

**MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS IN A STEEL MANUFACTURING  
COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The importance of motivation for organisational success is recognised by organisations of various sizes and functions the world over. One of the biggest challenges for organisations is to establish the motivational levels of their employees with a greater degree of certainty. The multi-dimensional nature of an individual's motivation complicates matters, requiring in depth analysis.

The objective of the research is to determine the motivating factors, from an appreciative inquiry perspective, of the lower-managerial employees in a steel manufacturing company in South Africa. Appreciative inquiry reframes relationships around the positive and the possible and is grounded on the positive organisational behaviour philosophy. This philosophy suggests that focusing on the positive rather than the negative aspects of a situation will improve organisational success and individual well-being (McShane & Travaglione, 2007).

The study on motivational factors was deemed important as the company has gone through a number of organisational changes without establishing the impact thereof on the employees.

Owing to the multi-dimensional nature of motivation, the literature review showed that there is no single theory or integrated model for motivation studies. The evident lack of research integration in this area presented an opportunity for the researcher to study motivation from an appreciative inquiry perspective, of which the data collection stage began with the posing of questions that are **unconditionally positive**. The questions were analysed using the first-level factors framework presented in the two-factor theory of motivation by Frederick Herzberg.

A four-dimensional cycle model to study appreciative inquiry has been proposed by Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros in which four phases of appreciative inquiry are determined. These include the discovery phase, the dreaming phase, the design phase and the destiny phase. The research here

focuses on the first two phases of appreciative inquiry, namely the discovery phase and the dreaming phase.

The research has shown that by phrasing questions in **an unconditionally positive** manner the factors that motivate employees can be established. By determining those factors that employees would like the organisation to improve on ( or the factors that the employees would like to see more of), the factors that motivate these employees becomes evident.

During the discovery phase of appreciative inquiry, it became clear that the factors that employees of a steel manufacturing company appreciate are interpersonal relations, the work itself, the possibility for growth and technical supervision.

The dreaming phase of appreciative inquiry showed that the factors that the employees would like to see more of are: company policy and administration, working conditions, recognition, possibility of growth and interpersonal relations. It is, then, recommended that the organisation improve on these areas in order to increase the motivation of employees.

## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK**

I, **Tshiphiri Vincentia Muedi**, declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. Any assistance that I have received has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce at the University of Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or at any other University.

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# 1 CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

According to Robins (2005: 170), motivation is one of the most frequently researched topics pertaining to behaviour within an organisation. Management staff perpetuates research in this field, spending billions of Rands on human development programs in response to dissatisfied and poorly motivated workforce (Sanzotta, 1977: 3). Low motivation impacts greatly on productivity, turnover, levels of absenteeism and is altogether counter productive.

The South African manufacturing sector is currently facing a crisis over turnover, a problem compounded by shortage of skills in South Africa and absenteeism of which the steel industry is not immune (Faurie, 2008: 1). Although this trend has been largely attributed to low employee motivation by management in these industries, most of these organisations do not properly understand the motivational factors in play and, although spending billions on research to understand employee behaviour, have not accurately established the factors motivating employees within their organisations (Sanzotta, 1977: 3).

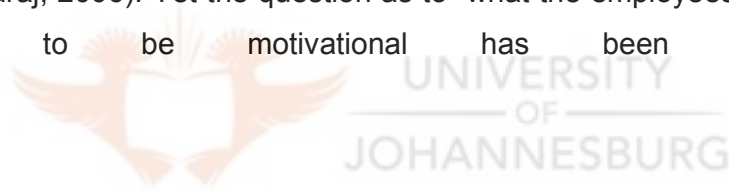
One such organisation is ArcelorMittal South Africa; established in 1928 as the South African Iron and Steel Industrial Corporation (ISCOR) as a parastatal in terms of the Iron and Steel Industry Act, No. 11 of 1928 in Pretoria. Over the years, the company was expanded to include Vanderbijlpark, Newcastle, Vereeniging and Saldanha Works.

From the late 1980's, ArcelorMittal has gone through a number of organisational changes, from transferring state interests to the private sector, unbundling the mining division, Kumba Resources, and the acquisition of a majority share by international steel company Mittal Steel, thereby making ArcelorMittal part of the largest steel manufacturing company in the world. In order for the company to control the cost structure, all non-core functions

were centralised within the past four years. With this came voluntary retrenchment packages. All these changes, directly or indirectly impacted on the factors motivating employees within the organisation.

Other factors that may have affected the motivation of employees in the organisation include the democratisation of the Republic of South Africa, bringing with it Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment legislation. Most non-black employees within these organisations felt that they would be treated unfairly because of efforts to redress past injustices, thus affecting their motivation (Maharaj, 2006).

Through the researchers observation, it is clear that ArcelorMittal has gone through a number of organisational changes in the past two decades. The organisation uses remuneration and other monetary rewards as motivational aids (Maharaj, 2006). Yet the question as to what the employees themselves consider to be motivational has been unresolved.



## **1.2 Problem statement**

Individual performance is the foundation of organisational performance (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999: 148). Motivation and the ability to work both interact to determine work performance. Although motivation is not an easy characteristic to measure or quantify, the lack of motivation leads to poor work performance of employees, which in turn leads to poor organisational performance. Managers, then, need understand and appreciate the motivational factors of their employees for improved organisational performance. After determining these, then they can tap into these factors for higher organisational performance.

## **1.3 Research question**

From an appreciative inquiry perspective, what are the factors that motivate lower-managerial level employees in a steel manufacturing company in South Africa?



## **1.4 Purpose of the research**

This study entails primary and secondary objectives.

### ***1.4.1 Primary objective***

The primary objective of the research is to determine the motivational factors of lower-managerial employees, from an appreciative inquiry, in a steel manufacturing company in South Africa.

### ***1.4.2 Secondary objectives***

The secondary objectives are:

- 1) To assess the usability of appreciative inquiry as a tool to study motivation;
- 2) To create a base from which the company can do comparative motivation studies in the future; and

- 3) To make recommendations on how the company can improve the motivational levels of employees.

The study is beneficial to the organisation for the following reasons:

- 1) It will enable managers to gain insight into the factors that motivate and those that can be enhanced to further motivate employees.
- 2) Assist the Human Resources department to devise strategies to improve employees' motivation based on those factors that are applicable to the organisation.



## 1.5 Literature review

Neumann (1994: 79) states that reviewing the accumulated knowledge about a research question is an essential early step in the research process. He further argues that a literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and thus one can learn and build on what others have done. In this research, basic literature on motivation and appreciative inquiry have been reviewed.

### 1.5.1 Motivation

It is generally agreed that motivation plays a central role to organisational success in terms of productivity. Herzberg argues that the psychology of motivation is tremendously complex and what has been discovered about motivation with any degree of certainty is limited (Herzberg, 2003: 86). Studies on motivation have predominantly attempted to answer the following questions (Myers, 1964:73):

- 1) What motivates employees to work effectively?
- 2) What dissatisfies workers?
- 3) When do workers become dissatisfied?

Motivation can be defined as an individual's degree of willingness to exert and maintain an effort towards organisational goals (Dieleman, Cuong, Vu Anh & Martineau, 2003: 2). Amar (2004: 89) argues that motivation goes beyond oneself and is associated with the forces acting on a person causing him to act in a certain way. Understanding the dynamics of these motivational forces is a requisite for identifying what drives people to act in certain ways.

Robbins (2005: 170) defines motivation as the process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards attaining a goal. Thus there are three main (distinct) elements to motivation (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999: 148 and Robbins, 2005: 170):

- 1) **Intensity** - which measures how hard a person tries or the strength of the response once the choice is made.

- 2) **Direction** – the option the individual takes when faced with a number of alternatives.
- 3) **Persistence** – which measures how long a person will continue to devote effort in the chosen direction.

Robbins (2005: 170) is of the opinion that in an organisation, individual effort should be directed towards and be consistent with organisational goals.

Motivation of employees is determined by factors at various levels (Dieleman et al, 2003: 2):

- 1) **Individual level** – this can be the person's job expectations, his or her self esteem and his or her goals compared to the goals of the organisation.
- 2) **Organisational level** – this includes the motivation to be in a job and the motivation to perform in line with organisational goals once the individual has filled a position.

### ***1.5.2 Motivational theories***

A number of theories have been developed as an attempt to identify and explain what motivates workers within an organisation. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999: 150) argue that motivation is a tough concept to measure and thus is illicited by manipulating certain conditions and observing how behaviour changes with those conditions.

Two groups of motivational theories have been identified:

- 1) Early motivation theories
- 2) Contemporary theories

These theories are discussed in detail below.

#### **1.5.2.1 Early theories of motivation**

Although somewhat outdated, they form the foundation of new motivational studies. These early theories of motivation are also referred to as content theories.

Content theories focus on identifying specific motivational factors; those factors within the person that energize, direct, sustain, and stop behaviour.

Four important content theories of motivation are:

- 1) Maslow's need hierarchy
- 2) Alder's ERG theory
- 3) Herzberg's two-factor theory
- 4) McClelland's learned needs theory

- **Maslow's need hierarchy**

Arguably the most well known and the most widely cited motivation theory, Maslow's theory of motivation suggests that an individual's needs are arranged in a hierarchical order of importance and a person will attempt to satisfy the more basic needs before directing behaviour toward satisfying higher level needs (Robbins, 2005: 171). Maslow's five levels of need (from the most basic to the highest level) are:

- 1) **Physiological:** The need for food, drink, shelter and relief from pain
- 2) **Safety and security:** The need for freedom from threat or for security and protection from physical and emotional harm.
- 3) **Need to belonging, for society and love:** The need for friendship, affiliation, interaction and love.
- 4) **Esteem:** The need for self-esteem and for validation from others.
- 5) **Self actualization:** The need to fulfil oneself by making maximum use of abilities, skills and potential or the drive to become what one is capable of becoming.

As each basic need becomes satisfied, the next need within the hierarchy becomes dominant (Robbins, 2005: 171). Maslow assumes that a satisfied need ceases to motivate, unsatisfied needs can cause frustration, conflict and stress. People have a need to grow and develop and, consequently, will strive to move up the hierarchy to satisfy other needs.

According to Robbins (2005: 171) Maslow further divided the five needs into higher- and lower-order needs. Physiological and safety needs are classified as lower-order needs as they are predominantly satisfied externally while



social, esteem and self-actualisation needs are classified as higher-order needs as they are satisfied internally.

Although it is one of the most popular theories of motivation, Pinder (1998: 60) argues that it is also probably the most misunderstood and the most frequently oversimplified theory. Pinder (1998: 63) criticises the theory arguing that there has been very little evidence to attest to its scientific validity and that most of the research conducted to test the theory has not been conducted appropriately. Theories that are based on needs are destined to be of only limited use in understanding human behaviour (Pinder, 1998: 63).

- **Alder's ERG theory**

The work done by Clayton Alder was based on reworking Maslow's hierarchy of needs to align it more with empirical research (Robbins, 2005: 175). Alder argues that there are three groups of core needs:

- 1) **Existence:** Needs satisfied by such factors as food, air, water, pay and working conditions. These include what Maslow considered to be physiological and safety needs.
- 2) **Relatedness:** Needs satisfied by meaningful interpersonal relationships and related to the social need identified by Maslow.
- 3) **Growth:** Needs satisfied by an individual making creative or productive contributions. This need encompasses the self esteem and self-actualisation needs of Maslow.

