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OF ECONOMICS  
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**Title: „*The Impact of Organizational Maturity on  
Employee Engagement.*”**

**Dissertation**

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The dissertation was approved on: .....

Supervisor Signature

Poznań 2026

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the impact of organizational maturity on the level of employee engagement. The work integrates theoretical, methodological, and empirical approaches, identifying the relationships between factors that characterize mature organizations and the determinants of employee engagement. The author assumes that employee engagement is not a one-sided phenomenon, as it depends both on individual motivation and on the organizational environment. The central axis of the analysis is the reciprocal relationship between the organization and its employees, in which values, organizational culture, and the level of organizational maturity shape the quality of professional engagement. The dissertation includes a literature review and a systematization of definitions of engagement and models of organizational maturity and the development of an original Influence Matrix as a tool for analyzing how the level of organizational maturity affects the level of employee engagement.

Empirical research conducted in organizations at different levels of maturity revealed that there are common factors characteristic of both mature organizations and engaged employees, that the alignment of employee and organizational values significantly influences the level of engagement, and that there is a feedback loop between organizational maturity and engagement. All hypotheses were confirmed:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship (correlation) between the level of organizational maturity and the level of employee engagement.

H2: As the level of organizational maturity increases, the level of employee engagement increases, which is reflected in a statistically significant linear relationship between these variables.

H3: The relationship between the level of organizational maturity and the level of employee engagement remains statistically significant after controlling variables such as organizational size and respondents' length of service.

The results of the research made it possible to formulate practical recommendations for management, particularly in the area of building an organizational culture that supports long-term engagement. The Influence Matrix developed by the author can serve as a diagnostic tool for assessing and enhancing HR strategies and organizational development.

### 1. Research gaps

This dissertation addresses three interrelated gaps:

- **Theoretical gap:** the literature offers multiple, sometimes conflicting definitions of engagement and a fragmented treatment of organizational maturity. There is no coherent, integrated conceptualization linking these areas, their causal sequence, and levels of analysis.
- **Methodological gap:** few studies combine qualitative exploration (to identify constructs and instruments) with quantitative verification (to test correlations and regression models). The comprehensive form of methodological triangulation

developed and applied in this study has not been employed in previous empirical research on this topic and therefore represents a significant methodological novelty.

- **Empirical gap:** there is a shortage of robust empirical studies that (a) quantify levels of maturity across organizations, (b) identify shared factors in mature firms, and (c) examine how these factors impact employee engagement in organizations at different maturity levels.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

The primary aim is to examine the impact of organizational maturity on employee engagement and to construct a practical and theoretically sound Influence Matrix connecting these two phenomena. The dissertation integrates a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review (SLR) with a multi-phase empirical design to (1) identify the common factors of mature organizations that influence employee engagement, (2) assess the impact of organizational maturity on engagement across defined dimensions, and (3) formulate an Influence Matrix that conceptualizes the reciprocal relationship between maturity and engagement.

## **3. Theoretical Framing (brief)**

The theoretical part is organized in **two chapters**.

**Chapter I** clarifies the relationships and distinctions between motivation, engagement, satisfaction, and well-being, laying the groundwork for operationalizing engagement in organizational settings. It introduces the author's original concept of the Cycle of Intrinsic Motivation and Engagement, a dynamic, self-reinforcing system in which motivation leads to engagement and commitment, the achievement of goals, satisfaction, and ultimately happiness, which in turn renews motivation. The proposed conceptual framework integrates existing theories into a coherent, dynamic structure that can be effectively applied both to diagnose the work environment and to design developmental interventions. In this sense, the cycle may serve as a practical tool in human-resource management for identifying declines in engagement and for shaping a work environment grounded in intrinsic motivation and a sense of meaning. The chapter also highlights the role of values in sustaining long-term commitment and lays the groundwork for understanding employee engagement as a multidimensional construct shaped by both individual and organizational factors.

**Chapter II** builds on these findings, shifting from the psychological dimension of motivation to the systemic and organizational context of maturity. It offers a comprehensive analysis of organizational development and maturity theories through systemic, process, and value-based management perspectives. The chapter traces the evolution of organizational paradigms—from classical and mechanistic models to contemporary adaptive and human-centered approaches—and introduces Spiral Dynamics Theory as a framework for understanding how values, awareness, and culture evolve within organizations. Considerable

attention is devoted to the principles of continuous improvement as a mechanism for achieving higher levels of maturity. The discussion integrates Organizational Development (OD) and Change Management (CM) theories, outlining key stages of organizational growth and mechanisms of continuous improvement leading to maturity. It defines and compares major organizational maturity models, including a critical synthesis of studies from 2018 to 2024, and culminates in the author's original concept of the Cycle of Influence: Employee Engagement and Organizational Maturity. This framework explains the bidirectional relationship between maturity and engagement, demonstrating that organizational maturity enhances engagement through structure, culture, and communication, while engaged employees accelerate organizational learning and development.

