Empowering Employees for Enhanced Firm Performance in Zimbabwe's Manufacturing Sector: The Case for Bulawayo Based Manufacturers.

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ABSTRACT

Zimbabwean firms particularly those in manufacturing have been greatly affected by the opening up of the economy which has seen the influx of cheaper foreign goods. This has created intense competition for the sector as customers opt for the more affordable foreign products. The result of this competition has been the decline of capacity utilisation by the local manufacturers which has also been accompanied by firms closing down, retrenching staff or at times refusing to award salaries that match the poverty datum line as they seek to survive. On the other hand, employees faced with possibility of losing employment or earning low salaries have accused employers/managers of being self-centered in the decision making process. It is for this reason that this study was carried out to ascertain the extent of employee empowerment in Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector. The study is confined to large scale manufacturers who are on Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI) register operating in Bulawayo,the 2nd capital city of the country. The study uses the qualitative approach and is case study of Bulawayo based manufacturers. Proportional representation is used to draw a sample 33 firms from 16 strata that make up the sub-sectors of the country's manufacturing sector. The study findings reveal that the sampled firms are moderately high on engaging employees in empowerment programmes. However the findings also reveal that managers, to a large extent, treat employee contributions as only fairly important. Thus the study concludes that there are fa8irly low levels of employee empowerment in the sector in Bulawayo. The study recommends that as a way of raising employee levels of empowerment, the firms should adopt the Strategic Human Resources Management and the Total Quality Management Approach.

Keywords: *Empowerment, manufacturing sector, quality circles; commitment and motivation*

INTRODUCTION
Morris, Kuratko and Covin (2008) acknowledge that the business environment in the 21stcentury has been characterized by a high turbulence mainly driven by rapid technological improvements. These improvements have seen customer tastes rapidly changing in any given period of time; markets being fragmented and competition in industries intensifying as firms jockey for market share and preference from suppliers of both inputs and labour. Morris, Kuratko and Covin (ibid) argue that survival and growth in this era is based on the firms' and their managers' ability to develop competitive advantage based on their ability to adapt to change, rather than acquisitions and mergers as was previously the trend. The authors identified five key capabilities namely:
- adaptability;
- flexibility;
- speed;
- aggression; and
- innovation.

This argument implies that firms' survival and growth has to be through internal initiatives or organic means. This view is supported by Brandt (1986 p 54) when he asserts that "companies must tap into the creative power of their members" if they have to make it through the turbulent environment.

Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector has also been characterised by high turbulence driven mainly by the liberalisation of the country's economy in 2009. This paper therefore seeks to assess the extent to which the firms operating in this sector, particularly those in Harare have tapped into their members as a way of weathering the stiff competition.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY
The year 2009 saw the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) introducing the multi-currency regime liberalising the economy as a way of assuaging the effects of hyperinflation which was last officially recorded at 231 million

percent in July 2008 and serious food shortages (Besada and Moyo, 2008). The move witnessed the influx of cheap foreign manufactured products, mainly from China and South Africa, flooding the market. This posed direct competition to the local manufacturers who could not compete against the foreign products. Statistics indicate that Zimbabwe, by the end of May 2013, had an import bill of US$1,301 billion against imports of US$3, 2 billion and projected to shoot to US$4, 5billion by year end (Mid-Term Policy Review, 2013).

Further to the above effects of foreign competition on the country's manufacturing sector, Zimbabwe's National Social Security Agency (nssa) reported that a total of 711 companies in Zimbabwe closed shop between 2011 and 2013. The report also highlights that the few remaining manufacturing firms have retrenched a sizeable number of their staff. In an interview with a weekly newspaper in October 2013 the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions' (ZCTU) national coordinator is quoted saying retrenchments in Zimbabwe industry (including manufacturing sector) is on a massive scale and set to continue in the near future. The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries survey report (CZI, 2013) indicates that 14% of 300 surveyed firms had downsized operations and retrenched their employees.

The result of these company closures and retrenchments has been the rise in unemployment rate which currently hovers above 70% (Robertson, 2013).

On the other the hand, the manufacturing sector's capacity utilisation was reported to have dropped to 38% in 2013 from a high of 45% in 2012(CZI, 2013).

The ZCTU president is quoted in a weekly newspaper as saying that the situation that employees find themselves in is mainly caused by employers (managers). The president argues that employers were exploiting employees as they tended to be selfish regarding decision making in organisations. He gave the example of remuneration in organisations which he said was the preserve of managers alone, resulting in decisions that tend to prejudice the ordinary worker.