Unlike Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, this theory proposes that more than one need may be operative at the same time and if the gratification of a higher-level need is stifled, the desire to satisfy a lower-level need increases (Robbins, 2005: 175).

In addition to progression based on satisfaction that Maslow proposed, a frustration-regression process is also at work; whereby frustration to satisfy a higher-level need can result in regression to a lower-level needs (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999: 152).

However, like Maslow's theory, there is very little empirical support for ERG theory (Pinder, 1998: 65) which is also limited in scope owing to its needs basis.

- ***Herzberg's two-factor theory***

The two-factor theory, sometimes called the motivation-hygiene theory was derived from the work by Frederick Herzberg in conjunction with Bernard Mausner and Barbra Snyderman on job satisfaction, reported in the book "The Motivation to Work". Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959: 3) viewed the study of workers attitudes towards their jobs as important because work fills the greater part of the waking day for a majority of people. The findings of the study are also relevant to the industry as it may determine whether the worker's attitude toward his or her job makes any difference in the way he or she works or willingness to remain with the organisation. This understanding is perhaps more relevant today where industry is characterised by mass employee movement, with little loyalty to the organisation.

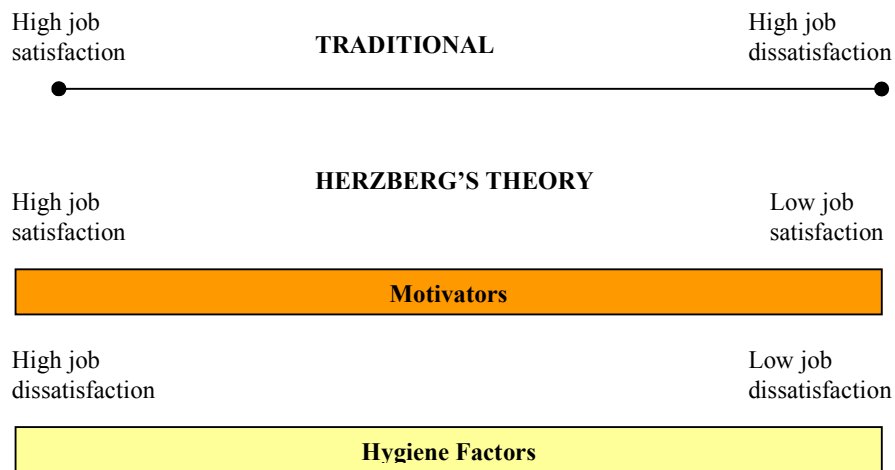
According to the two-factor theory, man is motivated by two sets of parallel and independent need systems (Sahni, 1969: 33; Reschke, 1967: 29). The first set of needs are referred to as maintenance or hygiene as their activity is directed towards the alleviation of discomfort. The other set of needs is referred to as growth or motivator needs as they take the individual away from the status quo (Sahni, 1969: 33). The literature states that these types of needs are of equal importance and that one set of needs cannot be substituted for the other. The hygiene and motivator factors identified in the study by Herzberg are tabulated below.

**Table 1: Hygiene and motivator factors**

<b>Hygiene Factors (lower-order)</b>	<b>Motivator Factors (higher-order)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Company policy and administration</li><li>• Supervision</li><li>• Relationship with supervisor</li><li>• Work conditions</li><li>• Salary</li><li>• Relationship with peers</li><li>• Personal life</li><li>• Relationship with subordinates</li><li>• Status</li><li>• Security</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement</li><li>• Recognition</li><li>• Work itself</li><li>• Responsibility</li><li>• Advancement</li><li>• Growth</li></ul>

Source: Herzberg et al (1959:81)

Before this theory became prominent, researchers believed that job satisfaction was measurable along a single continuum from job dissatisfaction at one end of the continuum to job satisfaction on the opposite side (Reschke 1967: 30). What Herzberg argued was that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not on the opposite sides of a single continuum, but rather are composed of two sets of independent continua each with its own set of variables. The continuum displaying job dissatisfaction includes only factors of hygiene while the other continuum, namely of job satisfaction, includes motivating factors (see figure 1).



**Figure 1: Traditional vs. Herzberg view of job satisfaction**

Adopted from Ivancevich & Matteson (1999) and Robbins (2005)

In summary, Herzberg showed that the factors involved in producing job satisfaction (and motivation) are separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposites, but rather, that the ends of the continua are no job satisfaction and no job dissatisfaction. The motivational factors (also called the intrinsic factors, satisfiers, job content factors or growth factors) operate on a continuum running from satisfaction to no satisfaction. Hygiene factors (also called extrinsic factors, dissatisfiers, maintenance factors or job content factors) operate on a different continuum running from dissatisfaction to no dissatisfaction. Thus the motivational factors are the primary cause of satisfaction and the hygiene factors are the primary cause of unhappiness regarding employment.

Criticism levelled against the two-factor theory is that the technique of story telling which tends to cause the interviewees to link instances of satisfaction to their own accomplishments and to associate instances of negative feelings with factors that are somewhat beyond their control or responsibility (Pinder, 1998: 37). Pinder (1998: 37) also argues that the results for empirical support are usually mixed, with disputes between the pro- and the anti-Herzberg factions.

- **McClelland's learned needs theory**

McClelland's has proposed a theory of motivation closely associated with the learning concepts, which focuses on three needs (Robbins, 2005: 177):

- 1) **Need for achievement (n Ach)** – describes the drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of standards or to strive to succeed.
- 2) **Need for power (n Pow)** – The desire to have impact, to be influential and to control others.
- 3) **Need for affiliation (n Aff)** – the desire for friendly and close interpersonal relations.

McClelland contends that when a need is strong in a person, its effect is to motivate the person to use behaviour that leads to its satisfaction (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999: 156). He also argues that these needs are learned by coping with one's environment; behaviour that is rewarded tends to recur at a higher frequency.

Tyilana (2005: 29) argues that the n Ach can be earned in conflict with a body of knowledge or literature that state that motives are normally acquired in childhood and thus are difficult to alter in adulthood. The technique of interpretation used in the study is also said to be more of an art than a science. For this reason, it is difficult to replicate the study carried out by McClelland.

### **1.5.2.2 Contemporary theories of motivation**

Contemporary theories, focusing on the description of motivated behaviour, are concerned with detailing the manner in which individual behaviour is energized, directed, maintained, and stopped (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1999: 156). Important contemporary theories of motivation include:

- 1) Expectancy theory
- 2) Equity theory
- 3) Goal-setting theory
- 4) Reinforcement theory

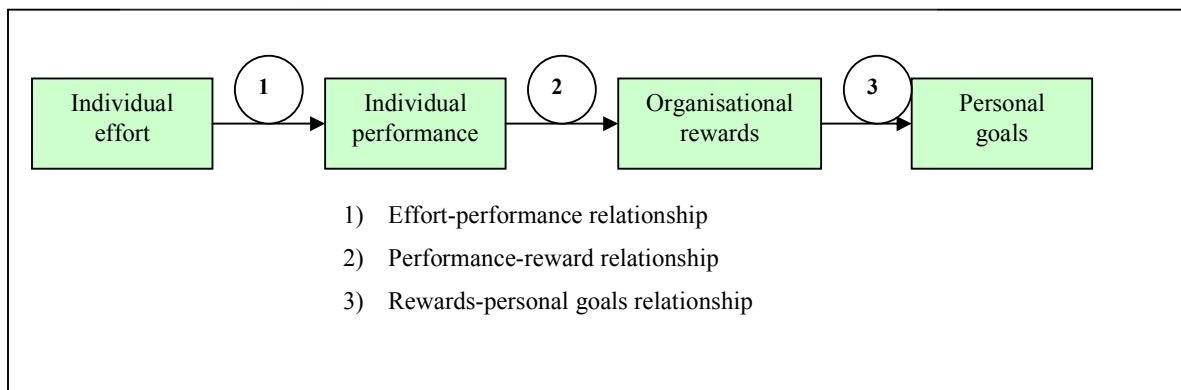
### - **Expectancy Theory**

Expectancy theory was proposed by Victor Vroom and it attempts to identify the reasons for the choices individuals make when faced with various alternatives (Rappaport, 2004: 2). According to Robbins (2005: 189), expectancy theory argues that “the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and on the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual”. Thus an employee will be motivated to exert a high level of effort when he or she believes that effort will lead to a good outcome, such as a performance appraisal.

The theory is said to focus on three psychological factors that instigate and direct behaviour (Rappaport, 2004: 3):

- 1) **Instrumentality** – perceived performance reward relationship.
- 2) **Expectancy** – the perceived effort performance relationship.
- 3) **Valence** - the value the individual places on a given reward.

Figure 2 below illustrates a simplified Expectancy model.



**Figure 2: Vroom’s Expectancy Theory**

Source: Robbins (2005: 190)

The expectancy theory argues that people’s behaviour results from conscious choices when given a range of alternatives and these choices are related to psychological processes (Ramlall, 2004: 52).

The expectancy theory has been criticised for its inability to specify which outcomes are relevant to which individual in which situation (Tyilana, 2005: 20). Like other motivational theories, this theory also lacks the empirical support for the concepts of expectancy, instrumentality and valence. Tyilana (2005: 17) also found that it focused on individual perceptions of the work environment and the interactions of that context with one's personal expectations.

- ***Equity Theory***

The equity theory was developed by Stacy Adams in 1965 and is based on the premise that individuals are not only concerned about the absolute quantity of the rewards they receive for their efforts, but also on the relationship of this quantity to what others receive (Ramlall, 2004: 52). The equity theory compares the job inputs and outputs of employees to others in a similar work situation (Robbins , 2005: 185). Inputs are what individuals bring to the job, such as qualifications, skills, effort and experiences. Outputs are what individuals receive from a job, such as recognition, pay, fringe benefits and satisfaction.

According to Schermerhorn (2001: 18), when people believe that they have been treated unfairly (when they perceive an imbalance in the outcome: input ratio) in relation to others, tension is created. Ramlall (2004: 55) argues that it is this tension that provides the basis for motivation as people strive for what they perceive as equity and fairness. People then respond to perceived negative inequity by changing for example work inputs, rewards received or their situation.

The implications for management of equity theory are (Schermerhorn, 2001: 18):

- 1) Underpaid people experience anger,
- 2) Overpaid people experience guilt, and
- 3) Perceptions of rewards determine motivational outcomes.

Criticism for the equity theory stems from the following issues (Pinder, 1998: 299):

- 1) Researchers have made a number of mistakes that leaves questions on the certainty of the scientific validity of the studies. For example: utilisation of ploys that probably generated, in the minds of experimental subjects, feelings that they were unworthy of the pay they were receiving;
- 2) Researchers have largely ignored the issue of which referent the subjects have used to compare themselves to, in order to establish the level of equity. A referent can be a fellow worker, family member, friend etc;
- 3) Pay has been used as the primary outcome provided to experimental subjects in exchange for their work, ignoring other alternatives that can act as motivators;
- 4) The ground work has been predominantly conducted in contrived laboratory settings, generally over very short periods of time; thus its applicability to real situations is questioned.