**Together, Chapters I and II establish the theoretical bridge between micro-level motivation and macro-level organizational maturity, demonstrating that employee engagement serves as the linking mechanism through which human factors and organizational systems interact to sustain long-term development and continuous improvement.**

#### **4. Research Problem:**

The identified theoretical, methodological, and empirical gaps lead to the formulation of the central research problem of the dissertation. The research problem lies, in particular, in the lack of clear answers to the question of whether the level of organizational maturity determines the level of employee engagement, or whether employee engagement contributes to an increase in the level of organizational maturity, and whether this relationship is unidirectional or characterized by feedback. An additional dimension of the research problem is the absence of tools that would enable the operationalization of organizational maturity in a manner accessible to the average respondent and suitable for quantitative analysis of its relationship with employee engagement. Consequently, the relationships between organizational maturity and employee engagement remain insufficiently explored empirically, despite their significant importance for both management theory and practice.

#### **5. Research Questions:**

- (1) What is the nature of the relationship between organizational maturity and employee engagement, that is, is it unidirectional, or is there a feedback loop between them?
- (2) What positive and negative factors characteristic of mature organizations influence the level of employee engagement?
- (3) What common organizational factors affect both the level of organizational maturity and the level of employee engagement?
- (4) Is there a statistically significant relationship (correlation) between the level of organizational maturity and the level of employee engagement?
- (5) Does the level of employee engagement increase as the level of organizational maturity increases?

## 6. Objectives

### 6.1. Cognitive / Theoretical Objectives

The cognitive objectives focus on building a strong conceptual foundation that integrates individual and organizational perspectives on engagement.

Specifically, they include:

- (a) integrating management and organizational science literature on motivation, engagement, and value-based management;
- (b) organizing definitions and determinants of engagement at both individual (manager/employee) and organizational levels;
- (c) clarifying terminology and constructing a practical scale of organizational maturity that is comprehensible to respondents; and
- (d) developing the author's conceptual framework, the Cycle of Intrinsic Motivation and Engagement grounded in systemic and value-based theories such as Spiral Dynamics and ISO-based quality maturity models.

### 6.2. Methodological Objectives

**Methodological objectives** aim to design a rigorous empirical procedure to capture and verify the relationship between maturity and engagement. They include:

- (a) selecting an appropriate research approach to analyze the complexity of the maturity–engagement relationship;
- (b) applying a **multi-phase, triangulated methodology** that combines qualitative methods (IDI, exploratory study, case studies, FGI), **ABM testing** (to verify instrument logic and scenario sensitivity), and quantitative analysis (CAWI with correlation and regression); and
- (c) defining sampling criteria, measurement instruments, and reliability procedures to ensure scientific validity and replicability.

### 6.3. Empirical Objectives

The empirical objectives focus on identifying, measuring, and validating the mechanisms linking maturity and engagement. They include:

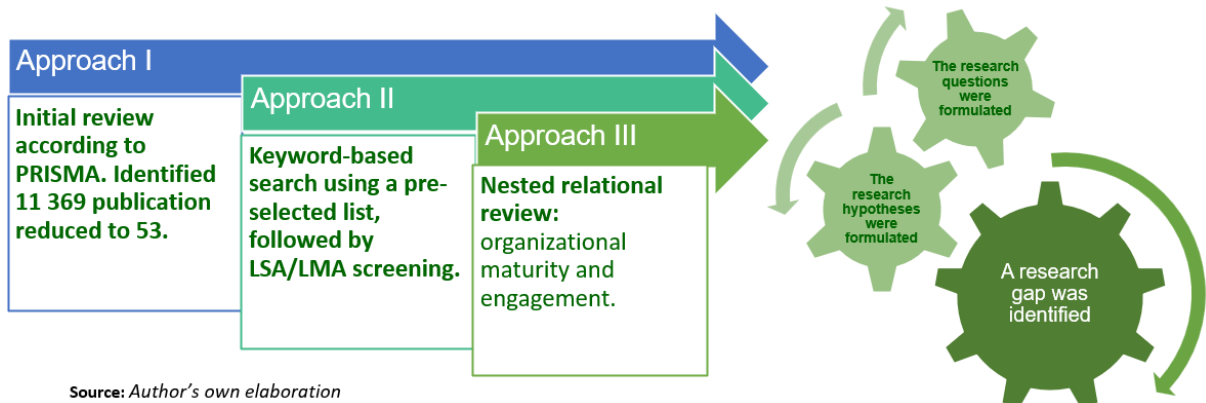
- (1) identifying key determinants of mature organizations and examining how they influence employee engagement;
- (2) assessing the impact of organizational maturity on engagement across defined organizational dimensions;
- (3) verifying correlations and regression relationships derived from qualitative insights; and
- (4) synthesizing findings into the Influence Matrix, which translates research outcomes into actionable managerial guidelines for enhancing both maturity and engagement.