Statement of the Problem
The above discussion reflects a sector that is not only in crisis due to foreign competition, but that is also experiencing centralized decision making which tends to favour managers at the expense of the ordinary employee. This is also being blamed for causing the current poor performance of the sector's players.

Study's Proposition
Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector is faced with stiff foreign competition but is failing to develop effective ways of counteracting that competition due to its failure to involve employees in decision making.

Study objectives
The study seeks to:
- establish if Bulawayo's manufacturing sector managers have empowered their employees;
- establish if the managers are committed to employee empowerment; and
- establish if the above sector's employees contributions are valued.

Study Delimitations
The study is only confined to manufacturers in Bulawayo and registered with the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI). This is an institution recognised as the representative of Zimbabwe's manufacturers and is also the voice of industry that is consulted by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) in the formulation or development of industrial policies (CZI, 2012).

Study Justification
The study will benefit managers in the manufacturing sector to appreciate the impact of employee empowerment in improving organisational performance. The study will also assist manufacturing sector managers and other managers in general to develop ways of empowering their employees.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Empowerment is defined by Mullins (1999) as allowing employees greater autonomy and self-control over their work. On the other hand, Buchanan and Huczynski (1999) refer to empowerment as the other term for decentralization. As a form of employee empowerment, decentralization is whereby decision making in an organization is shared between various divisions of the organization. Thus, according to Buchanan and Huczynski (ibid) decentralization is an employee empowerment technique that organisations can use to raise levels of employee motivation in organizations. Through allowing decision making to be done at different

levels of the organization, autonomy and responsibility is given to individuals in decision making and they will be motivated to perform allocated tasks.

Robbins and Coulter (2008) assert that the main benefit of employee empowerment is that it creates a committed workforce that subordinates its personal interests to the organisation. Employee commitment is defined by Robbins and Coulter (ibid) as the process of getting employees to apply themselves fully to the achievement of set organisational targets.

Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, et al. (2008) add that employee level of commitment to an organisation is demonstrated by their readiness to suggest ways of improving performance, putting extra effort or hours into their tasks at no cost to the organisation.

Champoux (2003) argues that organisations can use a variety of methods to empower employees but emphasises the following assumptions about empowerment techniques:
- that they are aimed at enhancing the content of the job to increase job satisfaction and reduce boredom; and
- that there is a positive correlation between the techniques employed and the level of motivation and productivity of the workforce in the organization. Champoux (ibid) asserts that the greater the autonomy and responsibility in employee decision making, the more the employee feels positive about their worth in the organisation.

The above discussion bring to the fore that empowerment should be real in the eyes of employees and not just some concept that managers talk about. Wheelen and Hunger (2006) argue that managers in organisations need to put systems in place that support employee empowerment as a way of ensuring that the practice becomes a reality. Drucker cited in Van Aardt and Van Aardt (1997) asserts that systems are the policies and procedures that guide an organisation's operations.

Methods of Empowering employees:
Job design is one way of empowering employees as it acts as a motivation technique that may be used by organizations. Job design is when a job is structured in such a way that it reduces the negative effects of high specialization such as boredom. Job design can be achieved through job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment.

Job rotation involves the process of moving the same worker among different jobs in an organization. The proponents of job rotation believe that through job rotation a worker becomes less bored by doing many different activities in a day or week (Champoux: 2003). Thus through job rotation the tasks become interesting to do and the workers will be motivated to do it. When employees are moved from one task to another through job rotation the worker will have a feeling that they are being recognized and watched by management and this will make them change their behavior towards work, they begin to apply themselves towards the achievement of organizational goals (Cummings and Worley: 2001).

Job enrichment, according to Mullins involves assigning a person greater autonomy and authority over the task by executed by an employee. Robbins and Coultar (2008) argue that enrichment increases complexity of a task thus making it challenging and meaningful to the employee. Enrichment can be achieved through allowing workers greater freedom and control of task planning, allowing employees to carry out a full task (removing specialization), allowing employees to work in self-managing teams and also allowing them to deal directly with customers or clients.

As opposed to enrichment, job enlargement involves increasing the scope or range of tasks that an employee performs (Robbins and Coultar, 2008). Job enlargement is horizontal job design. Mullins cites the following as weakness of job enlargement:
- it does not necessarily improve the sense of achievement;
- some employees prefer simple routine tasks to task that require high levels of concentration,
- And that some worker may view job enlargement as an increase in routine tasks that have to be performed.