- **Goal-setting theory**

Goal-setting theory is a cognitive theory based on the premise that intentions to work towards a goal are a predominant source of motivation (Robbins, 2005: 180). According to Locke and Latham (1990) cited in Yearta, Maitlis & Briner (1995: 238), goal-setting theory assumes that human behaviour is purposeful and that goals direct and sustain an individual's energies towards performing a particular action. Locke and Latham (2002: 705) further argue that goals affect performance through four mechanisms:

- 1) Goals serve a directive function to channel effort toward goal-relevant activities;
- 2) Goals have an energising function – higher goals lead to greater effort than low goals;
- 3) Goals affect persistence;
- 4) Goals affect action indirectly by leading to the arousal, discovery and use of task- relevant knowledge and strategies.



The implications this has on management are that the organisation has to set specific, challenging goals and clarify goal priorities (Schermerhorn, 2001: 28). These goals should be accepted and there should be some level of commitment from the employees. When goals have been achieved, feedback should be given and accomplished goals rewarded.

This theory has been labelled as one of the most successful theory of work motivation; however it is not immune to criticism. Critics argue that goal setting researchers have failed to explore limitations to the theory in that it comes from a narrow, uni-dimensional view of logical positivism of the world (Pinder, 1998: 378). Like some motivational theories, critics also argue that the work has been conducted in tightly controlled laboratory conditions and not sufficiently in real-world organisational settings. Another finding was that the goal-setting formula was ineffective in situations in which the person found the task novel or complex (Pinder, 1998: 379).

- ***Reinforcement theory***

Reinforcement theory views behaviour as being caused largely by one's environment (Robbins 2005: 182). It focuses on the impact of the external environmental consequences on behaviour (Schermerhorn, 2001: 31). Reinforcement is seen as a tool to shape behaviour whether positive or negative. Following a response by a positive reinforcement increases the probability of the behaviour being repeated through the contingent presentation of a pleasant consequence, and following a response by a negative reinforcement increases the frequency of a behaviour through the contingent removal of an unpleasant consequence (Schermerhorn, 2001: 32).

Reinforcement theory is not viewed strictly as a theory of motivation; however, it provides a tool for analysing the controls of behaviour (Robbins, 2005: 183).

- ***Job design theory***

The premise of job design theory is that the task itself is a key to employee motivation (Ramlall, 2004: 56). The way the elements of a job are organised can act to increase or decrease effort (Robbins, 2005: 183). In the job

characteristic model, Robbins (2005: 183) further argues that any job can be described in terms of five core dimensions:

- 1) Skill variety
- 2) Task identity
- 3) Task significance
- 4) Autonomy
- 5) Feedback

Skill variety, task identity and task significance are critical psychological stages that combine to create meaningful work (employment that is important, valuable and worthwhile), and when they are present, the greater the employees' motivation, performance and satisfaction (Robbins, 2005: 185).

Job design has been criticised for being unable to be generalised beyond a small sample (Pinder, 1998: 202). The literature argues that some workers will rather prefer other incentives like pay, job security, better working conditions, etc. Katz cited in Pinder (1998, 202) further states that only employees who have been established in their jobs for moderate periods of time will be likely to benefit from the potential outcomes of job design.

### **1.5.2.3 Shortcomings (limitations) in motivational theories**

The motivational theories presented in this section are not in any way exhaustive, but are theories that have been commonly cited and used as the bases for motivational studies. Some of the problems associated with motivational theories are that:

- 1) There is still no clear indication of a single correct theory or an integrated model for motivation studies;
- 2) No clear indication is given to managers as to how to motivate employees;
- 3) Each of the theories takes a different point of departure as some focus on motivational levels and others on motivational processes; and
- 4) The complexities of the modern integrated organisation are not suitably addressed by the traditional motivational theories.

To bridge this gap, it might be necessary to utilise a different approach and consider a more inclusive view. For the purpose of this study, an appreciative inquiry approach was adopted to explain the motivational dynamics in the organisation.

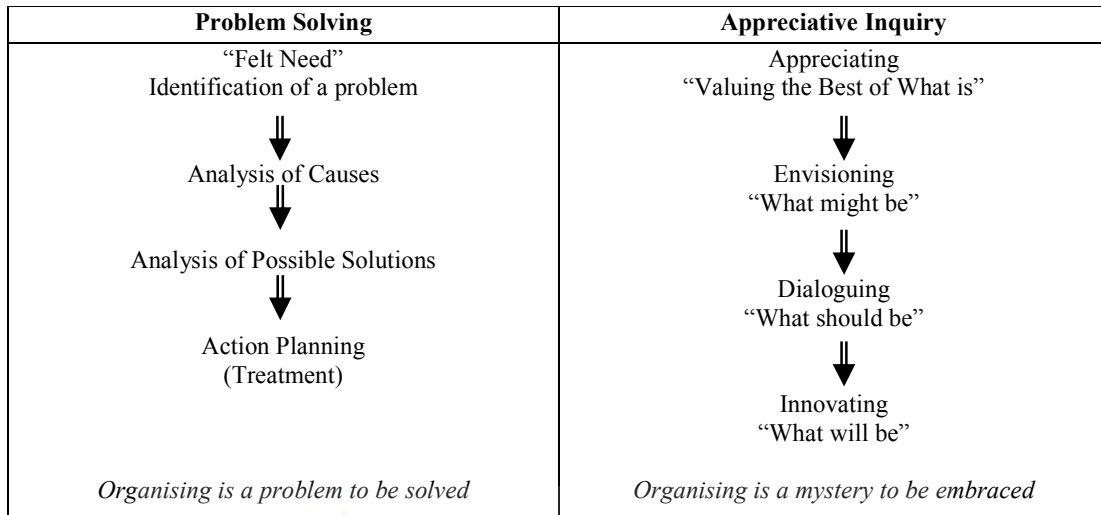
### *1.5.3 Appreciative Inquiry*

The technique of appreciative inquiry (AI) was developed by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Case Western University and is based on the assumption that every organisation has merits that works well for its structure, and these strengths can be the starting point of creating positive change (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008: 1). Cooperrider et al. (2008: 3) define AI as the “co-operative search for the best in people, their organisations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives life to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms”. M<sup>c</sup>Shane and Travaglione (2007) argue that AI is deeply grounded in the emerging philosophy of positive organisational behaviour, which suggests that focusing on the positive rather than the negative aspects of a situation, will improve organisational success and individual well-being.

AI uses the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen an organisations capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential (Cooperrider et al, 2008: 3; Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly Jr & Konopaske, 2006: 498). This is achieved through the use of **unconditionally positive questions**.

How does AI differ from traditional (conventional) managerial problem-solving? Traditional problem-solving uses a deficit-based approach to problem solving, which begins by diagnosing a problem, followed by the making of recommendations (Cooperrider et al, 2008: 16). AI embraces organisational challenges in a positive light by taking an affirmative approach, whereby an organisation is seen as a solution to be embraced rather than a problem to be

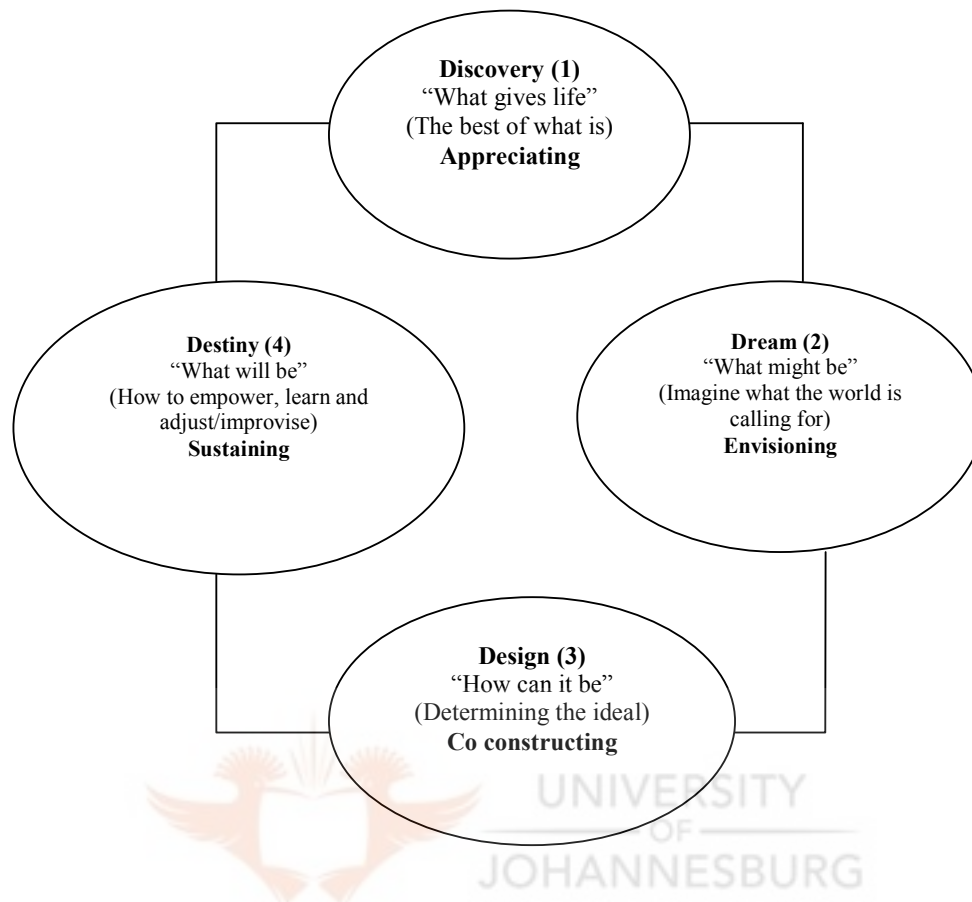
solved. Figure 3 below illustrates the difference between the two paradigms for organisational change, i.e. problem solving and AI:



**Figure 3: Problem solving vs. AI**

Source: Cooperrider et al, 2008: 16

Cooperrider et al (2008: 5) further developed a four-dimensional Cycle model of AI, see figure 4.



**Figure 4: Appreciative inquiry 4-D cycle**

Source: Cooperrider et al. (2008: 16)

The four phases are described as follows:

- 1) **Discovery phase** – this involves discovering the positive exceptions, successes, and most vital moments. This can involve determining what employees like about their job, unit or colleagues. During this phase, every question is positive.
- 2) **Dreaming phase** – this involves passionate thinking and creating a positive image of a desired and preferred future.
- 3) **Design phase** – this involves the process of dialogue, in which participants listen with selfless receptivity to each other’s models and assumptions and eventually form a collective model for thinking within the team, thus creating a common image of what should be.
- 4) **Destiny (delivery) phase** – here a plan is established, an execution strategy and a set of goals for the situation are examined.

The power of positive imagery is a key factor in AI as momentum for change requires large amounts of positive effect (Cooperrider et al, 2008: 10). Gibson et al. (2008: 498) poses the question that if one wants to inspire, mobilise, and sustain motivation, one should focus on opportunities that build on strengths. AI is positioned to probe and ask peak positive events and experiences.