## 7. Method (High-Level Overview)

The study employs a **multi-phase, triangulated research design** integrating qualitative, quantitative, and simulation-based methods to ensure both depth and validity of results.

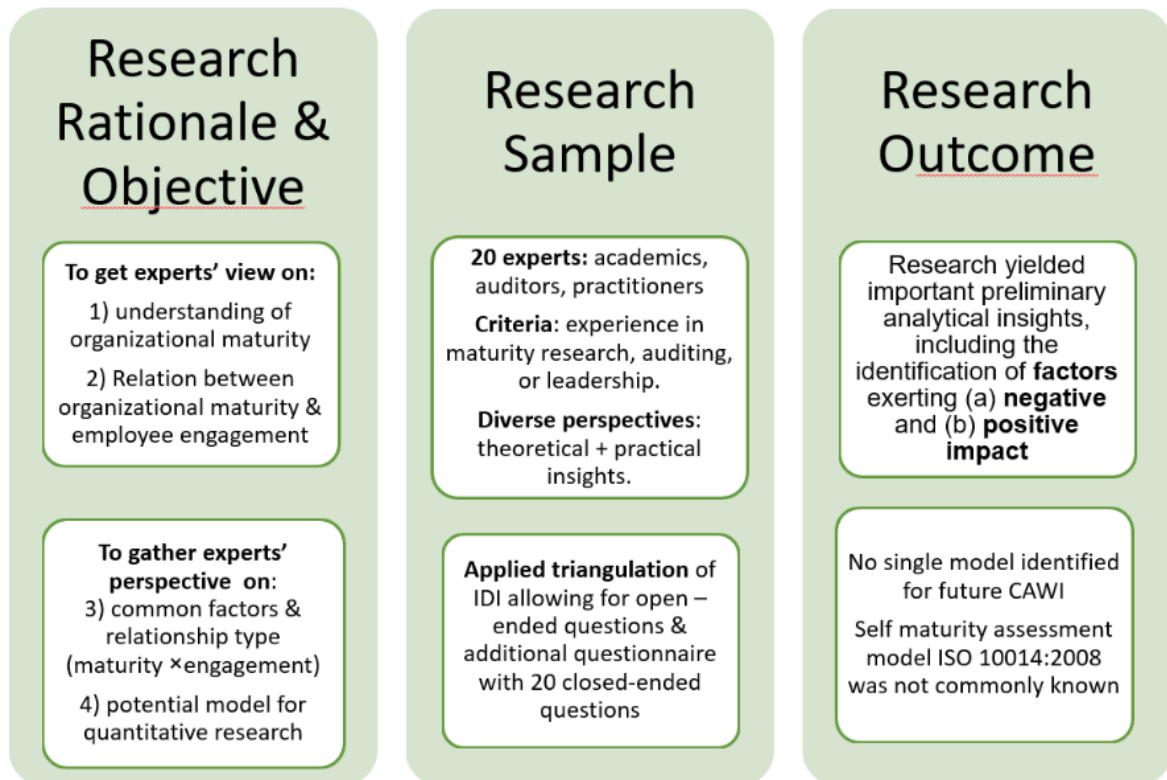
The **seven-phase methodological framework** was intentionally designed in this way to address the time and feasibility constraints of doctoral research. Conducting an extensive number of longitudinal case studies to represent organizations at multiple maturity levels would have required more than four years, during which contextual and environmental conditions might have changed, diminishing the validity of results. Therefore, the adopted framework integrates multiple methods and analytical lenses to obtain reliable, generalizable, and verifiable findings within a shorter research cycle, enabling the hypotheses to be tested effectively and the research questions to be answered comprehensively. This structured, multi-phase approach enabled methodological triangulation, combining theory-building, qualitative exploration, simulation testing, and quantitative validation to ensure comprehensive insight into how organizational maturity impacts employee engagement.

**Phase 1** consisted of a PRISMA-guided Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in the Scopus database, using keywords *organizational maturity* (9,884 records) and *employee engagement* (214 records), to identify conceptual gaps and construct the theoretical foundation. Below **Figure 1** presents how this phase was performed (3 conceptual approaches):



The SLR revealed a persistent gap: few (if any) empirical studies measure organizational maturity and employee engagement within a single, coherent measurement frame. Existing maturity models seldom link operational maturity traits (e.g., communication systems, role clarity, procedural fairness) to validated engagement outcomes. This motivated the development of an integrated tool and an Influence/Impact Matrix.

