousseau, Brotheridge and Saint-Onge (Haines III et al., 2012, pp. 73-87) based on their qualitative research study. This article was published on the journal of Personnel Review with the impact factor of 1.362 in 2018.

The purpose of the article was to examine the contents relating to the concept of Employee Business Awareness (EBA) which the authors thought that it was critical in decision-making and problem-solving process for those non-managerial employees in their mutual investment employment relationships organisations (subject and context). By applying an inductive approach of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a research methodology and Critical Incident Technique as an interview protocol during the interview, 20 interviews were conducted and 81 distinct incidents were discovered in which 35 elements allocated in 3 emerged themes of Employee Business Awareness were finally established.

Critique on Research Question and Objectives

The part of core research question, sub-questions or corresponding objectives was one of the major problems in this article. It was because other than the purpose of the study and its context and subject mentioned in the article as above, there was no core research question and its objectives to further describe explicitly in the article. According to the article of Larkin and Thompson (2012, p. 103), core research question and the corresponding objectives were essential for any qualitative research study, particularly in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), since they could help the readers to focus on what the experience that the qualitative research studied and understand the specific group of people in a specific context. It was also very hard to justify the validity of data collected, the suitability of methodology and sampling applied, as well as generalisation,

transferability, dependability and confirmability of the findings if no core research question and objectives guided in the study. Based on the advices in the article of Larkin and Thompson (2012, p. 103), Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014, p. 9) and also with reference to the ultimate findings of the article, a core research question and its objectives could be suggested for the article as below:

- RQ. How do non-managerial employees in mutual investment employment relationships organisations experience Employee Business Awareness (EBA) during their decision-making and problem-solving processes?
- OB1. To identify and examine the important external environment factors, internal business criteria and strategic business directions that non-managerial employees in mutual investment employment relationships organisations would recognise during their decision-making and problem-solving processes
- OB2. To analysis and discuss the consequences that mutual investment employment relationships organisations could encountered when their non-managerial employees having EBA in their decision-making and problem-solving processes

Critique on Research Philosophy and Theoretical Perspective

Theoretical Perspective –

Since the purpose of the article was to understand the subjective experiences and perceptions of the participants for the concept of Employee Business Awareness (EBA), so a concept of Social Constructivism interpretive framework was held in the article in order to interpret those constructive meanings obtained from the participants (Creswell and Poth, 2018, pp. 82-83).

Ontology –

From the philosophical point of view, the authors of the article reviewed some literatures which pointed out the importance and necessities of Employee Business Awareness (EBA) in different business situations including employee engagement, employee involvement and self-managing decision-making or problem-solving, work and knowledge continuous improvement target of employees, etc. All these articles did try to answer some ontological questions including the definition of EBA, its functions in different business processes and situations, the important external

environment factors, internal business criteria and strategic business directions when practicing EBA as well as the consequences of EBA in each particular business circumstance. However, based on the Relativism point of view, the authors reported that findings and business implications in the article should be relatively different based on the changes of specific contexts and subjects in the study (e.g. non-managerial employees and mutual investment employment relationships organisations). At this point, the authors provided sufficient ontological discussions from different perspectives in the article for those readers to follow (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 61).

Axiology –

From the axiological perspective, the article showed that the authors did involve personally in the study in order to understand the subjective experiences and perceptions of non-managerial employees (subject) in the specific context (mutual investment employment relationships organisations) on the concept of Employee Business Awareness (EBA). To achieving this, some in-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to build up a conceptual framework of the concept based on the authors' own interpretations of values obtained from the interviewing participants. As such, the methodology of study, selected interviewees, data collection and interpretation methods as well as analysis procedure used were all selected according to this assumption. This aligned with what it needed to be in axiological assumption of qualitative research mentioned by Creswell and Poth (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 62).

Epistemology –

From the epistemology perspective, the article showed that the authors did conduct the study through the Emic perspective and all the information was obtained as some subjective evidence during the in-depth and semi-structured interviews. While all interviewees were asking to describe some decision-making or problem-solving incidents guided by the critical incident technique, authors were also participating deeply during the interviews in order to shorten and lessen the distance with interviewees and understand interviewees' relatedness to the concept of Employee Business Awareness (Larkin and Thompson, 2012, p. 102). As such, those incidents or examples described by the participants with their full collaborations during the interviews would be the authors' mainly relying on as essential evidence to build up the conceptual framework. This also aligned with what it needed to be

in epistemological assumption of qualitative research mentioned by Creswell and Poth (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 62).

Methodology –

From the methodology perspective, the research study in the article used an idiographic approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA), to study the concept of Employee Business Awareness through the context (mutual investment employment relationships organisations) and interact with the subject (non-managerial employees) in order to collect data from them (Larkin and Thompson, 2012, p. 102). As such, an in-depth and semi-structured interview was adopted with the intention to examine the true subjective experience and perception of each participant through mutual interaction with the authors by giving employee a participation phenomenon like decision-making or problem-solving. In the discussion part of the article, the authors did summarise the essence about the concept of Employee Business Awareness (EBA) based on the structural and textural descriptions obtained which also aligned with the suggestions by Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 142 and p. 185).

Critique on Description of Context and Participants

The article indicated that all data were collected from an in-depth and semi-structured individual interview through two organisations which were well-known for their working culture of mutual investment employment relationship. One of the organisations was an equipment components manufacturing plant hiring 250 employees with company values including entrepreneurship, integrity, discipline, teamwork and equal while for another one, it was also a manufacturing plant for tissue and fine paper packaging products composed of recycled fibres which hiring 15,600 employees with central company values of respect and commitment (Haines III et al., 2012, p. 78). Participants were all selected by the referral of the head of human resources department from two organisations who understood briefly about the concept and the criteria of selection. 20 above-mentioned interviews were finally conducted and participants were all non-managerial employees with age average at 42, 60% were male and all had been working in their organisations at least two years. Based on the information provided, they were all matched with the criteria required for the context and the subject of the research study in the article.

Critique on Data Collection Steps and Method Used

Apart from the problem in the part of Research Question and Objectives, some major problems were also found in the part of Data Collection Steps and Method Used in the article which could be discussed as below:

Sample Size, Sampling and Validity

One-hour in-depth, semi-structured and audio-recorded interview was conducted with each participant and totally 20 non-managerial employees were selected based on the identifications of the head of the human resources department of each organisation through the convenience sampling method. It could consider that it was a mixed sampling method similar to Snowball Sampling with the Convenience one.

The first problem in this part was too big in sample size. According to the article of Eatough and Smith (2008, p. 29), keeping small sample size and interviewing several times was important in Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) for it could allow the authors to focus and emphasize on any emerging true subjective experience and perception of each participant about the concept in a rich and detailed manner. Pietkiewicz and Smith also explicitly recommended further to keep the sample size in 6 to 8 participants in IPA in order to maintain the full appreciation of each participant's account (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014, p. 9).