Quality Circles are another way through which employees' behavior is harnessed towards achieving organizational objectives. A quality circle is a group of people within an organization who meet on a regular basis to identify, analyze and solve problems relating to quality, productivity or other aspects of the day-to-day working arrangements in the organization using problem solving techniques (Mullin: 1999: 658). The

proponents of quality circles argue that, these groups are formed to improve the quality of the working life of employees as well as making work interesting to do. Mullins (1999) further explains that in quality circles membership is voluntary and members select problems to solve and make recommendations to management. Vecchio agrees with Mullins but emphasize that management does not punish members of quality circles should their recommendations not produce the desired results. Therefore successful implementation of quality circles requires that there be top management support or commitment, trust and goodwill and effective training programmes (Mullins, 1999). Thompson and Strickland (1996) postulate that quality circles also have the advantage of transferring skills among members as they are made up of employees from different departments. Thus quality circles become a source of multi-skilling employees and also offer a platform for employees to learn from each other.

Lashley, cited in Mullins (1999) identifies other ways of empowering staff such as participation and involvement, commitment and de-layering. De-layering is when the number of management levels in the organizational structure is reduced. By reducing the number of management levels in an organization some of the decision making authority will be delegated to the workers. When the levels of management are reduced the relationship between the workers and the management is significantly improved.

Employee Participation and Involvement is yet another employee empowerment technique of motivation that is cited by Mullins (1999). Employee involvement may be fulfilled through trade unions, consultation, and job redesign. When employees are meaningfully involved in decision making they will feel motivated and will increase their productivity levels. The other benefit of involvement and participation is that it builds mutual trust between management and employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research design
Leedy (2005 p 41) posits that designing a research is influenced by how it seeks to acquire knowledge. Thomas (2003 p 1) posits that research can assume a quantitative or qualitative approach depending on what the study seeks to establish.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992 p 6) define quantitative research as seeking explanations and predictions that will generalise to other persons and places.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994 p 2) define qualitative approach as multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject matter. They assert that qualitative research study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them. The authors affirm that the approach uses a variety of empirical materials like case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observation, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in people's lives.

This study's objective is to establish if Harare's manufacturing sector is using effective environmental scanning processes, thus making it a case study which is a qualitative approach.

Study Population
Population is defined by Shajahan (2009 p 244) as the group of individuals under study. Thus the population of this study is the manufacturers in Bulawayo. According to the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (2012), this population is made up of 16 sub sectors (strata) namely: Bakers; Battery; Plastic, Packaging and Rubber; Pharmaceuticals; Chemicals; Leather and Allied; Car Assemblers; Building (including Construction); Grain Millers and Tobacco; Electric Appliances Manufacturers; Engineering and Steel; Printing and Publishing; Textiles and Clothing; Paints and inks; Timber Processors (Including Furniture) and Food, Dairy and Beverages.

Sampling and Sample Size
Shajahan (2009 p 244) defines a sample as a finite sub-set selected from the entire population. Kumar (2005 p 164) argues that at times it is difficult, if not impossible, to investigate all elements in a population, hence the need to identify elements that are representative enough of the population (sample). The process of arriving at a sample is referred to as sampling design (Shajahan, ibid and Kumar, ibid) which requires the researchers to identify the population, the sampling unit or where the sample is drawn from (for example geographically) and the sampling frame or source lists (where each sample element is identified).

33 sample elements were selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling method from the CZI

register of Harare manufacturers. Kumar (2005 p 175) defines proportionate stratified random sampling as a process of selecting elements from each population stratum in relation to its proportion to the total population. This sampling method has the advantage of ensuring that the sample is the reflection of the population; hence avoid particular population strata, with more elements than others, influencing the study findings.

Table 4.1 on the next page shows the sample size of each sector used in the study.

Table 4.1 Sector Sample Sizes

Sector	Population	Bulawayo's Sample Size
Bakers	8	2
Battery	3	NIL
Plastic, Packaging and Rubber	13	3
Pharmaceuticals	7	2
Chemicals	11	3
Leather and Allied	4	1
Car Assemblers	2	NIL
Building (including construction)	8	2
Electric Appliances Manufacturers	5	1
Grain Millers and Tobacco	5	1
Engineering and Steel	18	5
Printing and Publishing	6	1
Textiles and Clothing	6	1
Paints and Inks	10	2
Timber Processors (including Furniture)	7	2
Food, Dairy and Beverages	29	7
TOTAL	142	33

Key: NIL= the city does not have manufacturers in that sector but has distributors

Data Collection Instruments
Data collection instruments, unlike research methods which focus on how data are collected, are the tools that one uses in the collection of research data (Shajahan, 2009 p 57). This study uses structured and semi-structured interviews, and recorded observations. Open and closed ended questions are to be used in interviews in the study to ensure that respondents freely express their opinions (Shajahan, 2009).