**Phase 2** involved 20 semi-structured in-depth interviews (IDIs) with experts in management, quality, and organizational development to identify determinants of maturity and engagement. Below **Figure 2** presents how this phase was conducted:

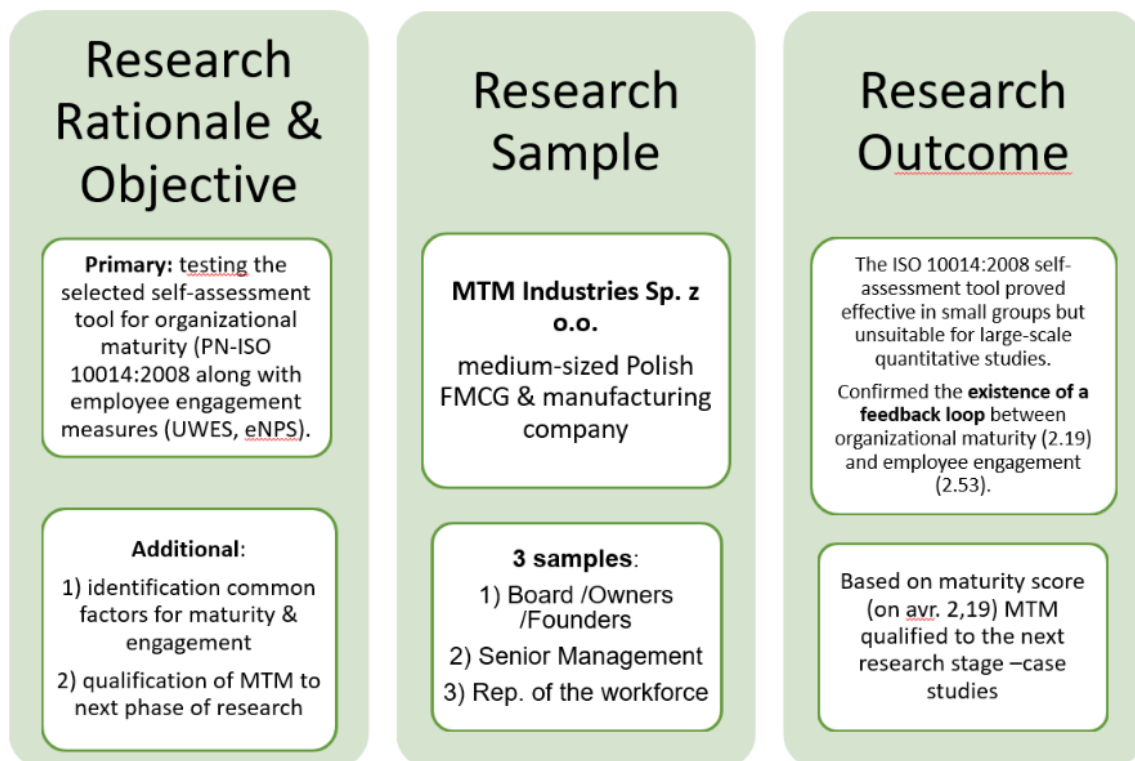


Experts converged on a common core of maturity that conditions engagement:

- transparent, two-way **communication**;
- **leadership** that is present, accessible, and coaching-oriented;
- **values** that are lived (not declared) and aligned with employees' values;
- **trust** and psychological safety;
- **role and process clarity** (including fairness).

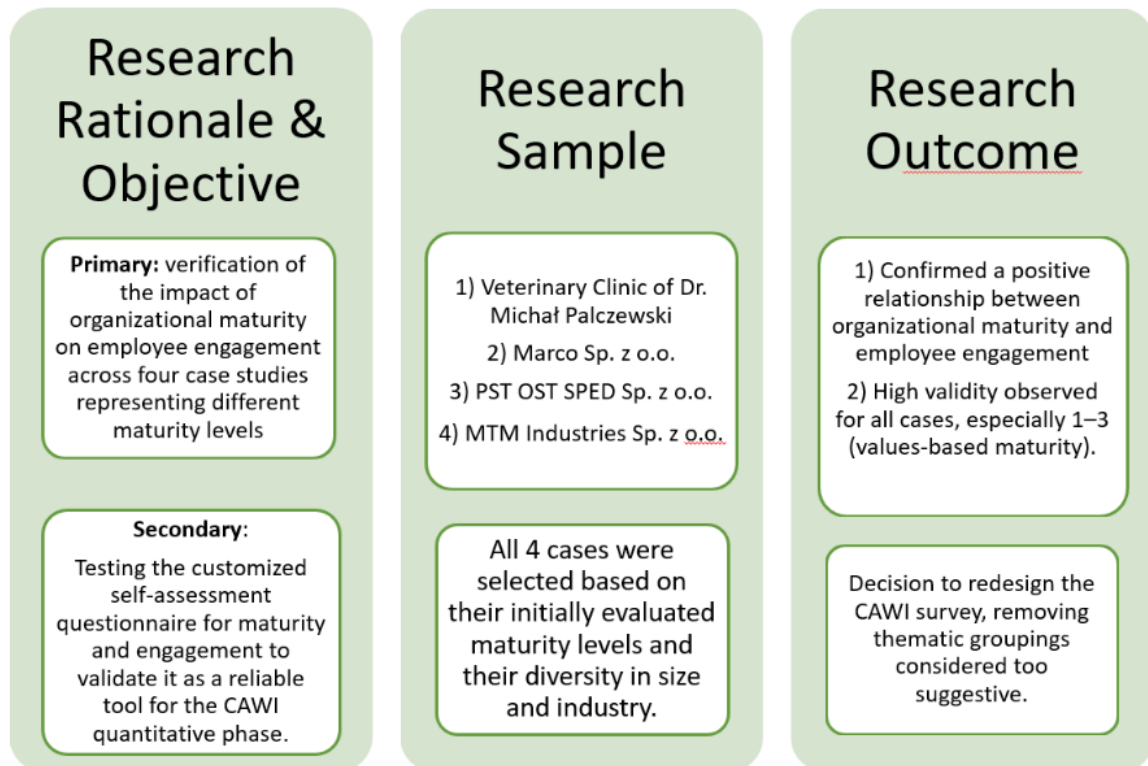
These elements repeatedly appeared as levers that raise energy, identification with goals, initiative/voice, satisfaction, and a sense of meaning.