The second problem in this part was the sampling method. Based on the advice of Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014, p. 9), any kind of sampling method related or similar to Convenience sampling method was not appropriate since it might lose the representativeness of sample selected. Even though the authors of the article did handle well for briefing the head of the human resources department of two organisation with some contents and questions about the concept of Employee Business Awareness (EBA) and mutual investment employment relationships organisations before their selections of interviewees (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 260), but the authors still could not get full control to guarantee the representativeness of the sample. One of the good examples of sampling method adopting in IPA was found in the article of Osborn and Smith (1998, p. 67) in which 9 women who attended the clinic because of their chronic back pain problems were referred and selected by their general practitioners for the study relating to personal experience of chronic benign lower back pain.

These two above-mentioned problems could lower the degree of the Validity of the research study in the article.

Ethical Consideration

Before each interview started, the article mentioned that each interviewee was briefed about the objective of study, their participation voluntary (free to participate or withdraw any time in the interview without providing a motive), audio-recording for the whole interview process and the confidentiality consideration (all participants information would be only disclosed with anonymity). However, it did not talk about accessibility of data (who could access those data) and data disposal procedure (how long should all data being kept and in what way to dispose them). According to the advice of Creswell and Poth (2018, pp. 273-274), it was better to also include these two handlings in the study in order to fulfil its ethical consideration.

Interview Protocol

The article did mention that it used the Critical Incident Technique during the interview and asked each participant to describe two of three incidents related to their participations of decision-making or problem-solving process. Apart from that, there was no other information provided in the article. Since the way of handling the interview would definitely affect the creditability and dependability of data, it was better to also mention other interviewing details. Based on the article of Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014, p. 10), it could be better to include the formulating of interview questions (e.g. how many questions, what kinds of question would be asked, how the interview questions were developed, the purpose of each kind of question, etc.) and providing the copy of interview questions in the article. All these questions should also be related to the core research question and its objectives in order to ensure the validity of the findings. As such, this was another proof that why the omission of core research question and its objectives in the article was the important problem.

Besides, based on the article of Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014, p. 10) and Eatough and Smith (2008, pp. 29-30), both recommended that it was better to also apply some other data collection methods like focus group and case study, and some other interviewing techniques like diaries, letters written, drawings, providing photos or poetries, etc. to obtain different kinds of information for the same concept (EBA). This could help to enhance the triangulation effect of data, as well as broaden the understanding and heighten the awareness of the authors for any emerging true subjective experience and perception of each participant about the concept. Finally, it was also better to include any findings generated from the authors' observation and examination during the interview process, too (Creswell and Poth, 2018, pp. 258-259).

Critique on Data Analysis

The article did mention well and in detail for the procedure of decoding and analysis of critical incidents in the article: one interview would be decoded by first author and then discussed with second author to resolve any discrepancies. Then both authors would independently decode the second interview and compare the results to resolve any discrepancies again. The third interview would be decoded independently by first researcher and third researcher, and then compared results to resolve any discrepancies again. Then the first researcher would decode all the remaining interviews and two graduate students would also conduct a second content analysis of all these critical incidents to ensure the confirmability of the findings. All these procedures just like to develop a perfect scheme of coding for the analysis of study and could somehow enhance the Validity of findings for the study (Larkin and Thompson, 2012, p. 112).

Nevertheless, according to the recommendation of Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 185), the decoding process in any kind of phenomenological research analysis should need to describe as much 'significant statement' as it could be in order to reflect the true subjective experience and perception of each participant about the concept. Besides, Larkin and Thompson (2012, p. 106) also suggested that some detailed 'free' or 'open' and phenomenological coding with line-by-line examination and analysis should be adopted during the analysis process in order to identify any emerging themes as well as develop and illustrate their relationships, too. With reference to both mentioned above, it was clear that the authors of the article did not analyse their data well enough in order to interpret those constructive meanings obtained from the participants since they only summarised (not even described) their interpretations of the data collected. One of the good examples of decoding adopted in Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) was found in the article of Osborn and Smith (1998, pp. 69-78) in which some of the important 'direct quotes' and 'significant statement' from participants were described and stated straight forwardly in order to show the original experiences and real responses of the participants in order to support the authors' important interpretations and findings.

Finally, it might be better if the interpretations and finding discovered in the analysis process could also include the application of some qualitative research analysis software like NVivo in order to minimise those human error during analysis, if any (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 261).

Credibility

Apart from the detailed procedure of decoding and analysis of critical incidents mentioned in the article as above, the transcripts were also further examined by two research analysing professionals in order to ensure the authors captured and transcribed accurately for the exact point of views of the participants (Haines III et al., 2012, p. 79).

Transferability

The authors of the article did try to ensure the transferability of the study by providing detailed model and phenomenon with specific findings, conclusions and recommendations of the research study in the article. However, the omission of core research question and its objectives in the article somehow lower a certain degree of Transferability of the study for the readers when they wanted to apply those details into other contexts, subjects as well as settings (Larkin and Thompson, 2012, p. 103).

Dependability and Confirmability

Because of the sample size and sampling method issues existed in the study as mentioned above, it might lead some discrepancies from the original purpose of using Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) and hence, lower the degree of Dependability of the study. For the Confirmability, again, the cross-checking procedure in different stages applied during the decoding and analysis by different research analysing professionals could ensure the function of practising reflexivity for the findings of the research study.

Critique on Findings and Discussion

Total 81 distinct incidents were discovered in which 35 elements allocated in 3 emerged themes of Employee Business Awareness (EBA) were finally established namely as External Environment, Organisational Strategy and Business Processes. The article did establish an interpretive framework to visually present all these findings and content domain of EBA which were critical for the readers to follow (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 303). However, with reference to those problems mentioned and discussed above relating to omission of research question and objective, data collection steps and method used, as well as data analysis, all these findings and discussions were still subject to justify.

Part II – Qualitative Research Proposal

Title

Experiences of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study with Educated and Knowledge Workforce in Hong Kong

Abstract

Through the qualitative research methodology, the purpose of this research proposal is to explore how educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong experience their unique individual engagement conditions in their organisations in order to detailed understand the antecedents and consequences of this particular context and subject (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 94). By applying the Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Purposive Sampling method, 10 in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face and audio-recorded individual interviews were conducted. Thematic Analysis advocated by Braun and Clarke (2012) was used for data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012, pp. 60-69). 6 reviewed themes and 9 potential themes relating to the concept of Employee Engagement were finally emerged and a Hierarchical Tree Diagram was developed in order to capture the interplay between themes to show their causal relationships with each other. Findings concluded that ‘Autonomy in Work’, ‘Important Involvement in decision-making’ and ‘Clear Direction, Goal, Mission, Vision’ (in Contents of Work theme), ‘Communication – Transparency & Clear’, ‘Tools and System Fit to Work’, ‘Comfortable Furniture & Facilities’, ‘Team Work & Participation’, ‘Colleagues Collaboration & Support’ and ‘Coaching & Leadership Style’ (in ‘Working Environment’ theme), as well as ‘Monetary Rewards e.g. Salary, Medical, Subsidy’ and ‘Work Skills Training’ (in Self Advancement theme) were all important antecedents and the consequences of Employee Engagement were ‘Better Performance’ as well as ‘Higher & Proactive Involvement and Participation’. As such, Reward and Recognition, Empowering Employees, Bond Building Between Leaders and Employees, Transformational Leadership Style as well as Participative Management were recommended to increase the employee engagement level of Hong Kong educated and knowledge employees.