Data Processing and Analysis
Kothari (2004 p 18) posits that after collecting research data, there is need to bring order and meaning through coding, tabulating and editing. Thomas (2009 p 57-59) explains that data can be processed using content analysis which is the systematic process of searching through one or more communications to answer questions brought up by the researchers. He further acknowledges that the method is the "only appropriate" method to use in qualitative research as it answers most research questions through searching for insights in situations, settings, styles, images, meanings and nuances.

This study therefore uses content analysis when analysing data from the findings.

Ethical Considerations
Ethics in research are important as they assist in according a study the validity, reliability and objectivity it deserves (Kumar, 2005 p 210), as its responses and results are not fraudulently derived. This study observes the following ethical issues that:
- an introductory letter is enclosed with the questionnaire. The letter explains the purpose of the study, the participants' rights and protection and also seeks their consent; and
- no rewards are offered to the participants except the undertaking that the results of the study will be made available to them on request at the end of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Response Rate
The response rate was of 88%. The high response rate is attributed to the fact that questionnaires were hand-delivered to the respondents who were then followed up after a week to collect the completed questionnaires. Where a respondent had not completed the questionnaire, the researchers would agree with the concerned respondent on the day of follow up and collection. Thus the constant follow up and the nature of respondents (senior managers) contributed to the high response rate.

Johnson and Owens (2009 p 127) argue that a response rate of at least 60% in a questionnaire survey is good and acceptable for contributions to refereed journal articles. Nulty (2008 p 308) agrees with the argument but goes further to state that a response rate of between 60% and 70% is more favourable. Thus, the overall response rate in this study is above the minimum threshold of 60% rendering the study findings reliable.

Profile of Respondents
21% of the respondents said that they had been senior managers for a period of five (5) or less years while 41% stated that they had been in senior management position for a period of between five (5) and 10 years. However 38% of the respondents stated that they had been senior managers for a period of more than 10 years.

This means that 79% of senior managers in the sample have served in that position for a period of more than five (5) years, hence are highly experienced. The implications are that they are most likely going to give responses that are based on what they practise rather than the ideal.

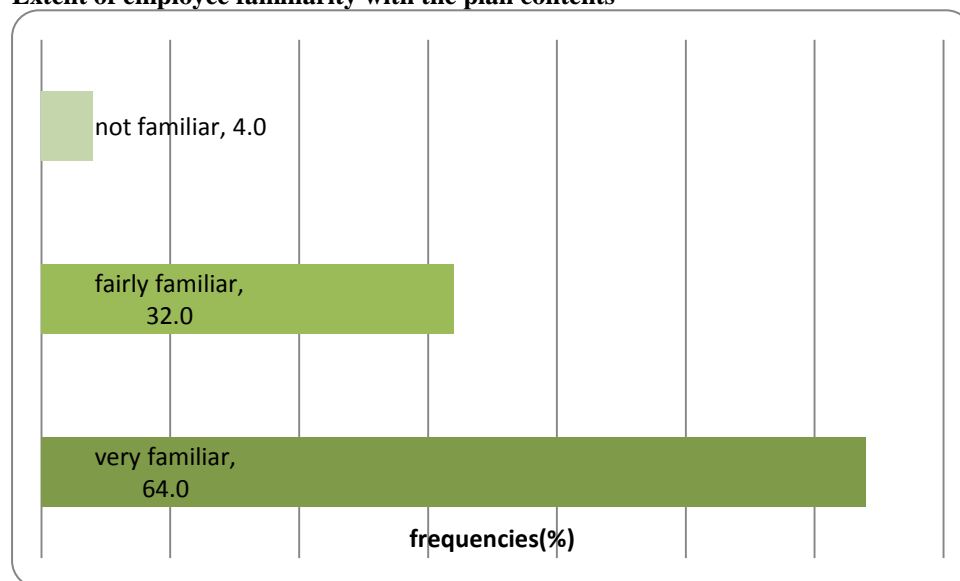### Extent of employee familiarity with the plan contents

Figure 1: Employee familiarity with strategic plan contents

The researchers sought to establish the extent to which employees in sampled organisations were familiar with the contents of their strategic plan documents. Figure 1 above reflects that 64% of respondents stated that employees were very familiar with the contents of the strategic plan documents while 32% of the respondents said that they were fairly familiar. However 4% of the respondents recorded that they were not familiar with the contents of the strategic plan documents. The findings show that there is effective communication between managers and their employees regarding set obectives. Employees who are familiar with the contents of their firms' strategic plan are an asset to their organisations as they will be able to make decisions that keep the organisation focused on the set goals or identified opportunities. In this case firms are most likely going to meet their set targets as the majority of their responses are in the very familiar and fairly familiar range.