**Phase 3** encompassed exploratory research at MTM Industries Sp. z o.o., focusing on testing the applicability of the ISO 10014:2008 self-assessment tool and refining hypotheses. Below **Figure 3** presents how this phase was conducted:



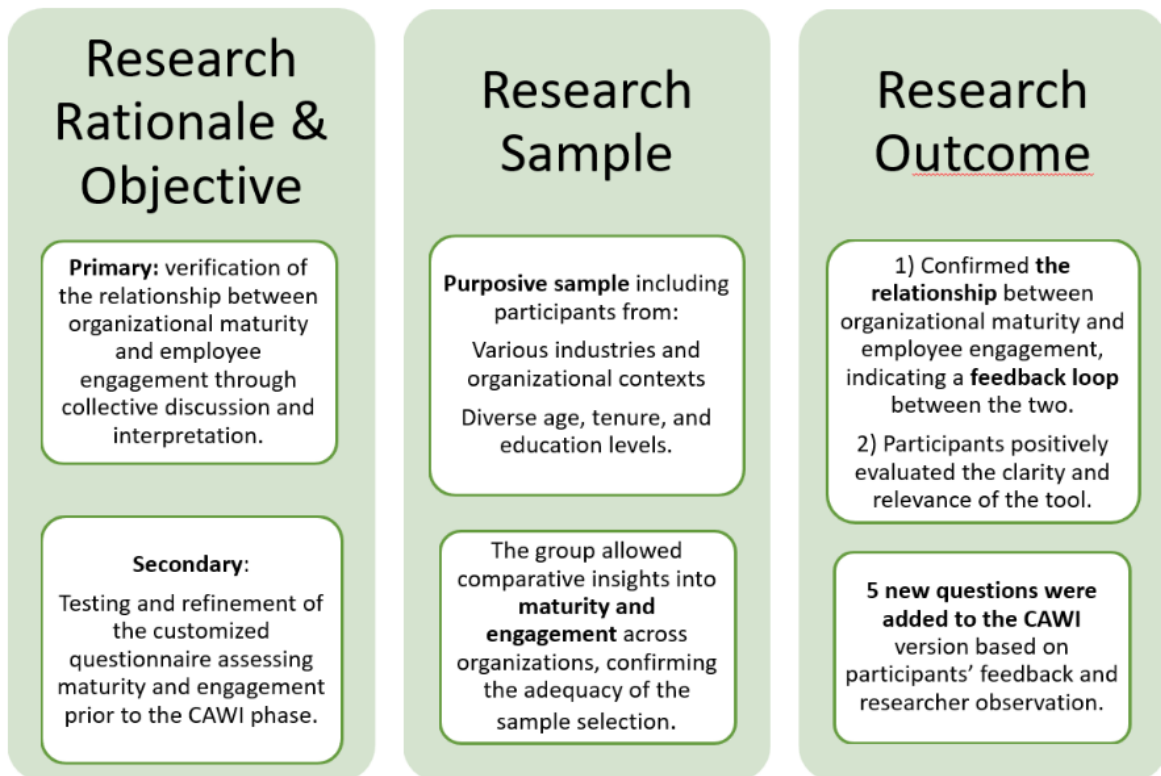
Testing the ISO 10014:2008 self-assessment tool in practice confirmed its usefulness for participants with a deep understanding of organizational processes and structures, as it reliably reflected perceived levels of maturity. However, the tool proved unsuitable for random employee samples and broader qualitative research, as many respondents lacked sufficient insight to interpret its technical language and evaluation criteria. This limitation led to the creation of a simplified, integrated *maturity–engagement instrument* designed to capture perceptions across all organizational levels.