Research Question and Objectives

The purpose of this research proposal is to explore and study how educated and knowledge employees in Hong Kong described their experiences of being engaged at work and hence, a research question correspondingly raised and guided in this study is:

RQ. How do educated and knowledge employees in Hong Kong experience their engagement conditions in their work?

Extending from this core research question, below research objectives would also like to be achieved in this study:

OB1. To identify the antecedents of employee engagement of Hong Kong educated and knowledge employees in terms of human, organisational and knowledge development influences

OB2. To examine the consequences of employee engagement of Hong Kong educated and knowledge employees

OB3. To analysis and discuss the engagement strategies that Hong Kong organisations could apply in order to increase the employee engagement level of their educated and knowledge employees

Research Philosophy

Ontology –

From the philosophical point of view, those qualitative research which studied the topic of employee engagement in past 30 years tried to answer some ontological questions including the actual meaning of employee engagement, the antecedents and the consequences of employee engagement under different circumstances as well as how and in what ways to maintain high level or increase the level of employee engagement in each particular circumstance. However, based on the Relativism point of view, it is clear that those findings and business implications should be relatively different based on the changes of study in different specific contexts and subjects. Owing to this, this research proposal is expecting to explore different perspectives through its findings and business implications because of the context (Hong Kong) and subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce) change.

Axiology –

From the axiological perspective, the researcher is planning to personally explore the experience of employee engagement in the specific context (Hong Kong) as well as subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce) through different in-depth and semi-structured interviews in order to build up a conceptual framework relating to the concept of Employee Engagement based on self-interpretation of values obtained from the interviewing participants. As such, the methodology being applied, participants being selected, data collection and interpretation methods being used, as well as the findings generated will also be affected by this assumption.

Epistemology –

From the epistemology perspective, this research proposal is planning to conduct a study through a ‘insider’ point of view (Emic perspective) in the sense that all the information is being obtained in a kind of subjective evidence during the in-depth, semi-structured and face-to-face interviews from those participants with the researcher’s participation. One of the main reasons behind for this is trying to shorten and lessen the distance between the researcher and interviewees in order to get the ‘first-hand’ information from the participants. It is also trying to ‘feel and sense’ the feedbacks personally from the participants through the involvements and interactions in order to get any ‘further and behind’ meaning about what the participants’ mentioned. Owing to this direction, the researcher will conduct this study mainly relying on the quotes of the participants as the evidence with their full collaborations, in consideration of time and resources constraints.

Methodology –

From the methodology perspective, this research study is planning to use an inductive logic and interpretative approach to study the concept of Employee Engagement within the context (Hong Kong) and interact with the subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce) to collect data from them. As such, the Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) will be applied as base in this study in which researcher will follow a ‘grounded and bottom-to-top’ approach, describe every single detail about the context of the study during the whole process before generalisations. For method of data collection, an in-depth, semi-structured and face-to-face interview with each participant will be adopted since it is one of the reliable ways to examine the true personal engagement experience of each participant during the interview through mutual interaction with the researcher. If

necessary, some interview questions may also need to be revised continuously during process in order to fit into the field condition.

After all, by recognising the background of the Employee Engagement topic, a concept of Social Constructivism interpretive framework is expecting to hold in this research study in order to interpret those constructive meanings obtained from the participants.

Literature Review

Antecedents of Employee Engagement and Disengagement

Kahn's iconic three psychological conditions (Psychological Meaningfulness, Psychological Safety and Psychological Availability) engagement framework illustrated that Task Characteristics, Role Characteristics and Work Interactions, Interpersonal Relationships, Group and Intergroup Dynamics, Management Style and Process, Organisational Norms, Physical Energy, Emotional Energy as well as Insecurity and Outside Life were all antecedents of personal engagement (Kahn, 1990, pp. 703-717).

The article of Matthews, Stanley, and Davidson (2018) also indicated that Challenges, Problem-solving, Achievable Specific Outcomes within time allocation (under Natures of Work), Managerial Behaviours such as positive feedback, effort recognition, mentoring, collaboration encouragement, constructive team environment (under Human Factors), as well as Potential and Opportunity to Learn (under Knowledge Development) were all important factors affecting Employee Engagement (Matthews, Stanley and Davidson, 2018, pp. 876-881).

The article of Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011) also showed that Relationship Development and Attachment to Co-workers, Workplace Climate and Organisational Culture as well as Opportunity for Learning would also influence the engagement level of employee (Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz, 2011, pp. 312-319).

Some antecedents might lead employee disengaged with their work and organisations such as Being Bullied as well as some negative managerial behaviours including Micromanaging, Promoting Unnecessary Internal Competition and Excessively Critical (Matthews, Stanley and Davidson, 2018, p. 875).

Consequences of Employee Engagement and Disengagement

Some consequences of engaged or disengaged employees bringing to the organisations including more attach themselves with organisations, resilient themselves with any organisational change, outperform and exceed their expected performance levels even in tough economic times, higher desire to stay longer with their organisations, share their positive working attitudes with their peers, organisations and even their customers, keep on their continuous improvement to accomplish their tasks, higher in job security, job safety, profitability, productivity, retention to stay in the organisations and customer loyalty, better employees' personal health and well-being, promoting innovation and creativity, as well as increasing competitiveness and effectiveness of organisations (Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2014, p. 67; Kumar, 2019, p. 7; Welch, 2011, p. 340;).

The consequences of employee disengagement could be lower profitability, productivity as well as job safety, higher intention to leave, reluctant to change with the organisations and in their work, promoting negative working attitudes with their peers, organisations and even their customers, etc. Some of the disengaged employees would even feel they were burnout and powerlessness in their work, too (Gagne and Bhave, 2011, p. 171).

Strategies for Promoting Employee Engagement

Articles studied the topic of employee engagement already indicated some possible directions of strategies to increase the engagement level of employees including Stress Management (through workload burden control, recognition, constant and suitable monitoring, etc.), Promoting Employee Well-being, Self-management Facilitating (through providing positive judgement on meaningfulness of tasks, clarifying the achievable target of work as well as providing better opportunity for employee to perform), Rewards and Recognition, Empowering Employee, Building a Bond Between Leaders and Employees, Transformational Leadership Style, as well as Participative Management (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013, p. 21; Bhuvanaiah and Raya, 2014, p. 68; Gagne and Bhave, 2011, p. 174; Osborne and Hammoud, 2017, pp. 55-59).

Description of Context and Participants

All data were collected in Hong Kong through an in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face and audio-recorded individual interview and the participants being selected were all classified as educated and

knowledge employees based on their academic education levels as well as their senior working positions in their companies. Because of resources and time limitation as well as convenience consideration, 10 above-mentioned in-depth individual interviews were finally conducted in order to examine the engagement experience of the participants in their work and all of them were from the researcher's close friends who had been working in the managerial position in their companies for a period of time. Table 1 (Appendix 1) was the summary table for the descriptive information of all participants in the interview. From the table, it summarised that the age range of all participants in the interviews were between 36 – 65 while 40% were male and remaining 60% were female. Besides, they were all married and with bachelor to master degree as their education levels. With reference to their occupations, they were all in managerial positions with different scopes of work including Profession, Sales Management, Marketing Management, Human & Talent Training and Development, Business Owner, Civil Servants as well as General Management. Regarding their annual income levels, they all fell into the range between HK\$300,000 to above HK\$900,000. After all, they were all fit into and matched with the criteria required for the context and the subject of this research study.