#### **1.5.3.1 How is appreciative inquiry used to study motivation?**

Positive psychology has looked at the various effects of positive and negative emotion. Lewis, Passmore and Cantore (2008: 29) argue that a key ideology of AI is that people are motivated differently by the experience of positive and negative emotional states. Lewis et al. (2008: 29) further state that although negative emotional experiences focuses people's attention, they also tend to reduce the ability to be creative, socialise, deal with complexity or take risks. The introduction of negative emotion creates a threat ( which in turn makes people feel anxious, fearful or insecure) and this motivates people to alleviate the threat (Lewis et al., 2008: 29). Using negative emotion as a motivational factor limits productivity as once the threat is removed, so is the motivation.

Positive emotion on the other hand is associated with encouraging people to look and think broadly, interact with others, try new things and be creative (Lewis et al., 2008: 29). Positive emotions enhance people's ability to find ways through difficulties, work together, and be resilient in the face of stress or danger. Lewis et al. (2008: 29) further argue that positive emotion-based energy is a powerful resource for change. It is this positive emotion-based energy that the researcher wishes to determine in the study of motivational factors.

## **1.6 Research methodology**

The orientation of the study is qualitative, which Bryman (2001) defines as a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. This orientation allows the researcher to interpret the data from the perspective of the people being studied. The research follows what is termed a spiral model which allows the researcher to dive in and out of the data as she proceeds, thereby allowing the researcher to generate new understandings during each phase of the research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

### ***1.6.1 Sampling***

The focus of the study was on the lower managerial level (g role) employees within the organisation. This level was selected because it was viewed as the truest test of the organisations integrity. As the target population was small, no sampling was used for the study.

### ***1.6.2 Data collection***

The survey method was used to gather data. A self-administered questionnaire comprising of closed and open-ended questions was distributed to respondents. Anonymity of respondents was guaranteed so that they were not limited in their responses.

### ***1.6.3 Data analysis***

The framework for data analysis was derived from the categories developed by Herzberg referred to as the first-level factors. Content analysis technique was used to analyse the data. This technique allowed the researcher to reduce the responses, using a theme coding unit, to various categories as defined in the first-level factors.

### ***1.6.4 Results***

Results was analysed using content analysis. The most useful application of content analysis technique is its ability to convert qualitative data into quantitative form. The results was be presented in the form of graphs and

tables according to various demographic factors of the respondents. The results were presented in the form of a mini-dissertation report.

### ***1.6.5 Sense making and conclusion***

The final part of the study was the interpretation of the results obtained from which conclusions and recommendations were drawn.





## **2 CHAPTER TWO – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The research seeks to analyse the motivational factors of lower managerial level employees, from an appreciative inquiry perspective in a steel manufacturing company in South Africa. The lower managerial level employees have been identified as the most suitable group to test the integrity in terms of motivational factors of the organisation as they are the interface between high-level management and labourers. As such, this group is in a position to experience and understand challenges from both high-level management as well as the labourers. Also, many at this level have worked their way up that position making them skilled workers and not professionals, and are thus seen to have less power to move to other organisations or other positions. Their unique position within the organisation enables them to have a greater understanding of the organisation's operation at various levels. The study will use the framework proposed by Herzberg in his theory as an analytical tool.

This chapter seeks to outline the research methods to be used, which includes the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis methods.

### **2.2 Research design**

Zikmund (2003: 65) defines research design as a master plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data. The researcher must specify the sources of information, the research method or technique, the sampling method and the schedule of the research (Zikmund, 2003: 65). The survey method has been chosen as an instrument to collect data for this study.

### ***2.2.1 Target population and sampling procedure***

In order for this or any study to be empirical, the sample must be representative of the target population (Bryman, 2001). Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1993) define the target population as the set of people that contains the information of interest to the researcher. This research will focus on a steel manufacturing company in South Africa as the researcher, who was an employee at the organisation, identified challenges of employee motivation and productivity within the organisation. The target population is the lower-managerial staff in the company. Table 2 below gives the total number of employees in the company as of October 2007.

**Table 2: Total number of employees at a steel manufacturing company**

<b>JOB LEVEL</b>	<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
A-D	7	Executive level
E-F	40	Middle management and professionals
<b>G</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>Lower management</b>
H-I	355	Skilled workers
J-K	169	Semi-skilled workers
L	88	Unskilled-workers
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>728</b>	

Some issues regarding the target population in consideration were:

- 1) Can the population be enumerated?
- 2) Is the population literate?
- 3) Are there language issues?
- 4) Will the population co-operate?
- 5) What are the geographic restrictions?

According to Zikmund (2003: 369), the process of sampling involves any procedure using a small number of parts of the whole population to make conclusions that can be generalised. A sample is a subset or some part of a larger population.

As the target population was small, no sampling procedure was used in this study and the questionnaire was distributed to every member of the population. The target in the research is the G level (lower- managerial

employees) in the organisation, thus the total sample is 69 employees. The researcher did not encounter any literacy and language problems as English is the medium of communication within the organisation and the level of staff indicates a good level of literacy. No geographic restrictions were experienced as the employees were in the same organisation and majority of were in the same premises.

### ***2.2.2 Data collection methods***

Neumann (1994: 222) argues that the survey is the most widely used data-gathering technique in social research. A survey is defined as a method of gathering information from respondents thought to be representative of some population, using an instrument composed of closed structure or open-ended questions (Creswell 2003). The purpose of the survey is to use the results of the sample to make inferences about some characteristic, attitude, or behaviour of the larger population (Creswell 2003).

The advantage of using surveys as a method to capture data, is that the findings are easily generalised to a larger population. Since one of the objectives of this study is to assess the usability of appreciative inquiry as a tool to study motivation, the survey method is the most suitable owing to cost and time constraints.

There are two general types of problems associated with surveys (Federal committee on Statistical Methodology, 2001)

- 1) Coverage error occurs when some members of the population are excluded by mistake from the sample.
- 2) Nonresponse error is a failure to obtain information from respondents of the target population that were selected in the sample.

For the survey to be viewed as valid and reliable, researchers should ensure that these problems are minimised.

The most common methods of data collection in survey research are Neumann (1994: 223):

- 1) Self-administered questionnaire
- 2) Interviews
- 3) Structured record review
- 4) Structured observation

For this study, semi-structured questionnaires was used. In a semi-structured questionnaire, respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire themselves (Bryman, 2001). This instrument was chosen for the research because it is relatively cheaper and quicker to administer and also for the convenience that it gives to the respondents. The researcher ensured that a sufficient response rate is obtained and that the questions asked were not difficult or too long for the respondents to stay focused.

The questionnaire for the research has been structured into two sections (see Appendix A):

- 1) **Section A** - Biographical information in which closed-ended questions were used. Biographical factors inquired were number of years employed at the organisation, gender and racial group.
- 2) **Section B** – Questions on motivation in which two open-ended questions were used:

*Think about the current work context (circumstances) in the organisation, your job, the working conditions and fellow workers etcetera and answer the following two questions:*

1. *What do you appreciate about the above work situation?*
2. *What would you like to see more of to increase your appreciation of the job?*

Although open-ended questions are more time-consuming, they were chosen to allow the respondents to answer in detail and to obtain any unanticipated findings.

The procedures used in data collection was as follows:

1. Permission to conduct research using employees within the organisation was granted by the General Manager of the organisation (June 2007)
2. In the monthly feedback session in October 2007, the researcher got an opportunity to address the target population to explain the purpose as well as type of questionnaire they will be receiving.
3. The questionnaire was e-mailed to respondents and were given 2 weeks to give feedback (November 2007).

### ***2.2.3 Data analysis***

Once the data has been collected using methods described above, it must be analysed. Data analysis is the process of converting raw data collected into useful information for the purpose of decision making (Zikmund, 2003). Flick (2006) argues that the interpretation of data is the core of qualitative research, therefore the method of data analysis used can influence the nature of the results obtained. The method found to be most suitable for analysis of this research is content analysis. This method allows the researcher the freedom to add new categories should they emerge.

Of the various definitions of content analysis available in the literature review, two definitions were applicable in this instance:

- 1) Weber (1985: 1) defines content analysis as a research methodology that utilises a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text.
- 2) Dym (1985: 58) defines content analysis as a procedure for identifying those attributes of a message which have the greatest likelihood of leading to an accurate inference of the intention of the message source.

Common to the two definitions is the ability to make an inference from text (data) being analysed. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines an inference as “a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning”.

Some of the advantages of using content analysis are (Weber 1985:3):

- 1) The nature of such to operate directly upon text or transcripts of human communications.
- 2) Its ability to yield unobtrusive measures in which neither the sender nor the receiver of the message are aware they are being analysed.

A central problem in content analysis is in the data-reduction process by which many words of texts are classified into fewer content categories. Different people analysing the data might code the same data differently, thus consistency and reliability are crucial in this technique.

The process of content analysis begins with the creation and testing of a coding scheme (Weber, 1985: 21). This includes several basic steps:

- 1) **Define the coding unit** – a coding unit can be a word, word sense, sentence, theme, paragraph or whole text. The coding unit for research will be a theme, regardless of whether the theme is generated through a word, sentence or paragraph.
- 2) **Define the categories** – The researcher should decide if the categories are to be mutually exclusive and also how narrow or broad the categories are to be. The framework for this study is based on the work by Herzberg on the two-factor theory of motivation.

These categories and their definitions are given in table 3 below:

**Table 3 : Description of first-level factors**

<b>First-level factors</b>	<b>Description</b>
Recognition	Any act of recognition, be it a notice, praise or on (the negative side) blame.
Achievement	Includes stories involving some specifically mentioned success or conversely, stories of failures or the absence of achievement.
Possibility of growth	Changes in job situation where the possibilities for professional growth increase or decrease. Included in this is the possibility of workers to advance their skills within a given field.
Advancement	Actual changes in the status or position of the person in the company.
Salary	All events in which compensation plays a role.
Interpersonal relations	The relations with supervisors, subordinates and peers that take place within working hours, either sociotechnical or purely social interactions.
Supervision-technical	Competence or incompetence, fairness or unfairness and accessibility of the supervisor are critical in this factor.
Responsibility	The derived satisfaction (dissatisfaction) from being given the responsibility for your own work or for the work of others or being given new responsibility.
Company policy and administration	The availability of clearly defined policies, especially those relating to people and the adequacy of organisation and management.
Working conditions	The physical conditions of work, the amount of work or the facilities for doing the work affect job attitude.
Work itself	Actual completion of the work or of the work tasks are an indicator of good or bad feelings about it.
Factors in personal life	Situations in which some aspect of the job affected personal life in such a way that the effect was a factor in the respondent's feelings about his job.

Status	Person's position or rank, symbolised by title, parking space, car, size of office, furnishings, benefits, etc.
Job security	Objective signs of presence and absence of job security.

Source: Herzberg et al (1959: 81).

The first-level factors are divided into hygiene and motivator factors in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Herzberg motivator and hygiene factors**

Hygiene Factors (lower-order)	Motivator Factors (higher-order)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company policy and administration</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Relationship with supervisor</li> <li>• Work conditions</li> <li>• Salary</li> <li>• Relationship with peers</li> <li>• Personal life</li> <li>• Relationship with subordinates</li> <li>• Status</li> <li>• Security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement</li> <li>• Recognition</li> <li>• Work itself</li> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Advancement</li> <li>• Growth</li> </ul>

Source: Herzberg et al (1959:81).