**Phase 4** featured four case studies representing different maturity levels and industry contexts, aimed at verifying the impact of organizational maturity on employee engagement and testing the customized self-assessment questionnaire for reliability and conceptual validity before the quantitative phase. **Figure 4** presents how this phase was conducted:



Four case studies representing different maturity levels and industry contexts were conducted to validate qualitative findings and test the internal coherence of the maturity - engagement framework. Organizations representing higher levels of maturity displayed consistently higher employee engagement scores and stronger alignment across leadership, communication, and value-related items. In contrast, the organization assessed at a lower maturity level exhibited weaker results in areas such as trust, cooperation, and recognition, suggesting that the integration of values into everyday behavior and relationships was still developing.

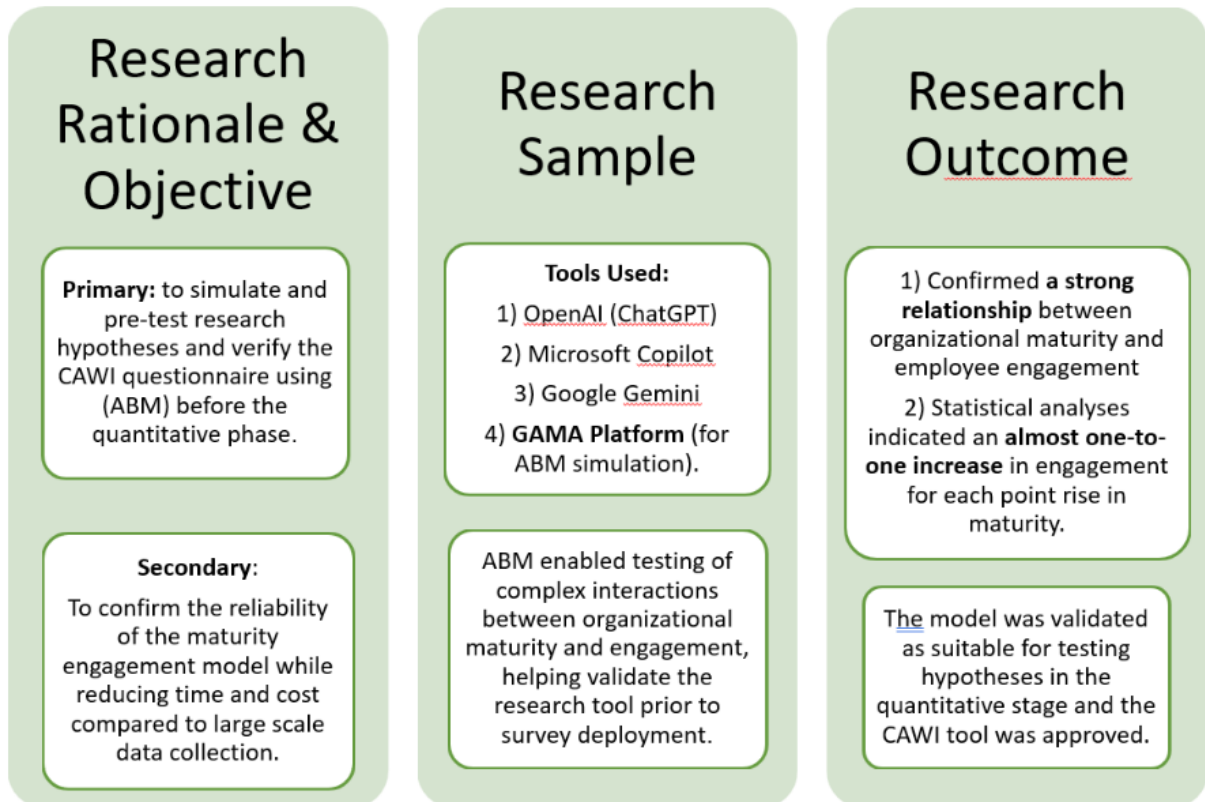
**Phase 5** included a focus group interview (FGI) to evaluate the relationship between maturity and engagement and to refine the CAWI questionnaire in terms of clarity, logic, and construct validity. The design of this phase is outlined in **Figure 5** below:



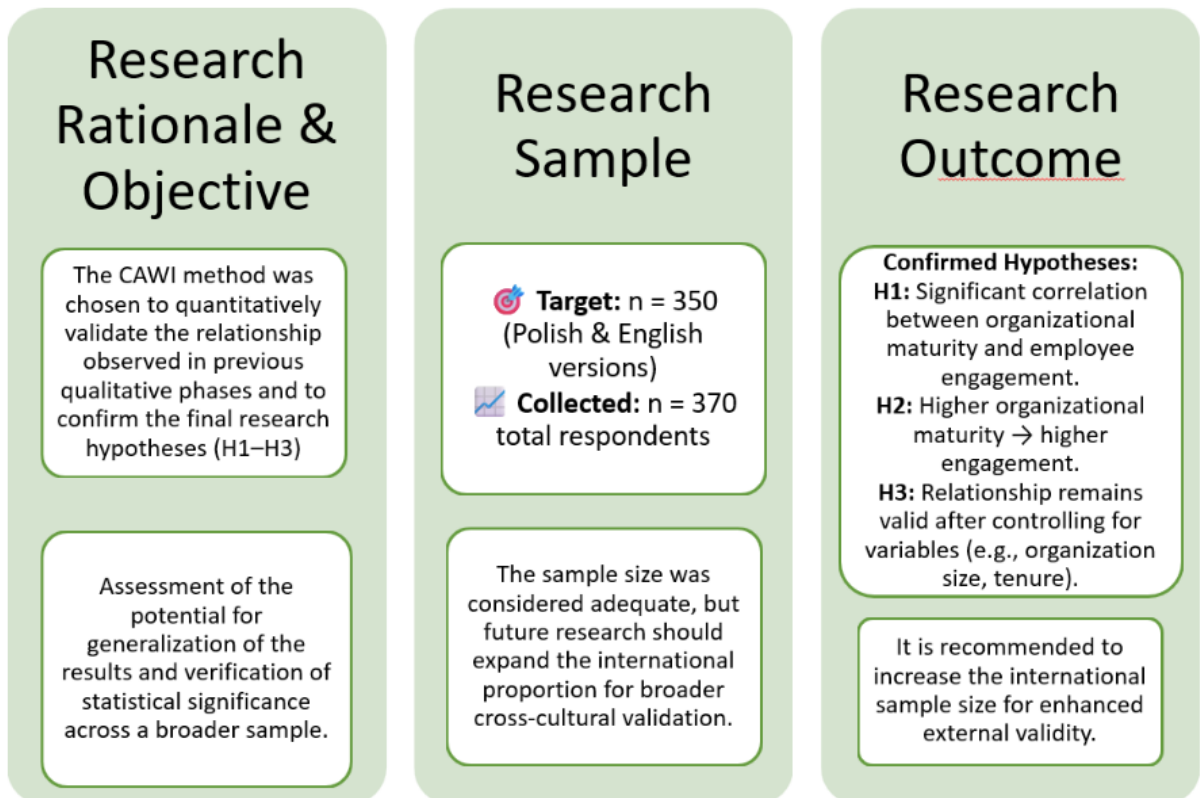
The FGI (22.04.2025) confirmed themes from the IDIs and cases, clarified perceived differences across hierarchy levels, and surfaced a potential tension between “values declared” and cooperation in day-to-day behaviors. Five questions were added/edited in the CAWI tool based on participant feedback.

**Phase 6** employed Agent-Based Modeling (ABM) using the GAMA platform to test the internal consistency and sensitivity of the revised CAWI questionnaire, ensuring robustness before large-scale deployment. **Figure 6** provides an overview of how this phase was carried

out:



**Phase 7** culminated in a quantitative CAWI survey (n = 370), verifying the relationships between organizational maturity and employee engagement through correlation and linear regression analyses, and assessing cross-sample stability across Polish and English respondents. **Figure 7** illustrates the research procedure for this phase



**Net quantitative conclusion: A higher level of organizational maturity is strongly and positively associated with a higher level of employee engagement; the relationship is linear and replicable across language/culture subsamples.**