Explanation of Data Collection Steps

Since the attempt of this research proposal was to discover and explore the engagement experience of Hong Kong educated and knowledge workforce in their work, so an inductive research approach was needed in order to collect as much data as possible for analysis. Furthermore, the Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strass and Corbin (1998) was applied with the intention to provide a conceptual account of how employees experience when they were engaging in their work and organisations. Evolved Grounded Theory emphasized on structure which allowed preliminary literatures review in order to provide a framework for data collection and suggested researchers to actively obtain any theory from data collected (Claxton, 2014, p. 191).

Sampling and Validity

A non-probability and judgement sampling method, Purposive Sampling was used based on the specific requirements of the research and some criteria set by the researcher. Referring to this research study, those criteria would be Educated and Knowledge Employees (bachelor degree or above in education), Working in Hong Kong (for context as interview processes and data collections were done in Hong Kong), Achieving Certain Managerial Level (get involved in any decision-

making of employee engagement strategy) and Experience the Importance of Consequences (when employees engaged or disengaged). All these considerations could contribute and ensure the Validity of this research study.

In order to avoid any social desirability effect which might happen when collecting data through the focus group, an individual interview was used and totally 10 in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face and audio-recorded ones were conducted and the average length of all interviews was around 30 minutes (the shortest one was around 26 minutes and the longest one was around 34 minutes).

Ethical Consideration

Before each interview started, each interviewee was asked to sign the Letter of Consent & Confidentiality after detailed explanation by the researcher about the Purpose of the Research Study, the Voluntary of the Interview (free to participate or withdraw any time they preferred in the interview), Audio-recording for the whole interview process, Confidentiality Consideration (all participants information would be only disclosed with anonymity and no name and identity indication would be mentioned in this research proposal), Accessibility of Data (only researcher could access those data) and Data Disposal Procedure (all data would only be kept until the end of March 2020). The sample of Letter of Consent and Confidentiality was showed in Figure 1 (Appendix 2). Besides, the venues of conducting the interviews were selected by the interviewees in order to facilitate their sharing.

Questions for Individual Interview

All the interview questions were self-developed, open ended except for those collecting demographic data such as age range, gender, marital status, education level, annual income range, tenure of work in current companies and the corresponding working positions. The concept of Evolved Grounded Theory, Social Constructivism, the core research question and its corresponding 3 research objectives was guiding during the interview questions preparation in order to ensure those constructive meanings obtained from the interviewees could be interpreted and relevant to this research study. After demographic data part, there were 12 questions in the interview questions in which the first 7 questions were asking based on interviewees' personal point of views for their experiences about Employee Engagement in terms of Contents of Work, Working Environment and Self-advancement. The remaining 5 questions were asking based on the role of leaders or managerial executives' point

of views of the interviewees for their experiences about Employee Engagement Strategies as well as its Consequences. The sample of the Individual Interview Questions was showed in Figure 2 (Appendix 3).

Explanation of Data Analysis

In order to make sure those constructive meanings of the interviewees could be interpreted and relevant to the purpose of this research study, the researcher analysed all the data by himself based on the 6 Phases Thematic Analysis advocated by Braun and Clarke (2012) which was an accessible and flexible qualitative data analysis method for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57). There were 6 phases of this method including Familiarising with Data (by listening multiple time of audio data and note taking to notice anything which was relevant to the research question and objectives), Generating Initial Codes (for both descriptive and interpretative meaning), Searching for Themes (by reviewing the coded data with reference to the research question and objectives), Reviewing Potential Themes (by justifying those real meaningful themes through quality checking and reviewing), Defining and Naming Themes (for the unique and singular focus themes which directly addressed the research question) and Producing the Report (Braun and Clarke, 2012, pp. 60-69).

Credibility

Based on the article of Vilorio (2018), by describing the research topic being studied exactly from the view of the participants could increase the Credibility of the qualitative research study (Vilorio, 2018, p. 8). Therefore, all the audio transcripts were prepared based on the data collected from individual interviews and then sent back to each participant in a briefly point form in order to ensure the researcher captured and transcribed accurately for the exact meaning of the participants' point of views.

Transferability

By using the method of Thick Description in which the researcher provided detailed model and phenomenon with specific findings, conclusions and recommendations of this research study, it was

assumed that this study could provide a certain degree of Transferability for the readers to evaluate when they wanted to apply it into other contexts, subjects as well as settings (Viloria, 2018, p. 8).

Dependability and Confirmability

Even though the individual interview was the only data collection method used in this research study, but since the interviewees invited were from different industries and different managerial positions or natures of work, it could somehow provide a certain level of trustworthiness of data owing to this different sources of data. Besides, by applying Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strass and Corbin (1998) which emphasized on structure through some preliminary literatures reviews in order to provide a framework for data collection, it could also serve as some cross-checking as well as practising reflexivity functions for the findings of this research study.

Preliminary Findings

By adopting 6 Phases Thematic Analysis as well as guiding by the Evolved Grounded Theory, the core research question and its corresponding 3 research objectives, a Hierarchical Tree Diagram for the Themes of Employee Engagement was produced in order to capture the interplays between those themes found and their causal relationships with each other. In the Figure 3 (Appendix 4), which showed the summary of the relationships of all these themes, 6 Reviewed Themes (in oval shape) relating to the concept of Employee Engagement were finally emerged and identified including Measurement Method, Contents of Work, Working Environment, Self-advancement, Consequences and Strategies. Besides, 9 Potential Themes (in rectangle shape) under each reviewed theme, which produced based on the self-interpretation of the researcher, were established including Instruments & Tools and Behaviours (under Measurement Method), Job Nature and Way to Work (under Contents of Work), Organisation Culture, Physical and Human (under Working Environment), as well as Monetary and Non-monetary (under Self-advancement). Furthermore, totally 44 descriptive and conceptual codes were finally discovered under all these themes which were all exact and repeated wordings of the participants during the interviews. The diagram also contained the corresponding percentage in each potential theme and code which represented how many interviewees described and mentioned that particular theme and code during their interviews.

Discussion that Emerged from Findings

Reviewed Theme of Measurement Methods

The most common emerged codes were ‘Survey’, ‘Involvement & Participation’ and ‘Proud to Speak Out’ in the reviewed theme of Measurement Methods when measuring the engagement level of employees.

Reviewed Themes Summary of Contents of Work, Working Environment and Self Advancement

Based on the preliminary findings, it concluded that ‘Autonomy in Work’, ‘Important Involvement’ in decision-making, ‘Clear Direction, Goal, Mission, Vision’ were the most common codes emerged in the reviewed theme of Contents of Work while for the reviewed theme of Working Environment, ‘Communication – Transparency & Clear’, ‘Tools and System Fit to Work’, ‘Comfortable Furniture & Facilities’, ‘Team Work & Participation’ ‘Colleagues Collaboration & Support’ and ‘Coaching & Leadership Style’ were those most common emerged codes. For the reviewed theme of Self Advancement, ‘Monetary Rewards e.g. Salary, Medical, Subsidy’ and ‘Work Skills Training’ were both most common emerged codes. All these were considered as important antecedents of Employee Engagement for Hong Kong educated and knowledge workforce.