If further categories emerge during data analysis, allowance will be made to add the categories provided they are material to the study.

- 3) Test the coding scheme on a sample of text.
- 4) Assess accuracy or reliability.
- 5) Revise coding rules.
- 6) Return to step 3 – this cycle continues until the coders achieve sufficient reliability.
- 7) Code all text.
- 8) Assess achieved reliability and accuracy.



It is important to note that during analysis, the researcher must always move back and forth between text and the output, progressively refining and validating the hypotheses (Weber, 1985: 71)

#### ***2.2.4 Quality assurance***

Validity and reliability of a measuring instrument or recording of data need to be considered in all research. Reliability measures if the outcome of the measuring process is reproducible and without error, thus yields consistent results, and validity measures the ability of a measuring instrument to measure what it is intended to measure (Zikmund, 2003: 302). However, in qualitative research, terms such as “internal validity” are replaced with “credibility”, “external validity” with “transferability”, “reliability” with “dependability” and “objectivity with confirmability” (Goulding, 2002: 43). These terms will be used in order to optimise the quality of this study.

- To ensure credibility, the researcher implemented a consistent coding scheme as per the framework of the study, has also applied multiple analysis of each questionnaire and used peer expert checks.
- Through thorough description of the research context and assumptions made, the researcher attempts to enhance the transferability of the research.
- To ensure dependability and confirmability, a framework that has been in existence in the studies of motivation has been used as an analytical tool.

#### ***2.2.5 Ethical rigour***

The researcher is fully in agreement with the position held in social science research communities generally regarding ethics. The code regarding ethics in research, as proposed by the Faculty of Management, at the University of Johannesburg, states that researchers have a set of ethical obligations. These guidelines are to:

- Do value-adding research;
- Set high standards in research;

- Familiarise themselves with research and reporting methodologies.

This document further states that researchers should be ethically accountable and therefore aspire to:

- Achieve objectivity and maintain integrity;
- Record and disclose their own data;
- Follow ethical publishing practices;
- Be accountable to society;
- Be sensitive to and respect the right to privacy of their subjects;
- Be sensitive to and respect the right to anonymity and confidentiality of their subjects;
- Be sensitive to and respect the right to full disclosure about the research;
- Protect subjects from harm;
- Protect the integrity of the environment.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

The research problem, to determine the motivational factors of lower-level managerial employees at a steel manufacturing company in South Africa, was assessed from an appreciative inquiry perspective. The research questions were analysed through a qualitative orientation in which a self-administered questionnaire was drawn, distributed and collected from lower managerial employees. These questionnaires were analysed using a content analysis technique and findings were written based on the interpretation thereof.



## **3 CHAPTER THREE – PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The goal of the study, as formulated in chapter 1, was to establish the motivational factors of lower-level managerial employees in a steel manufacturing company in South Africa from a positive inquiry perspective. This chapter focuses on the research findings profiling the motivating factors based on the framework used in this research according to the various demographic factors. The demographic factors inquired were:

- 1) Number of years in service
- 2) Gender
- 3) Racial group

Out of a population of 69 employees in lower managerial positions (g-role) within the organisation, 15 questionnaires were received back making a response rate of 22%. As a secondary objective, the research was to lay a foundation for future studies on motivation within the organisation. For this, the response rate was considered to be sufficient.

Therefore  $n = 15$

Where  $n$  denotes the number of respondents.

During the data analysis, the responses to the open-ended questions were divided into themes or categories. Through this process, 81 incidents were identified and categorised into the various themes. The percentage of the appearance of each incident was determined in each demographic factor. Incidents that represented more than 5% of the total incidents in the specific demographic factor were considered to be significant and will be discussed as a motivational factor that the employees appreciate or would like to see more of.

To conclude the chapter, the overall results of the study are summarised.

### 3.2 Findings on number of years worked

The respondents were divided into two groups according to the number of years worked:

- 1) Employees who have worked between 1 – 10 years
- 2) Employees who have worked for more than 10 years (> 10 years)

From the questionnaire received, 60% of employees had worked at the company between 1 – 10 years and 40% had worked for more than 10 years (see figure 5 below).

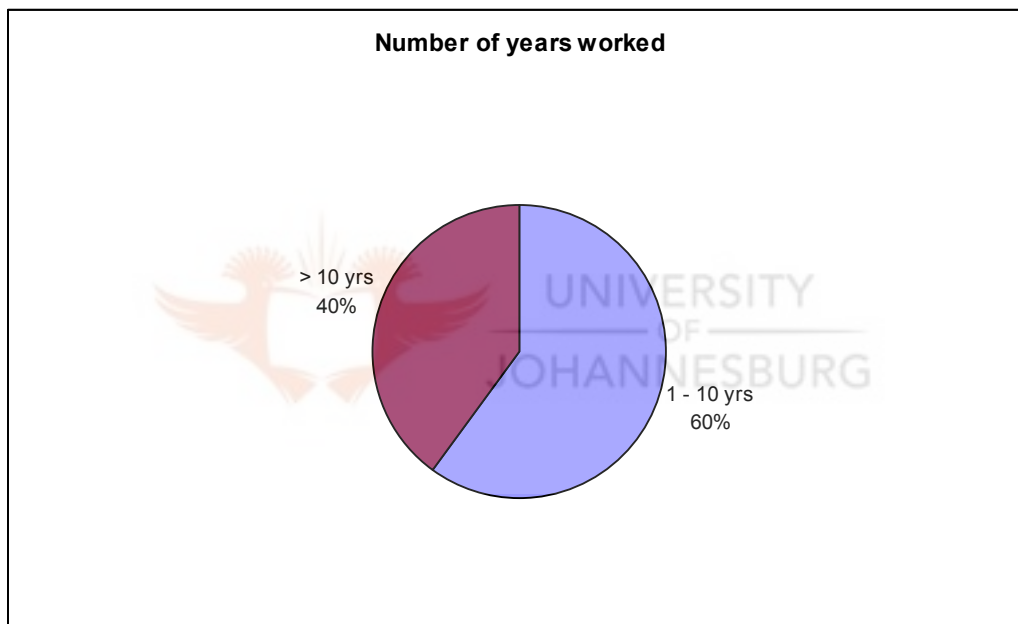
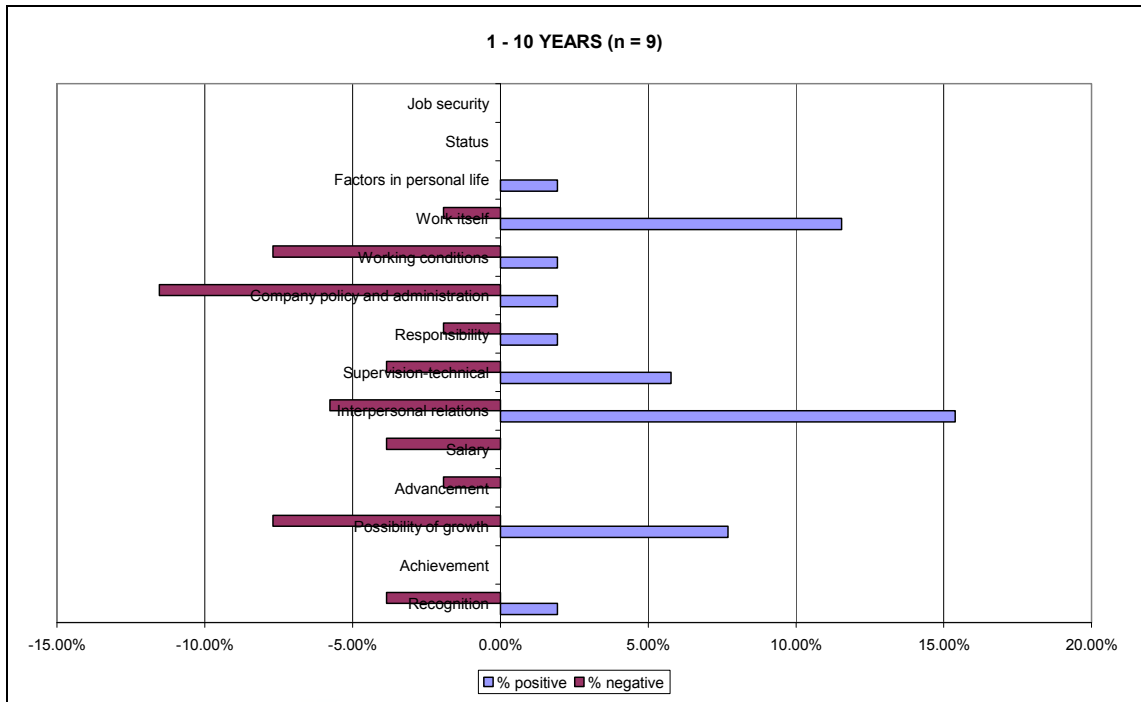


Figure 5: Percentage respondents by number of years worked

#### 3.2.1 1 – 10 years worked

The results of the employees who have worked for 1 – 10 years are summarised in figure 6 below:



**Figure 6: Results of employees who worked for 1 – 10 years**

The following job factors are appreciated by employees who have worked between 1 – 10 years:

- Interpersonal relations
- Work itself
- Possibility for growth
- Supervision technical

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that employees who have worked between 1 – 10 years appreciate about their job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- Fellow workers: Most of my fellow workers are friendly and mature people and can be approached for help or advice when needed.
- It also provides me an opportunity to interact with different sections in the works, i.e. Steelmaking, hot rolling, cold rolling as well as customers.

**Work itself:**

- I find my current work or job very interesting and challenging.
- The job is technically inclined and addresses the core of my passion
- I appreciate that the work that I do is challenging.

**Possibility of growth:**

- I also appreciate that I have the opportunity to further my skills in the work that I am doing and the company is willing to pay for my development and allow me the time to develop my skills.
- It provides a good platform and opportunity to learn.

**Supervision technical:**

- The manager is willing to try new avenues in terms of the way we make steel.
- There is an open-door policy with management, especially with my immediate manager.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the employees who have worked for between 1 – 10 years would like to see more of:

- Company policy and administration
- Possibility of growth
- Working conditions
- Interpersonal relations

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect factors that the employees who have worked between 1 – 10 years would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- There is a high level of bureaucracy associated with big companies; hence things take longer to get done, especially administrative issues.
- Top management to focus on the actual implementation of their policies and making sure that they are implemented and sustained on the ground level.

**Possibility of growth:**

- When work has to be delegated, all the most important tasks are given to the experienced personnel. This delays the growth of the less experienced personnel, which sometimes leads to frustration.