Participants' levels
The researchers sought to establish the participants in the formal strategic planning sessions in the respondent organsations. Figure 2 below shows that 68% of the respondents said that in their organisations, both management and employees participated in the strategic planning process while 24% of the respondentssaid

that only the senior executives and middle managers were the participants. However 8% of the respondents stated that it was only senior executives who participated in the process.

The findings confirm the assertion that managers are communicating with their subdirnates. In this case managers are to a large extent involving employees in the strategic planning process, thus empowering them.
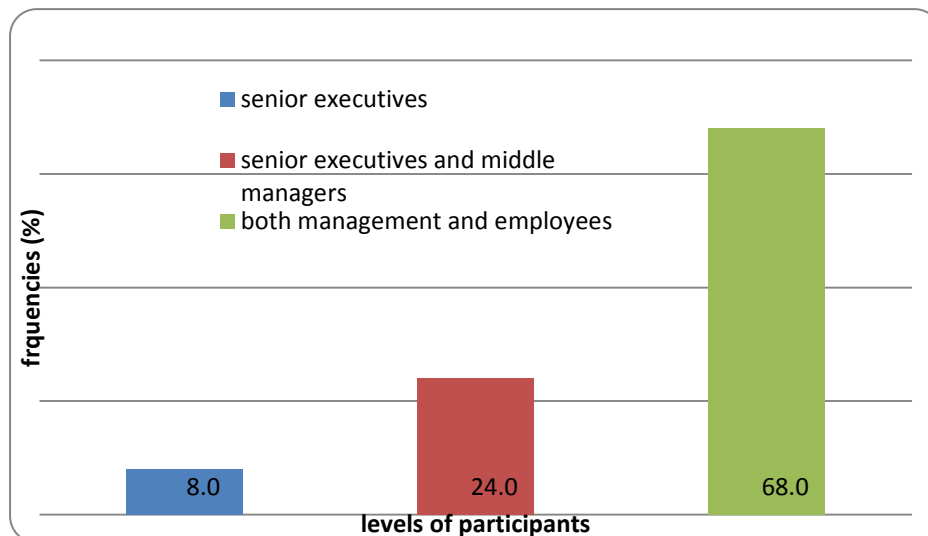

Figure 2: Who Participates?

The quality of a strategic plan document is a function of who contributed to its birth as advocated by Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) in their locus of planning theory. The authors argue that organisations who practice deep locus of planning- involve management and employees- are bound to come up with more relevant and useful strategic plan documents than those who leave the task solely to management. The researchers agree with this argument as managers are constantly sharing information among themselves to the extent that they have almost similar views on challenges facing organisations and the resultant solutions. This is commonly referred to as "group think". To counter the negative effects of "group think" requires bringing in other views from employees who are on the ground and have firsthand experience with the challenges facing the organisation. The result of having these two groups who have asymmetrical information is a thorough and objective analysis of issues leading to a rich strategic plan document.

Rewarding Employee Achievements
The researchers sought to establish if the organisations rewarded employees/departments that achieved set strategic objectives. Figure 3 below reflects that 72% of the respondents said that they did reward employees/departments that achieved strategic set objectives while 28% of the respondents recorded that they did not give any rewards despite set objectives having been attained.
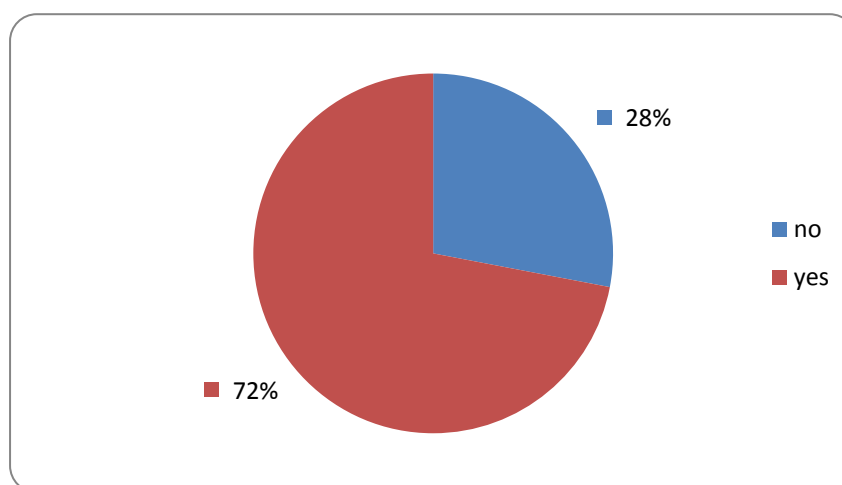