Reviewed Theme of Consequences

The most common emerged codes were two very straight forward ones: ‘Better Performance’ and ‘Higher and Proactive Involvement and Participation’ when referring the consequences of employee engagement.

Reviewed Theme of Strategies

The most common emerged codes which indicated 5 strategic directions in order to increase the engagement level of the educated and knowledge workforce were: ‘Provide Training and Teaching’, ‘Mutual Sharing and Development’, ‘Encourage Trial for Self-achievement’, ‘Show Recognition and Appreciation’ and ‘Mutual Communication and Positive Feedback’.

Proposed Strategies for Employee Engagement

By matching the findings in the Reviewed Theme of Strategies to some literatures reviewed before in this study, some engagement strategies can suggest implementing in order to increase the employee engagement level of Hong Kong educated and knowledge workforce as below:

Reward and Recognition –

Reward could be divided into Monetary and Non-monetary ones while Recognition referred to Show Appreciations and Recognitions for the contributions of employees in order to create their sense of ownership of outcomes, workplace environment and organisations (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017, pp. 55-56). These both just match with the ‘Monetary’ needs emerged in Self Advancement, as well as some ‘Physical’ needs and ‘Organisation Culture’ needs emerged in Working Environment in this study for engaging educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong.

Empowering Employees –

Empowering Employees referred to Provide Necessary Trainings and Resources (for employees to fit to their work), Formulate Career and Potential Development Plan to their employees, as well as Encourage Advancement and Learning of the Employees (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017, pp. 56-57). All these also match with some ‘Physical’ needs emerged in Working Environment and ‘Non-Monetary’ needs emerged in Self Advancement in this study for engaging educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong.

Bond Building Between Leaders and Employees –

Bond Building Between Leaders and Employees referred to Allow Open and Transparent Communication, Provide Positive Feedback with Mutual Trust, as well as Collaborative and Supportive Culture (Osborne and Hammoud, 2017, pp. 58-59). These also match with some ‘Organisation Culture’ needs and ‘Human’ needs emerged in Working Environment in this study for engaging educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong.

Transformational Leadership Style –

According to Alimo-Metcalfe (2013, p. 21), Transformational Leadership Style referred to four components including Idealised Influence (being role models to employees), Inspirational Motivation (sharing meaning, providing challenges and cultivate individual and team spirit), Intellectual Stimulation (stimulated innovation and creativity) and Individualised Consideration (Attentive to employees' growth and achievement needs as their coaches and mentors). This matches with some 'Organisation Culture' needs and 'Human' needs emerged in Working Environment, as well as the 'Autonomy in Work' needs emerged in Contents of Work in this study for engaging educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong.

Participative Management –

Participative Management referred to allow employees to Execute their Work in their own Ways (with monitoring and managing on the processes by their supervisors), Design and Distribute their own Work, as well as Participate in Goals Setting, Impactful Decision-making, Problems Solving and Developing and Implementing Organisations' Changes (Gagne and Bhave, 2011, p. 174). This matches with those 'Job Nature' needs emerged in this study for engaging educated and knowledge workforce in Hong Kong.

Personal Reflections

One of the main and critical reflections and limitations in this qualitative research study was time and resources constraint. If I had more time and resources for this study, I should organise and adopt some other qualitative research methods like focus group, company case studies or even ethnographies, and arrange more interviews in order to enlarge the sample size of the study and collect different kinds of data for further testing and investigation such that the validity and the triangulation effect of data collected, as well as the dependability and the confirmability of the study could be increased.

For simplicity, I didn't take into consideration of occupations and tenure of work in current companies of the participants when I was preparing the analysis in this study. Because of the influences on one's willingness to engage in their work and organisations from these two factors, different findings might obtain if I also extended my study to include these two factors.

For data analysis, it might be better if I can have enough time and resource to use some qualitative data analyse software like NVivo in order to minimise manual error, if any. For next step of study, I would extend my research by conducting a quantitative one based on the findings of this study in order to further ensure their validities and reliabilities by objective figures.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1 - Descriptive Information of Participants in the Individual Interview (n = 10)

Participants	Age Range	Gender	Marital Status	Education level	Scope of Occupation	Experience in Current Working Position	Annual Income Level
P1	46 - 55	Male	Married	Master Degree	Professional	7 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P2	56 - 65	Male	Married	Master Degree	Professional	10 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P3	46 - 55	Male	Married	Master Degree	General Working / Office Class	3 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P4	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Business Owner	9 Years	HK\$750,001 - HK\$900,000
P5	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Civil Servants / Employees of Government related to Organisations	2 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P6	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sale Management	9 Months	HK\$600,001 - HK\$750,000
P7	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Marketing Management	2.25 Year	HK\$300,000 - HK\$450,000
P8	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sales Management	12 Years	HK\$450,001 - HK\$600,000
P9	46 - 55	Male	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sales Management	10 Years	HK\$600,001 - HK\$750,000
P10	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Talent Learning & Development	18 Years	HK\$450,001 - HK\$600,000

Appendix 2: Figure 1 – Sample of Letter of Consent and Confidentiality

Qualitative Research Topic:

Experiences of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study with Educated and Knowledge Workforce in Hong Kong

Dear Participant,

Letter of Consent and Confidentiality

Thank you very much for your participation of this individual interview for one of the research modules, Qualitative Research, of my Doctor of Business Administration from The University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

The purpose of the research study is to explore and study how educated and knowledge employees in Hong Kong described their personal experiences when they were engaging in their work. With collected data, it is expected that it can help to explore and provide a solid knowledge base for understanding about the concept of Employee Engagement, its antecedents and consequences, as well as inspiring and providing some guidance and advices to HRM, entrepreneurs, business decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders how to increase the engagement level of their educated and knowledge workforce in order to improve their work performances in the situation of Hong Kong.

We would like to inform you that the participation of this study is completely voluntary and you have full freedom to decide to participate or withdraw from this research data collection process without any negative consequence on you. The whole interview process will be audio-recording and all your information provided is just for this study only which will be treated confidential and only will be disclosed with anonymity in the sense that no name and identity indication will be mentioned in my module assignment. I will be the only person who can access those data and all data will expect to be kept until the end of March 2020 and then destroyed accordingly. There are no known risks, discomfort or any other negative consequence after data collection process relating to this study.

Should you have any inquiries, please feel free and don't hesitate to let me know before, during or even after the interview or before the completion of this study. Please kindly sign your consent with full knowledge about the purpose and the process of this study and the procedure of data collection process as well. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your own reference.