**Working conditions:**

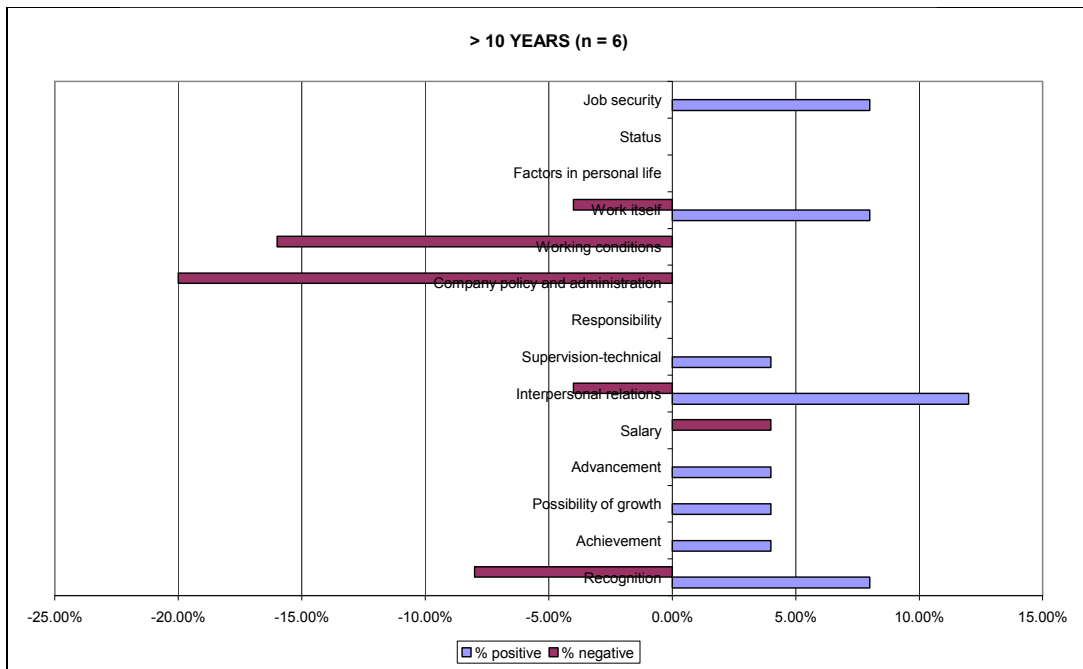
- I however do feel that we need more manpower and that we all have a lot on our plate and not enough time to get around to doing or completing projects.

**Interpersonal relations:**

- Also there seems to be “management by fear” style, which sees people with power enforcing certain decisions without being questioned.

**3.2.2 > 10 years worked**

The results of the employees who have worked for more than 10 years are summarised in figure 7 below:



**Figure 7: Results of employees who worked for > 10 years**

The following job factors are appreciated most by employees who have worked for more than 10 years:

- Interpersonal relations
- Work itself
- Job security
- Recognition

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that employees who have worked for more than 10 years appreciate about their job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- Working relations with the people are much closer and most of the colleagues (not even in my field) in other departments are known by name.
- Most of the employees know each other and are more than willing to assist each other with safety related issues.

**Work itself:**

- Each person understands the meaning and influence that every department plays in producing a quality product, as the best way of manufacturing and to deliver on time.

**Job security:**

- I appreciate that I have a job to do.

**Recognition:**

- I appreciate recognition for achievements.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the employees who have worked for more than 10 years would like to see more of:

- Company policy and administration
- Improved working conditions
- Recognition for jobs well done



Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect factors that the employees who have worked for more than 10 years would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- One always has to beg for months before receiving items such as printers, etc, only to be told that there are no funds available for them.

**Working conditions:**

- Employees feel that people who should see to it that conducive conditions are created and met don't really care.

**Recognition:**

- ArcelorMittal SA must show their appreciation more to illustrate that we are just as important to them.

### ***3.2.3 Summary of findings on number of years worked***

The factors that employees appreciate the most about their jobs in both tenures are interpersonal relationships and the work itself. For employees who have worked between 1 and 10 years, other factors, such as the possibility for growth and supervision technical are more important whereas employees who have worked for more than 10 years favour job security and recognition as a motivational factor.

Company policy and administration are the most important factors for motivation and change, and thus the company needs to focus on these to foster job appreciation and improve productivity.

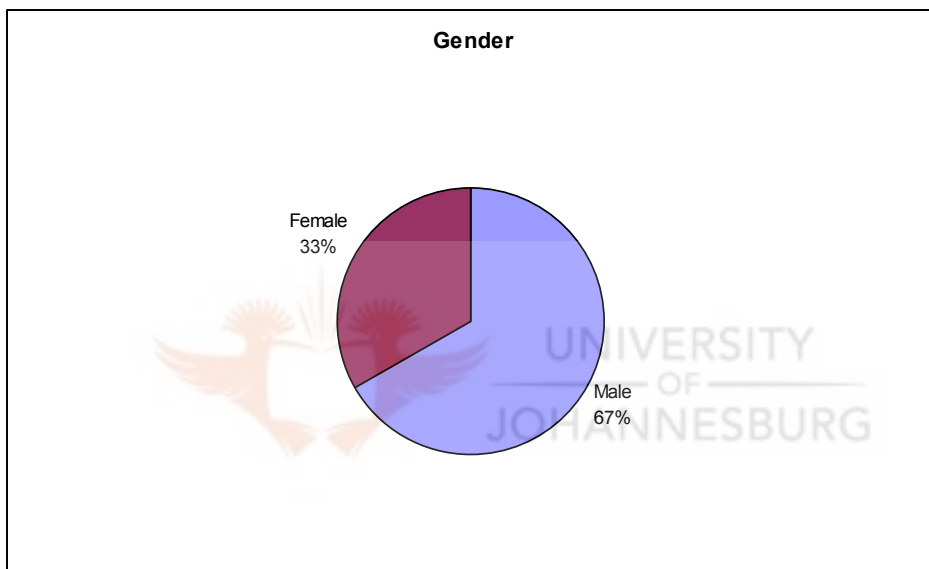
For employees who have worked for between 1 and 10 years, other factors that they find motivating are possibility of growth, good working conditions and the fostering of interpersonal relationships. Employees who have worked for more than 10 years would like to see the working conditions and recognition for the job done to increase their appreciation of the job.

### 3.3 Findings on Gender

The respondents were divided into two groups:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

From the questionnaires received back, 67% of the respondents were males and 33% of the respondents were respondents were females (see figure 8 below).



**Figure 8: Percentage of respondents by gender**

### 3.3.1 Male

The results of the male demographic are summarised in figure 9 below.

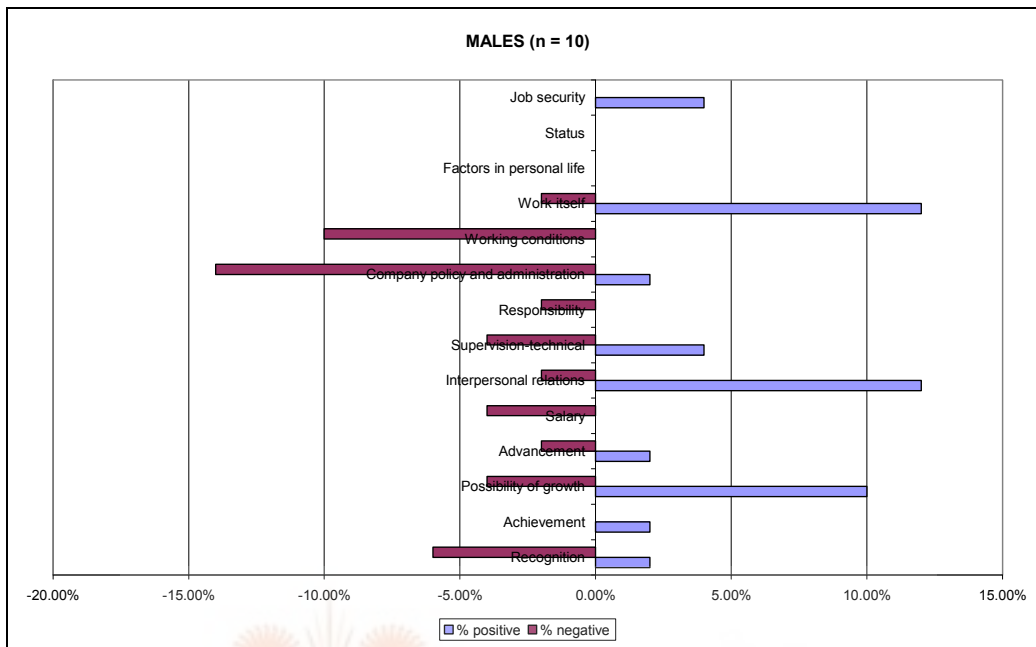


Figure 9: Results of male employees

Male employees appreciate the following factors about their jobs:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Work itself
- Possibility of growth

It is important to note that for male employees, interpersonal relationships are just as important as the work itself.

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that males appreciate about the job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- I appreciate that there is respect amongst the team members, in terms of ideas and other's views.

**Work itself:**

- The job is technically inclined and addresses the core of my passion.

**Possibility of growth:**

- It provides a good platform and opportunity for one to learn.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the male employees would like to see more:

- Company policy and administration
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Improved working conditions

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that male employees would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- There are tooooooo many meetings (safety, budget, week feedback, morning feedback and so on), so that you end up losing time.

**Recognition:**

- There is no recognition for the efforts a person makes to further their studies to enhance their contribution towards their field of work.

**Working conditions:**

- Feel and think that the people who should see to it that conducive conditions are created or met do not really care.

### 3.3.2 Female

The results of the female demographic are summarised in figure 10 below.

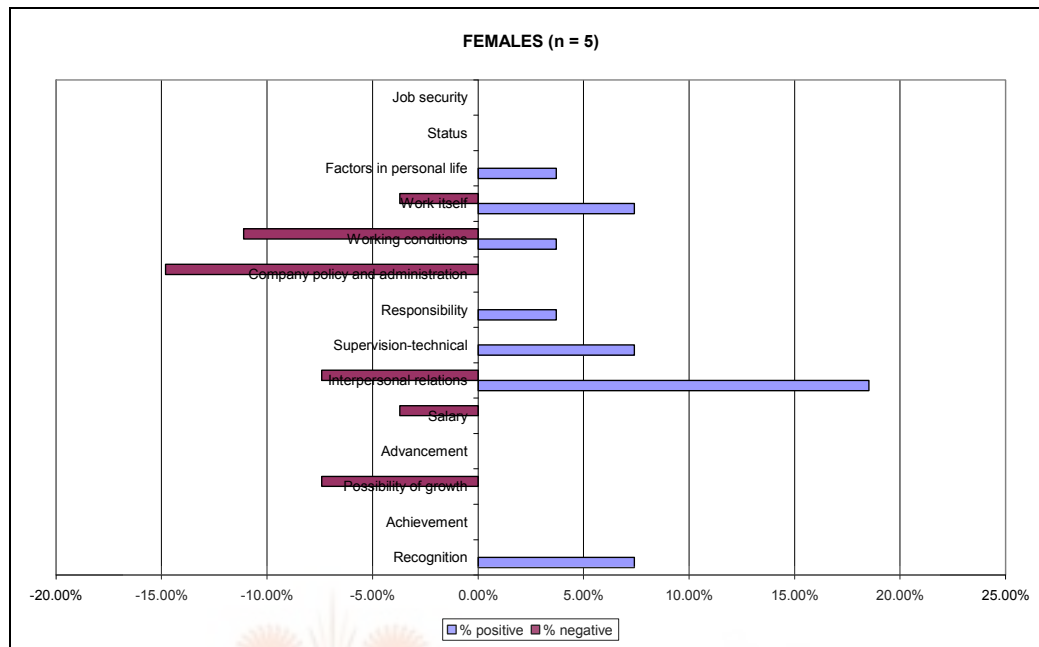


Figure 10: Results of female respondents

Female employees appreciate the following factors about their jobs:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Supervision technical
- Work itself

The factor appreciated most by employees of this demographic are interpersonal relationships, all the other factors are equally important.