Figure 3: Rewards for Achieving Strategic Objectives

Rewarding employees for achieving set targets motivates employees to apply themselves on set tasks and it also shows employees that management recognises and values their efforts. The researchers further postulates that rewarding performance is a reflection of the extent to which managers value the set targets. Performance management theory also argues that rewarding employees for achieving set targets acts as a positive reinforcement to employees, while not doing so negatively reinforces employees (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, et al. 2008).Therefore, failure to reward attainment of the set targets only serves to communicate negative messages to employees hence management should not be surprised when employees begin to slacken in their performance.

Employee Initiatives
Respondents were asked if their organisations encouraged employee initiative. 62% of the respondents affirmed the encouragement of employee initiatives in the sampled organisations while 38% said that it was not encouraged.

Encouraging employee initiatives and participation is an important element of bringing in new and improved ways of performing tasks. Employees are the people who are on the ground and possess knowledge about the problems that they are encountering. In most cases they have clear solutions to the problems, most often they would have tried out and perfected the solutions informally. The purpose of bringing the suggestions to management's attention is mainly to have those solutions formalized and incorporated in the organisation's procedures and processes. Therefore organisations that do not encourage employee initiatives and participation effectively reject innovations, creativity and discourage employees the opportunity to improve organisational performance.

Another serious consequence of not encouraging employee initiatives and participation is that while management is formally denying employees the opportunity to bring up their creativity and innovation for formal consideration, the employees will be applying the ideas in their work procedures, thus compromising their safety and health at the work place. The result is that the organisation may incur lost production hours through injured staff or money through compensating employees who would have been injured at the work place.

Policies for Employee Initiatives
Respondents who said organisations encouraged employee initiative and participation were asked if they had formal policies in place to support employee initiative and participation. Figure 4 below shows that 56% of the respondents said that they had formal policies to support employee initiatives and participation in place while 44% of the respondents disagreed.
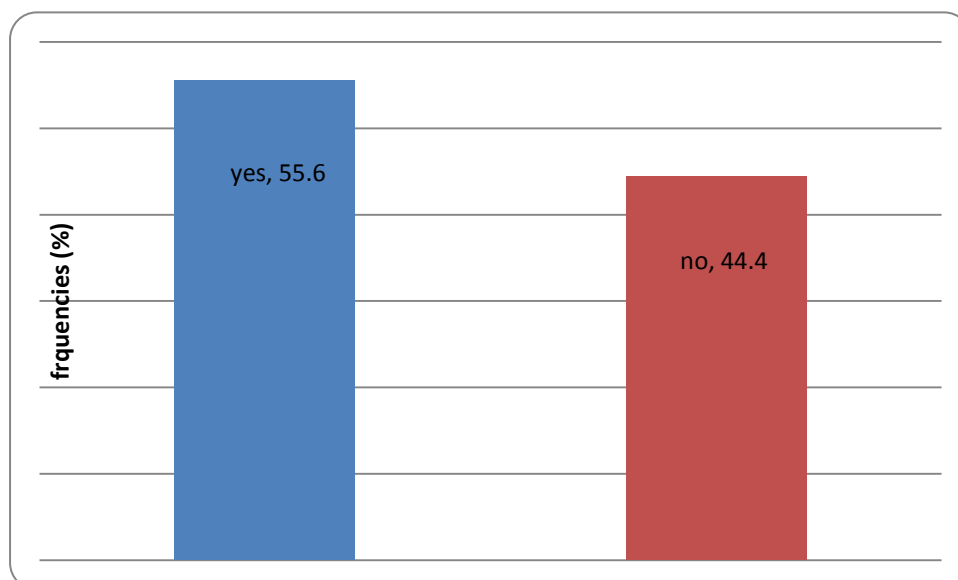

Figure 4: Are there formal policies for employee initiatives

Formal policies are important in organisations as they act as an open declaration by the organisation on what is accepted and not accepted in the organisation, thus they are the basis of creating a culture of creativity and innovation. Over and above the said benefit of policies, they also serve as an instrument of standardizing

management attitudes towards employee initiatives and participation thereby, providing employees with a shield against management penalties should anything go wrong in their quest for innovation and creativity.