Date:

Researcher: Mr. Stephen Chum, DBA Student of University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Email Contact Information: stephenchumdba@gmail.com

Questions for Individual Interview

Qualitative Research Topic:

Experience of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study with Educated and Knowledge Workforce in Hong Kong

Part A: Demographic Information:

Q1. Name & Email address: _____

Q2. Age: 26 – 35 36 – 45 46 – 55 56 – 65

Q3. Gender: Male Female

Q4. Marital Status: Single Married Others

Q5. No. of Children: 0 1 2 3 4 or above

Q6. Education Level: Bachelor Master Doctor Others: _____

Q7. Annual Income Level: HK\$300,000 – HK\$450,000 HK\$450,001 – HK\$600,000
HK\$600,001 – HK\$750,000 HK\$750,001 – HK\$900,000
Above HK\$900,000

Q8. How long you have been working in your current company: _____ years

Q9. What is your current position / title in your company: _____

Qualitative Research Topic:

Part A: Demographic Information:

- Page 32

Appendix 3: Figure 2 – Sample of Questions for Individual Interview (Page 2)

Part B: Individual Interview Questions:

From your PERSONAL point of view,

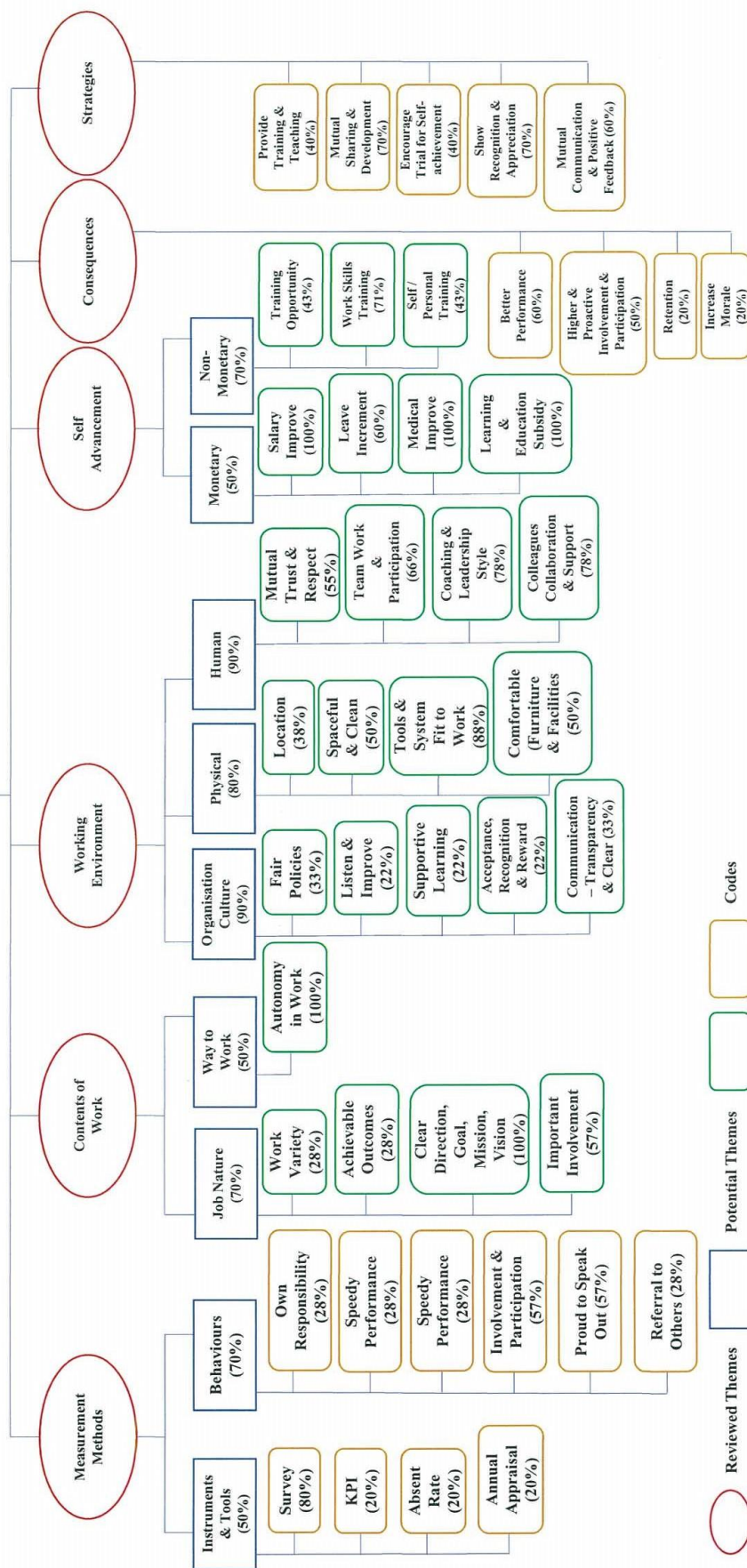
- Q1. What is Employee Engagement?
- Q2. What key determinants / affecting factors you think they are important to affect the level of Employee Engagement?
- Q3. How did you measure the level of Employee Engagement (eg. concepts, instruments, models, theories, behaviours, etc.)?
- Q4. What contents of work (e.g. work nature, scope, etc.) you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q5. What kinds of working environment you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q6. What kinds of self-advancement you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q7. What methods you think they are best to could increase and maintain your high level of engagement?

From the role of LEADER or MANAGERIAL EXECUTIVES' point of view,

- Q8. What engagement strategies have you used to increase your colleagues' engagement?
- Q9. Any difficulties / challenges you encountered when implementing these engagement strategies?
- Q10. a) What were the consequences when your colleagues engaged?
b) What were the consequences when your colleagues disengaged?
- Q11. a) With reference to 10a) answers, how did you respond?
b) With reference to 10b) answers, how did you respond?
- Q12. Anything you would like to add / comment that I might have missed?

End of the Interview. Thank You!

Employee Engagement



Appendix 4: Figure 3 – Hierarchical Tree Diagram for the Themes of Employee Engagement

Experiences of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study with Educated and Knowledge Workforce in Hong Kong

By Stephen Chum (SBPD7002: Qualitative Research)

Research Questions & Objectives

2

➤ Research Question:

- How do educated and knowledge employees in Hong Kong experience their engagement conditions in their work?

➤ 3 Research Objectives:

- To identify the **antecedents** of employee engagement of Hong Kong educated and knowledge employees in terms of **human, organisational and knowledge development influences**
- To examine the **consequences** of employee engagement of Hong Kong educated and knowledge employees
- To analysis and discuss the **engagement strategies** that Hong Kong organisations could apply in order to increase the employee engagement level of their educated and knowledge employees

Research Philosophy

3

► Ontology:

- Qualitative research studies in these 3 decades which already **answered some ontological questions** like actual meaning, the antecedents and the consequences of employee engagement and how increase its level of employee engagement in each particular circumstance
- Based on the **Relativism point of view**, this research proposal is expected to **explore different perspective** through its findings and business implications **because of the context (Hong Kong) and subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce) change.**

► Axiology:

- Researcher **personally explores the experience of employee engagement in the specific context (Hong Kong) as well as subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce)** through different in-depth and semi-structured interviews in order to build up a conceptual framework **based on self-interpretation of values** obtained from the interviewees
- The **methodology** being applied, **participants** being selected, **data collection and interpretation methods** being used, as well as the **findings** generated will also be affected by this assumption

Research Philosophy

4

➤ Epistemology:

- Conduct a study through a **'insider' point of view (Emic perspective)** and get **subjective evidence** during the in-depth, semi-structured and face-to-face interviews from those participants with the researcher's participation
- **Shorten and lessen the distance between the researcher and interviewees** in order to get the 'first-hand' information and 'feel and sense' the feedbacks from the participants **personally through the involvements and interactions.**
- Mainly rely on the **quotes of the participants as the evidence** with their full collaborations, in consideration of time and resources constraints

➤ Methodology:

- Use an **inductive logic and interpretative approach** to study the concept of Employee Engagement **within the context (Hong Kong)** and **interact with the subject (Educated and Knowledge Workforce)** to collect data
- **Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1998)** will be applied as base in this study in which the researcher will follow a **'grounded and bottom-to-top' approach**
- **An in-depth, semi-structured and face-to-face interview** to each participant will be adopted → **reliable way to examine the true personal engagement experience** of each participant through mutual interaction with the researcher

Literature Review

5

➤ Antecedents of Employee Engagement and Disengagement:

- Kahn's model (1990) as an iconic and foundational framework –
 - **Psychological Meaningfulness, Psychological Safety and Psychological Availability**
- Matthews, Stanley, and Davidson (2018) –
 - **Natures of Work, Human Factors and Knowledge Development**
- Shuck, Rocco and Albornoz (2011) –
 - **Relationship Development and Attachment to Co-workers, Workplace Climate and Organisational Culture and Opportunity for Learning**
- Antecedents of Employee Disengagement (Matthews, Stanley and Davidson, 2018) –
 - **Being Bullied**, some negative managerial behaviours including **Micromanaging, Promoting Unnecessary Internal Competition and Excessively Critical**

Literature Review

6

➤ Consequences of Employee Engagement and Disengagement:

➤ Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) –

- **More attach** with organisations, **resilient** with any **organisational change**, **outperform and exceed their expected performance levels** in tough economic times, **stay longer** with their organisations, **share their positive working attitudes** with others, **continuous improvement** to accomplish their tasks

➤ Kumar (2019) –

- Higher **Job Security and Safety, Profitability, Productivity, Retention to Stay** in the organisations, promoting higher **Customer Loyalty** and employees' personal **Health and Well-being**

➤ Welch (2011) –

- Promoting **Innovation and Creativity**, Sustainable Higher **Competitiveness of the organisations** and Higher **Organisational Effectiveness**

➤ Consequences of Employee Disengagement (Gagne and Bhave, 2011, p. 171) –

- Lower **profitability, productivity, job safety**, higher **intention to leave, reluctant to change** promoting **negative working attitudes** with others, **burnout and powerlessness**

Literature Review

7

➤ Strategies for Promoting Employee Engagement:

➤ Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2014) –

➤ **Stress Management, Promoting Employee Well-being, Self-management Facilitating**

➤ Osborne and Hammoud (2017) –

➤ **Rewards and Recognition, Empowering Employee and Building a Bond Between Leaders and Employees**

➤ Alimo-Metcalfe, B. (2013) –

➤ **Transformational Leadership Style** (Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration)

➤ Gagne, M. and Bhave, D.P. (2011) –

➤ **Participative Management**

Description of Context and Participants

- All data were collected **in Hong Kong**
- Subject all classified as educated and knowledge employees based on their **academic education levels** as well as their **senior working positions** in their companies
- **10 in-depth, semi-structured, face-to-face and audio-recorded individual interviews**
- Descriptive information:
 - Age range – Between 36 – 65
 - Male – 40%, Female – 60%
 - All married and with bachelor to master degree
 - Managerial Occupations – Profession, Sales Management, Marketing Management, Human & Talent Training and Development, Business Owner, Civil Servants and General Management
 - Annual income levels – Range between HK\$300,000 to above HK\$900,000.

Appendix 1: Table 1 - Descriptive Information of Participants in the Individual Interview (n = 10)

Participants	Age Range	Gender	Marital Status	Education level	Scope of Occupation	Experience in Current Working Position	Annual Income Level
P1	46 - 55	Male	Married	Master Degree	Professional	7 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P2	56 - 65	Male	Married	Master Degree	Professional	10 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P3	46 - 55	Male	Married	Master Degree	General Working / Office Class	3 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P4	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Business Owner	9 Years	HK\$750,001 - HK\$900,000
P5	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Civil Servants / Employees of Government related to Organisations	2 Years	Above HK\$900,000
P6	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sale Management	9 Months	HK\$600,001 - HK\$750,000
P7	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Marketing Management	2.25 Year	HK\$300,000 - HK\$450,000
P8	36 - 45	Female	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sales Management	12 Years	HK\$450,001 - HK\$600,000
P9	46 - 55	Male	Married	Bachelor Degree	Sales Management	10 Years	HK\$600,001 - HK\$750,000
P10	46 - 55	Female	Married	Master Degree	Talent Learning & Development	18 Years	HK\$450,001 - HK\$600,000

Explanation of Data Collection Steps

- Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strass and Corbin (1998) is applied
 - Emphasized on structure which **allowed preliminary literatures review** in order to provide a **framework for data collection** (Claxton, 2014, p. 191)
- Sampling and Validity
 - Non-probability sampling method, **Purposive Sampling** was used (**judgement of the researcher for specific requirements**)
 - **Validity:** Educated and Knowledge Employees (**bachelor degree or above in education**), **Working in Hong Kong** and **data collection can be done in Hong Kong (context)**, **Achieving Certain Managerial Level** (get involved in **decision-making of employee engagement strategy**) and Experience the **employee engagement consequences**
 - **Average length of total 10 interviews around 30 minutes** (the shortest one was around 26 minutes and the longest one was around 34 minutes)
- Ethical Consideration
 - Asked to sign the Letter of Consent & Confidentiality
 - Detailed explanation about the **Purpose of the Research Study**, the **Voluntary of the Interview**, **Audio-recording**, **Confidentiality Consideration** (all participants information only disclosed with anonymity), **Accessibility of Data and Data Disposal Procedure**

Explanation of Data Collection Steps

Questions for Individual Interview

- **Self-developed, open ended** questions except those for obtaining **demographic data**
- Guided by Evolved Grounded Theory, concept of Social Constructivism, core research question and 3 research objectives, **12 questions were prepared**
- First 7 questions – Based on **personal** experiences of Employee Engagement (**Contents of Work, Working Environment and Self-advancement**)
- The remaining 5 questions – Based on **leaders or managerial executives'** experiences of Employee Engagement **Strategies and its consequences**

Questions for Individual Interview

Qualitative Research Topic:

Experience of Employee Engagement: A Qualitative Study with Educated and Knowledge Workforce in Hong Kong

Part A: Demographic Information:

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------------|------------|---------|
| Q1. | Name & Email address: | | | | | | |
| Q2. | Age: | 26 – 35 | 36 – 45 | | 46 – 55 | | 56 – 65 |
| Q3. | Gender: | Male | Female | | | | |
| Q4. | Marital Status: | Single | Married | Others | | | |
| Q5. | No. of Children: | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 or above | |
| Q6. | Education Level: | Bachelor | Master | Doctor | Others: _____ | | |
| Q7. | Annual Income Level: | HK\$300,000 – HK\$450,000 | | HK\$450,001 – HK\$600,000 | | | |
| | | HK\$600,001 – HK\$750,000 | | HK\$750,001 – HK\$900,000 | | | |
| | | Above HK\$900,000 | | | | | |
| Q8. | How long you have been working in your current company: | _____ years | | | | | |
| Q9. | What is your current position / title in your company: | _____ | | | | | |

Part B: Individual Interview Questions:

From your PERSONAL point of view,

- Q1. What is Employee Engagement?
- Q2. What key determinants / affecting factors you think they are important to affect the level of Employee Engagement?
- Q3. How did you measure the level of Employee Engagement (eg. concepts, instruments, models, theories, behaviours, etc.)?
- Q4. What contents of work (e.g. work nature, scope, etc.) you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q5. What kinds of working environment you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q6. What kinds of self-advancement you think they could increase your level of engagement?
- Q7. What methods you think they are best to could increase and maintain your high level of engagement?