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that female employees appreciate about the job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- Most fellow workers are friendly and mature people and can be approached for help or advice when needed.

**Recognition:**

- In my current situation, I am not discriminated against even though I am a black female and my opinions and advice are taken note of which is not the same for other sections in this business unit.

**Supervision technical:**

- I think there should be more strong managers to keep an eye on the loafers.

**Work itself:**

- I find my current work or job very interesting and challenging. It gives exposure to all spheres of the organisation and hence it is quite interesting.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the female employees would like to see more:

- Company policy and administration
- Improved working conditions
- Possibility of growth
- Interpersonal relationships



Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that the female employees would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- I would like to see more positions filled based on merit and not only on colour.

**Working conditions:**

- I however do feel that we need more manpower and that we all have a lot on our plate and not enough time to get around to doing and completing projects.

**Possibility of growth:**

- More training courses for workers and incentives for employees to further their studies.

**Interpersonal relations:**

- More racially integrated workforce.

### ***3.3.3 Summary on gender findings***

Interpersonal relationships is a motivational factor appreciated by both male and female employees, but more so by female employees. For male employees, interpersonal relationships are just as important as the work itself. The possibility for growth is also considered to be a strong motivational factor for the males, whereas females find recognition for a job well done, supervision-technical and the work itself as more motivational.

Both males and females would like to see company policy and administration and working conditions improve, for greater job appreciation. The males would also like to see more recognition for jobs well done within their job, whereas the females favour the possibility of growth and interpersonal relationships.

### **3.4 Findings on racial group**

The respondents were divided into two groups:

- 1) Black (which included Blacks, Indians and Coloured racial groups)
- 2) White

From the questionnaires received, 53% of the respondents were black and 47% respondents were white (see figure 11 below).

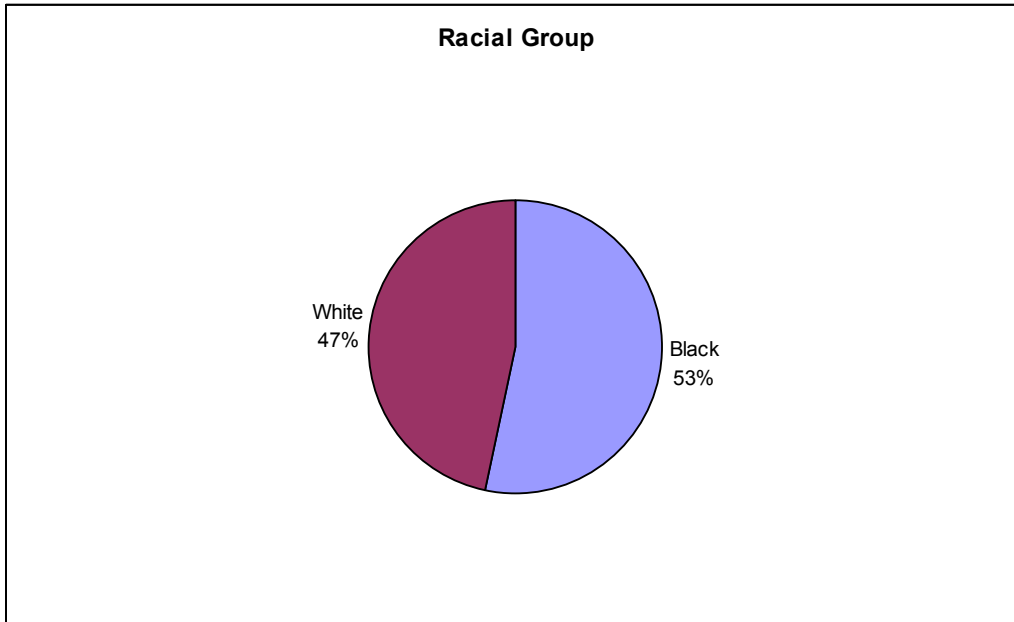


Figure 11: Percentage respondents by racial group

### 3.4.1 Black

The results of the black respondents are summarised in figure 12 below.

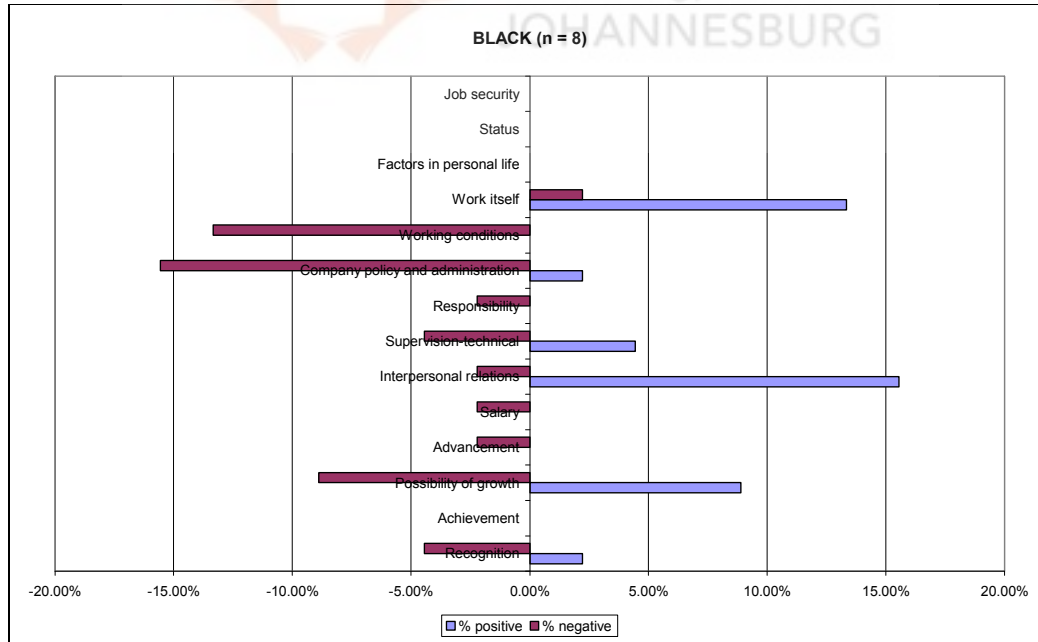


Figure 12: Results of black respondents

Black employees appreciate the following factors most with regards to their job:

- Interpersonal relationships



- Work itself
- Possibility for growth

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that black workers appreciate about their job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- My colleagues are quite flexible and good people to work with. From day one I fitted in and was part of the team, quite a very small team in terms of age and experience but we learn as we go along. In a way that gives us the cutting edge in what we do.

**Work itself:**

- I appreciate the exposure that I am getting.

**Possibility of growth:**

- This in turn motivates me to assess myself and change my goals and career aspirations to cope with the ever changing global work environment.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the black employees would like to see more:

- Company policy and administration
- Improved working conditions
- Possibility of growth

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect factors that the black employees would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- Top management to focus on the actual implementation of their policies and making sure that they are implemented and sustained on the ground level. On language policy, to make sure that policy is adhered to. English to be used as a medium of instruction at every level.

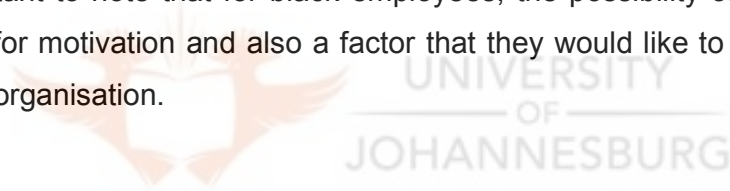
**Working conditions:**

- We have a very small team due to shortage of engineers around the country. This therefore makes it difficult to manage all the responsibilities that are given to us. There is no time to even think of new developments because you are overworked.

**Possibility of growth:**

- Therefore when work has to be delegated, all the most important tasks are given to the experienced personnel. This delays the growth of the less experienced personnel, which sometimes leads to frustration and a desire to leave the company.

It is important to note that for black employees, the possibility of growth is a key force for motivation and also a factor that they would like to see more of within the organisation.



### 3.4.2 White

The results of the white respondents are summarised in figure 13 below.

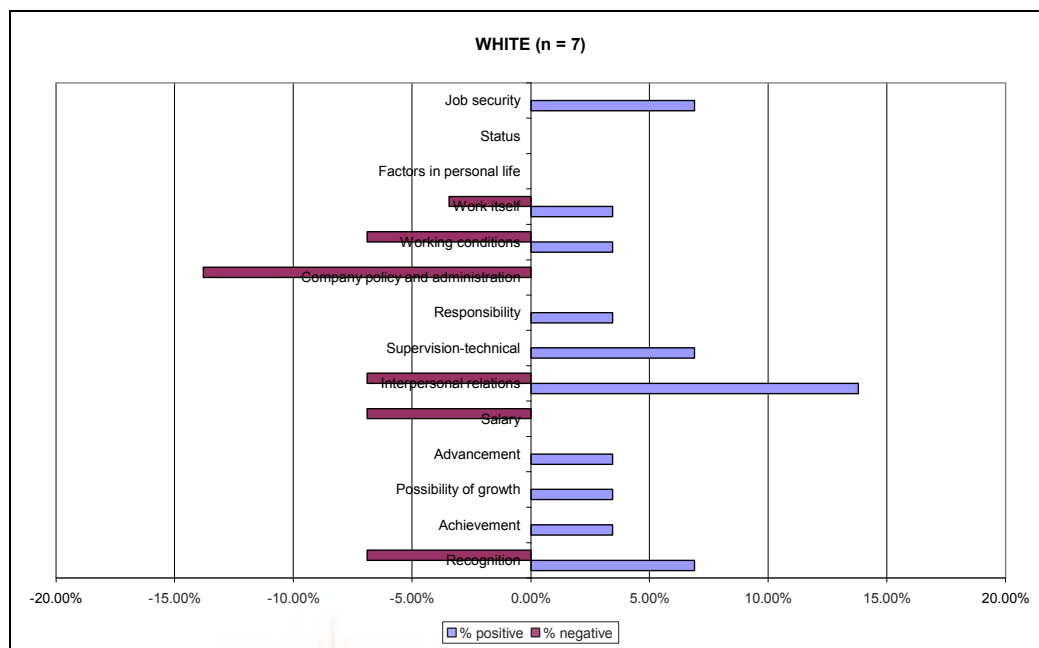


Figure 13: Results of white respondents

White employees appreciate the following factors most with regards to their job:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Supervision technical
- Job security

White employees appreciate interpersonal relationships the most, with recognition, supervision and job security being an equal second determinant for motivation.

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that white employees appreciate about their job include:

**Interpersonal relations:**

- Working relations with the people are much closer and most of the colleagues (not even in my field) in other departments are known by name.

**Recognition:**

- Recognition for achievements.

**Supervision-technical:**

- Senior manager has trust in his staff and is very accessible if required.

**Job security:**

- I am part of a large corporation which provides a higher degree of stability in relation to medium size enterprises.