Budgetary Support for Employee Initiatives
Asked further if they had a budget to support employee initiatives 61% of the respondents affirmed while 39% said they did not.

Provision of resources by organisations to support employee initiatives is very important as it acts as a reflection of management's commitment to seeing employees improving organisational performance. Organisations that do not provide the necessary resources will effectively be stifling employees from proffering ideas on how organisations can improve their processes or practices. Thus paying lip service to employee initiatives and participation without tangible support will, in the long run, create apathy in employees.

Value Attached to Employee Initiatives
The researchers sought to establish if respondents' organisations attached any value to employee initiatives and participation. Figure 5.24 on the next page shows the following:
- 61% of the respondents said that employee initiatives and participation were considered fairly important; while
- 39% of the respondents stated that employee initiative and participation were considered to be of little importance.
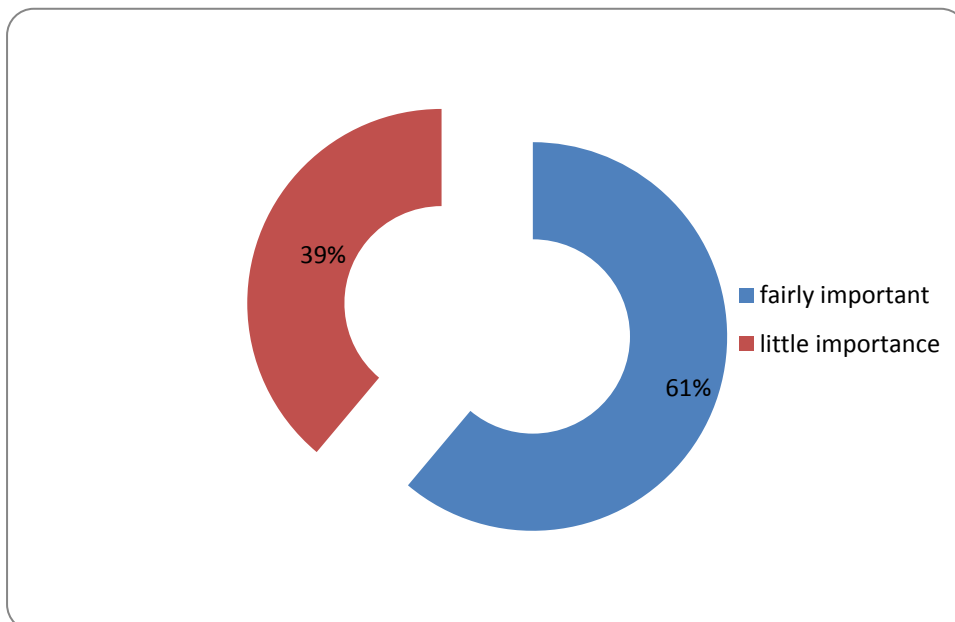

Figure 5: Value attached to employee initiatives

Attaching great value to employee initiatives and participation is a giant step towards stimulating creativity and innovation within organisations. No matter how much funds are set aside to support the initiatives and participation, they will be in vain if management does not attach great value to them. The value attached to the initiatives and participation determines the extent to which they will be supported (funded); therefore setting a budget for them with little value attached to them sends the message that management is hypocritical about the whole issue. This becomes the basis upon which employees will not initiate innovations or creativity, leaving managers wondering why employees are not contributing to organisational improvement when they have set aside resources to support the contributions. In this case the findings show that managers are lukewarm in valuing employee initiatives.