From the role of LEADER or MANAGERIAL EXECUTIVES' point of view,

- Q8. What engagement strategies have you used to increase your colleagues' engagement?
- Q9. Any difficulties / challenges you encountered when implementing these engagement strategies?
- Q10. a) What were the consequences when your colleagues engaged?
b) What were the consequences when your colleagues disengaged?
- Q11. a) With reference to 10a) answers, how did you respond?
b) With reference to 10b) answers, how did you respond?
- Q12. Anything you would like to add / comment that I might have missed?

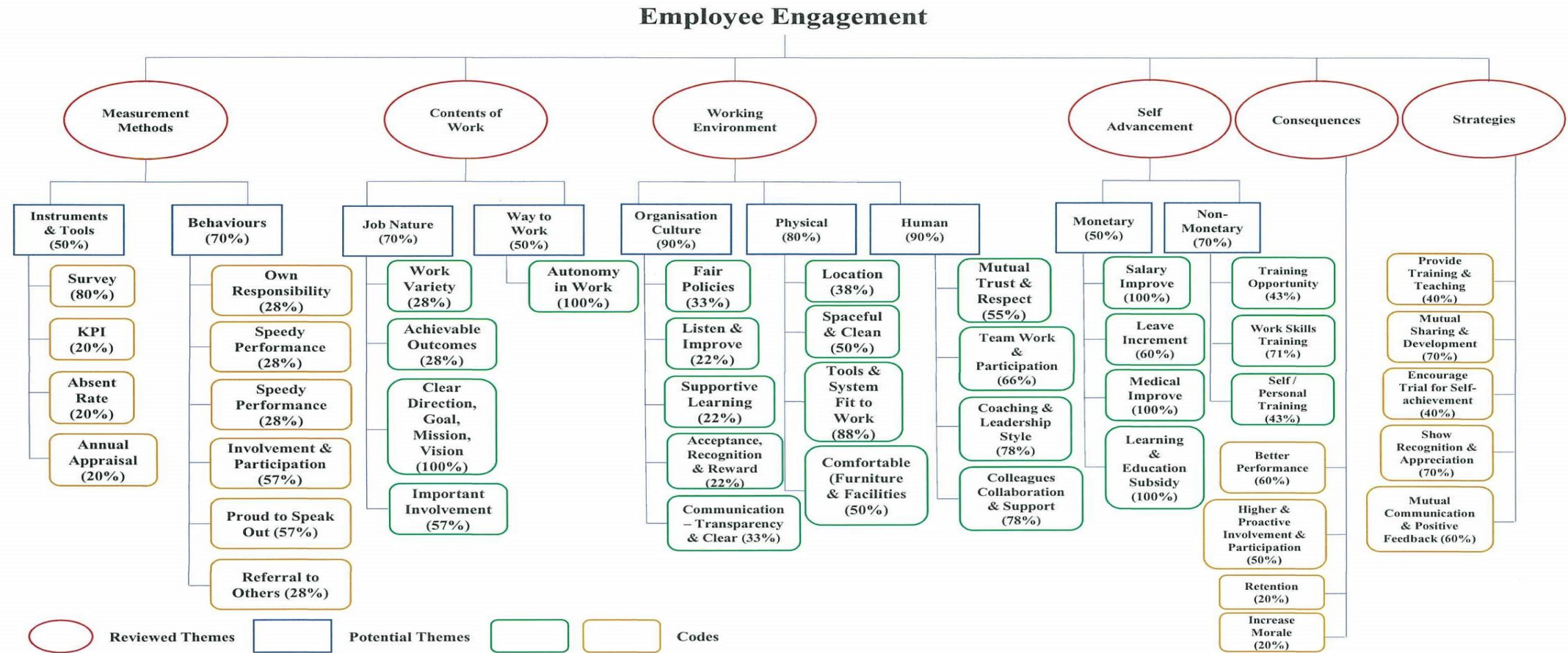
End of the Interview. Thank You!

Explanation of Data Analysis

- Data was analysed by the **6 Phases Thematic Analysis** advocated by Braun and Clarke (2012)
 - An **accessible and flexible** qualitative data analysis method for systematically **identifying, organising and offering insight** into patterns of meaning (**themes**) across a data set
 - 6 phases: **Familiarising with Data, Generating Initial Codes, Searching for Themes, Reviewing Potential Themes, Defining and Naming Themes** and **Producing the Report**
- Credibility
 - Briefly point form Verification by all interviewees
- Transferability
 - Thick Description
- Dependability and Confirmability
 - Interviewees invited were from different industries and different managerial position or nature of work → Provide a certain level of trustworthiness of data
 - Evolved Grounded Theory advocated by Strass and Corbin (1998) emphasized on structure which **allowed preliminary literatures review** in order to provide a **framework for data collection** → Serve as some cross-checking as well as practising reflexivity functions for the findings

Preliminary Findings

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Preliminary Findings

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- **6 Reviewed Themes** relating to the concept of Employee Engagement were finally emerged and identified:
 - **Measurement Method, Contents of Work, Working Environment, Self-advancement, Consequences and Strategies**
- **9 Potential Themes** were discovered based on researcher's self-interpretation:
 - **Instruments & Tools** and **Behaviours** (Measurement Method), **Job Nature** and **Way to Work** (Contents of Work), **Organisation Culture, Physical** and **Human** (Working Environment), **Monetary** and **Non-monetary** (Self-advancement)
- Totally **44 codes** were found during the whole process of Thematic Analysis

Discussion that Emerged from Findings

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➤ **Antecedents** of Employee Engagement:

- **Contents of Work** – Autonomy in Work, Important Involvement in decision-making and Clear Direction, Goal, Mission, Vision
- **Working Environment** – Communication – Transparency & Clear, Tools and System Fit to Work, Comfortable Furniture & Facilities, Team Work & Participation, Colleagues Collaboration & Support and Coaching & Leadership Style
- **Self Advancement** – Monetary Rewards e.g. Salary, Medical, Subsidy and Work Skills Training

➤ **Consequences** of Employee Engagement:

- Better Performance and Higher & Proactive Involvement and Participation

Discussion that Emerged from Findings

- **Proposed Strategies for Increasing Employee Engagement Level:**
 - **Reward and Recognition**
 - **Empowering Employees**
 - **Bond Building Between Leaders and Employees**
 - **Transformational Leadership Style**
 - Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualised Consideration
 - **Participative Management**

Thank You