In order to increase the appreciation of the job, the white employees would like to see more:

- Company policy and administration
- Improved working conditions
- Interpersonal relationships
- Recognition for jobs well done

White employees would like to see more company policy and administration, over improved working conditions, relationships and recognition.

Some of the key phrases quoted from the questionnaires that reflect the factors that the black employees would like to see more of include:

**Company policy and administration:**

- Certain rules and regulations that are imposed company-wide should be more focused on the areas that require such restrictions.

**Working conditions:**

- More people must be appointed; there are not enough people to do the job.

**Interpersonal relations:**

- It makes me think that it is expected of only a few people to do the work and the rest can sit and do nothing all day.

**Recognition:**

- Although Vereeniging is a negligible size in relation to the other business units, the organisation must show their appreciation more to illustrate that we are just as important to them.

### ***3.4.3 Summary of racial findings***

Interpersonal relationships are appreciated by both black and white employees. Black employees also view the work itself and the possibility for growth as motivational factors, while white employees appreciate job recognition, supervision-technical and job security.

All racial groups would like company policy and administration and working conditions to be improved to feel more motivated in the organisation. In addition, black respondents would like more possibility of growth, and white employees would like to see more interpersonal relationships and recognition for jobs well done to increase their appreciation of the job.

### 3.5 Overall results

Figure 14 below summarises the overall results by respondents.

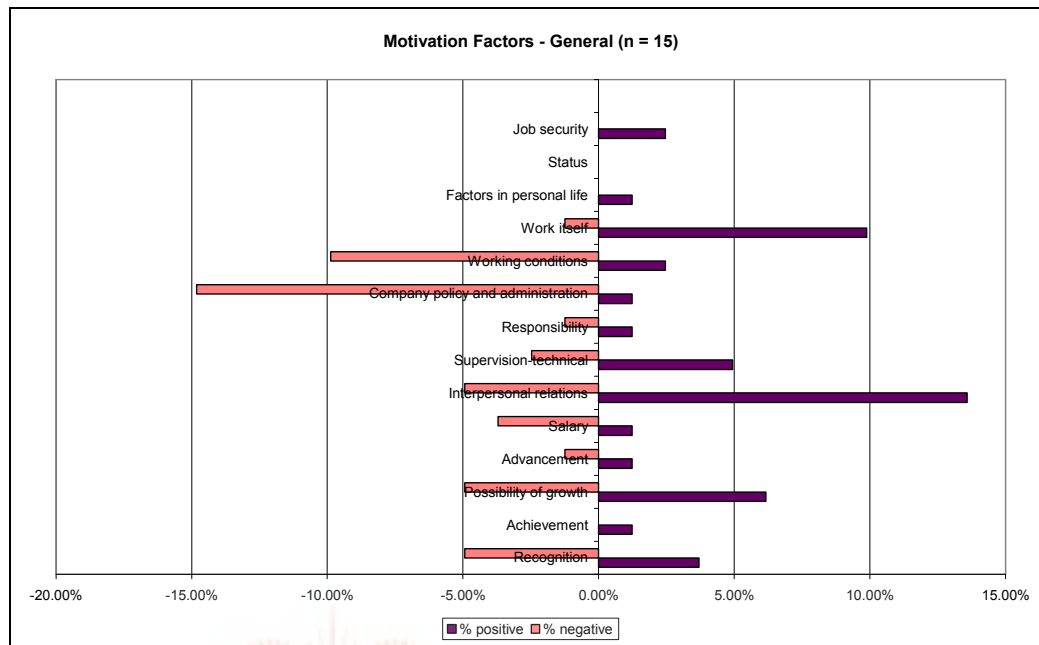


Figure 14: Overall results by respondents

Overall, the employees within the organisation are motivated by the following factors:

- Interpersonal relationships
- Work itself
- Possibility for growth
- Supervision technical

Employees would need to experience more of the following factors in order to feel motivated:

- Company policy and administration
- Improved working conditions
- Recognition for jobs well done
- Possibility for growth
- Interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal relationships and the work itself are strong motivational forces that the employees appreciate and would thus, require more attention be

given to them to maintain the level of motivation within the organisation. The employees are generally not happy with and would like to see improvements in company policies and administration as well as better working conditions.

Comparing the findings with the framework used in this study, the status category was not cited in any of the questionnaires analysed. Job security, factors regarding one's personal life and achievement only appear as those factors that employees appreciate. The remaining factors can be found as either factors that employees appreciate or those factors that they would like to see more of.



## 4 CHAPTER FOUR – SENSEMAKING

### 4.1 How the research incorporated appreciative inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a new approach to organisational development that has been applied to a variety of organisational studies. Asking questions that are unconditionally positive is the starting point of an appreciative inquiry study emphasising the fundamental principle of positive imagery, namely that perceived good is a positive influence.

The questions asked for the purpose of data collection in the research are:

*Think about the current work context (circumstances) at ArcelorMittal, your job, the working conditions and fellow workers etcetera and answer the following two questions:*

**Question 1: What do you appreciate about the above mentioned work situation?**

**Question 2: What would you like to see more of to increase your appreciation of the job?**

Question 1 focuses on the discovery phase of the four-dimensional cycle of AI and had the objective of identifying what is currently considered to be positive within the organisation. Question 2 on the other hand focuses on the dreaming phase of the four-dimensional cycle of AI whereby the respondents are asked to envision (what they would like to see more of) the factors that would increase their appreciation of the job. In both instances, it is important to note that the questions are asked from a positive perspective.



## **4.2 Interpretation**

### ***4.2.1 Factors that employees appreciate***

Interpersonal relationships is the factor appreciated the most by lower level managerial employees within a steel manufacturing organisation in South Africa. Interpersonal relationships have been defined as the relationships one has with supervisors, subordinates and peers that take place within working hours, either socio-technical or purely social (Herzberg et al., 1959: 81). This factor was the most recurrent across all demographic lines.

The work itself has been cited as the second most important force for appreciation (satisfaction) across demographics except the white sample of the population. The work itself can be defined as the act of fulfilling the positions requirements.

Although not stated by some demographics, other factors that the employees feel they appreciate and are motivational are the possibility of growth and supervisor technical. Besides occurring frequently as a response for motivation and job satisfaction, job security and recognition were not reflected in the overall results .

The discovery phase of appreciative inquiry showed that the most prominent factors for motivation and change are interpersonal relations, the work itself, possibility for growth and supervisor technical. If the organisation wants to maintain the level of motivation and positivity, it should ensure that these factors are made prominent and given due attention.

### ***4.2.2 Factors employees would like to see more of***

The factor that lower level managerial employees within a steel manufacturing organisation would like to see more of in order to increase their appreciation of the job is company policy and administration. Company policy and administration has been defined as the availability of clearly defined policies, especially those relating to people, adequacy of organisation and

management, which is clearly lacking within the organisation (Herzberg et al., 1959: 81). This factor was recurrent across all demographics.

The second most prominent factor that all employees would like to see more of is improved working conditions. Working conditions can be defined as the physical conditions of work, the amount of work or the facilities in which the work is done which affects one's attitude toward one's job. Like company policy and administration, this factor was prominent across all demographics.

Other factors that were recurrent include recognition, possibility for growth and interpersonal relationships. What is interesting is that these factors also featured as factors that some of the employees appreciate. The result shows that although the organisation does not ignore these factors for motivation and change, it is still of great importance to the employees for the organisation to continuously take stock and focus on these issues.

The dreaming or envisioning stage of appreciative inquiry showed that the lower managerial employees would like a future in the organisation with better company policies and administration, improved working conditions, more recognition and enriched interpersonal relationships. These factors should be considered more seriously by higher level staff as being components that improve productivity, which will require the organisation engaging with employees on this level. An organisational structure in which employer and employee are associates needs to be designed. To improve employee motivation, these are the factors that should be considered as important by managers.

## 5 CHAPTER FIVE – CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

Motivation is a concept used to explain why a person performs in the manner and on the level that he or she does (Kerr, 1979: 52). Understanding the motivation of employees is important for managers as it provides insight into what makes a particular employee tick. However, it is difficult to measure motivation as it is a multi-dimensional concept. Some of the causes for employee behaviour in an organisation include (Kerr, 1979: 52):

- 1) Factors determined by the environment outside the department;
  - 2) Factors within the department manager's realm of power;
- and
- 3) Factors individual to the employee.

Due to this multi-dimensional facet of motivation, a lot of motivational theories have been proposed, however there is no clear indication of a single empirical theory or an integrated model for motivation studies. For this reason, the researcher proposed another perspective of studying motivation, namely that of appreciative inquiry.

The research has shown that by phrasing questions in **an unconditionally positive manner**, the factors that motivate employees and factors that employees would like the organisation to improve on to increase their motivation can be established. The benefits of appreciative inquiry to traditional problem-solving is the prevention of the “us versus them syndrome” which refers to the antagonistic nature of the relationship between employees and management. An appreciative inquiry framework allows the organisation to design a structure of operation that motivates lower-level and higher-level employees, thus improving the productivity of the organisation.

The limitations of the study are:

- 1) The framework for data analysis has been adopted from a traditional motivational theory while using a new perspective;
- 2) Only two stages of the four-dimensional appreciative inquiry model were investigated. It would have been more beneficial if all the stages were investigated;
- 3) Low response rate which is characteristic of self-administered questionnaires;
- 4) Questionnaires do not allow for probing. However, the researcher structured the questions in as simple and understandable way as possible without losing the objective of the study;
- 5) In a self-administered questionnaire, people can be dishonest about the answer. Some people can go to the extent of discussing the answer with peers or family before giving their answer;
- 6) Interference during completion can influence the response and mood of the respondent.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations from the study can be made:

- 1) If the organisation wants to improve the motivation of employees within the organisation, they should review the company policy and administration, and working conditions. The researcher acknowledges that these two factors are the most difficult to change as the hierarchy of the organisation determines this, however, acknowledgement of the problem is an initial step to its resolution.
- 2) As this study was creating a base for future studies within the organisation, it is recommended that a larger study, using the same framework and incorporating other employees from other levels within the organisation be conducted. This study should not only end at the dreaming phase, but should go on to the design and destiny stages of the four-dimensional model of appreciative inquiry.
- 3) Academic researchers should investigate the use of appreciative inquiry as a tool or basis for studying motivation.
- 4) The value of motivation as a tool for organisational performance should be instilled in the traditional and technical process of functioning within the steel industry.

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## 7 Appendix A – Research questionnaire

### **Motivational questionnaire**

Dear respondent

The researcher would like to establish the motivational levels of employees in G-role level (first line management) working at ArcelorMittal South Africa Limited -Vereeniging Works. Please assist by completing this questionnaire.

#### **Confidentiality declaration:**

You are assured that the information obtained in this questionnaire will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and that no attempts to identify anyone through the questionnaire will be made. Please do not write your name and surname on the questionnaire to allow the researcher to maintain anonymity.

Please send the completed questionnaire by internal post for attention Tshiphiri to Postal Point 4 or send it back by e-mail.

## Section A: Biographical Information

(Please select one of the options by marking appropriate box with an X)

1. How long have you been working at ArcelorMittal Limited?

No of years	
1 – 5	
5 – 10	
10 – 15	
15 – 20	
> 20	

2. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	



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3. Which race group do you belong to?

Black	
White	
Coloured	
Indian	
Other (Please specify)	