Existence of employee teams
Respondents were asked if in their organisations there were employee teams. Figure 6 below shows that 69% agreed that they had employee teams in their organisations while 31% disagreed.
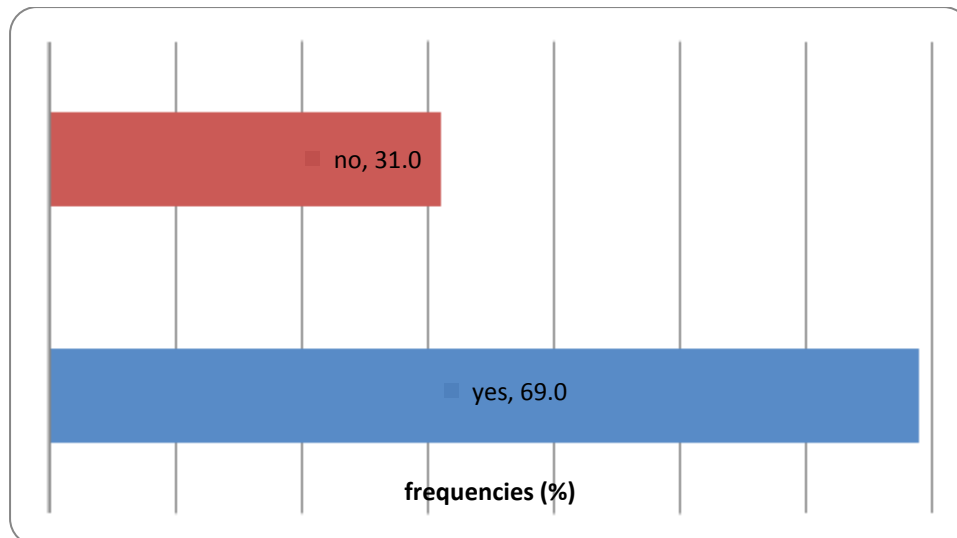
Figure 6: Do employee teams exist

Employee teams play an important function in organisations as they are the basis for organisational learning. They act as platforms that allow employees to learn from one another an informal way of transferring knowledge and skills among employees. Informal learning in organisations is very effective and in some instances more effective than formal learning. Formal learning has the major disadvantage of inhibiting the slow learners from asking questions as they fear being labelled as dull, or fear delaying others. Trainers in formal learning also have the main objective of finishing their planned lesson thereby at times, showing signs of impatience or irritation with slow learners. These limitations are greatly reduced if not totally eliminated when employees learn from one another. Therefore employee teams help to improve intra- departmental efficiencies.

Existence of cross-functional teams?
On being questioned about cross-functionality of the teams 83% of the respondents asserted that the teams in their organisations were cross functional while 17% disagreed.

The researchers sought to establish if the cross functional teams were on an ad-hoc (needs basis) or permanent basis. All respondents affirmed that their cross functional teams operated on an ad-hoc basis. Cross functional teams are a source of innovation and creativity as employees from different departments exchange diverse views on solving particular organisational problems.

Therefore the more cross functional teams meet the greater the possibility of organisations reaping the said benefits. Thus, organisations that have ad-hoc cross functional teams tend to reap fewer benefits as employees take time to "warm up" to one another and open their hearts. Put simply, employees who do not meet regularly tend to be shy to say their true opinions due to the negative effects of group dynamics.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The findings discussed above reflect that there are moderately high levels of employee engagement in empowerment programmes. However the major weaknesses in this engagement are management attitudes towards employee initiatives and fairly low levels of policies supporting employee initiatives. These two weaknesses render the respondent firms as moderately empowering employees.a in the sampled manufacturing firms. Thismeans that the sampled firms are shows that the sampled firms are moderately allowing employees the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the organisations' success. Therefore the sampled organisations are benefitting, to a limited extent, from employee contributions. To some extent the researchers concludes that positive feelings of being valued by the firms are also being created in employees. This means that employees in these organisations have some commitment to their organisations.

The researchers are of the view that the organisations have scope to increase levels of employee empowerment in their organisations and get their employees to be more committed to the firms. Strong levels of employee commitment to organisations are desirable as they result in employees subordinating their personal needs to the organisation. This is termed as "value congruence" by Hellriegel, Jackson and Slocum (2002).

The study recommends that the concerned organisations can enhance employee empowerment by adopting two approaches to management namely the Strategic Human Resources Management and the Total Quality Management approaches.

Strategic Human Resources Management Approach
Strategic human resources management is defined by Armstrong (2008) as a management practice that acknowledges that employees are the key resource in achieving organisational strategic objectives. Therefore organisations must align their human resources management practices to their strategic objectives. This process compels organisations to involve employees in the strategic planning process thus allowing employees to give input in the whole process. The approach also enhances communication,between management and employees, of organisational objectives and ways of achieving them. This has the effect of ensuring that employees are empowered in decision making.

Adopting Total Quality Management (TQM) Principles.
TQM is defined by Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2010 p 364) as a management approach that emphasises 100% accuracy in executing all business tasks, continuous improvement in all business phases, benchmarking all business activities against the best international organisations, involvement and empowerment of employees at all levels, team-based work design and total customer satisfaction. This approach will allow the concerned organisations to build a team culture that thus valuing all employees' contributions.

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