**Figure 8: Graphical Results on CAWI regression \_combined sample PL &ENG**

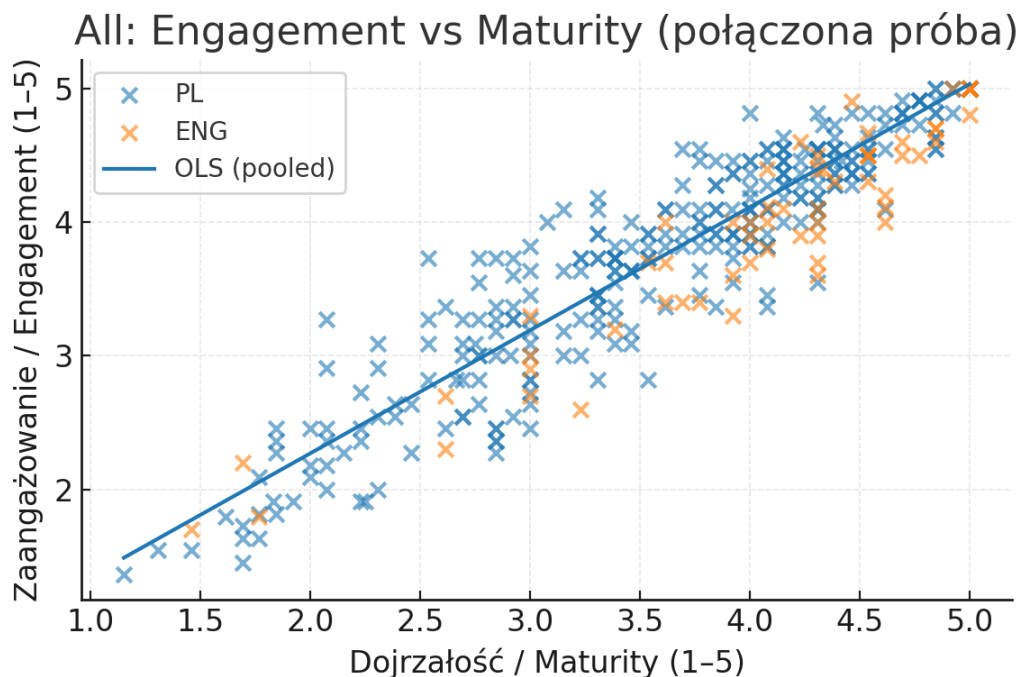
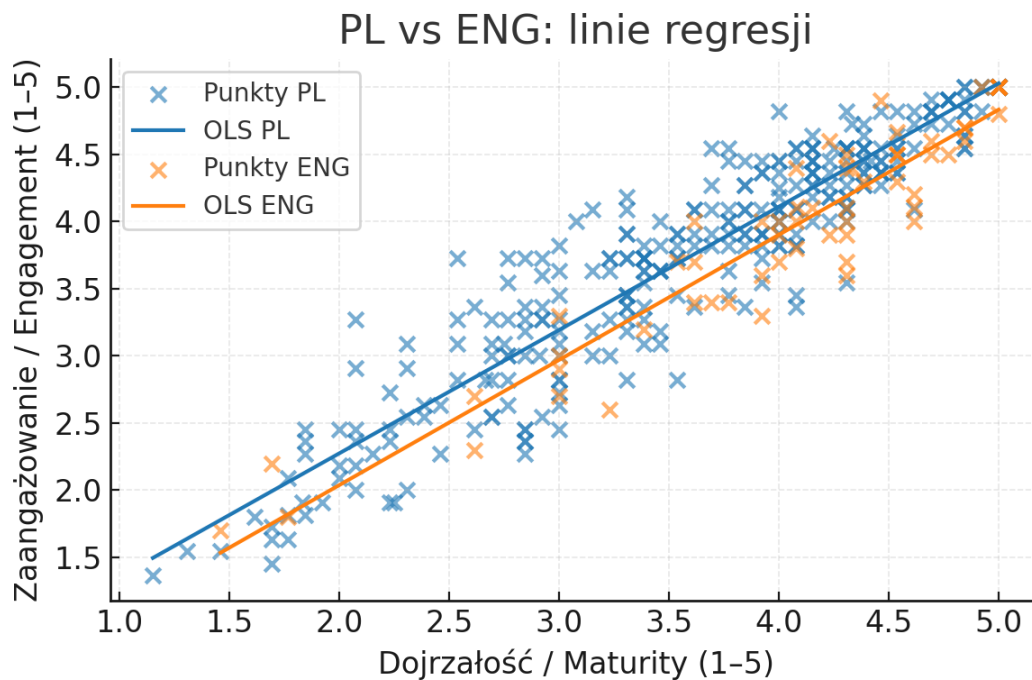


Figure 9: Graphical Results on CAWI\_regression PL vs. ENG sample



**Commentary on the results summarized jointly from Poland and outside Poland:**

- A very strong and stable relationship: an increase in maturity systematically raises engagement; the effect is practically identical in PL and ENG.
- The language effect is small but significant ( $-0.21$ ) and it may result from cultural/contextual differences between samples; however, it does not change the strength of the relationship.
- The explained variance  $R^2 \approx 0.87$  in the model adjusted for language confirms that maturity is the main predictor of engagement.
- In both language versions (PL and ENG), statistically significant relationships were obtained ( $p < 0.001$ ).
- The models showed high  $R^2$  values, meaning that organizational maturity explains a substantial part of the variability in engagement.

**Conclusions on CAWI results:**

- Very strong relationship: maturity and engagement grow together; more mature companies have more engaged employees.
- **Stability of results:** both in PL and ENG versions, the model yields nearly identical  $\beta$  and  $R^2$ . This indicates that the adopted model and tool work consistently across languages.
- **Practical interpretation:** shifting an organization from level 3  $\rightarrow$  4 in maturity increases engagement on average by 0.85 points on a 1–5 scale ( $\approx 17\%$  of the scale).
- **Practical significance:** this confirms that building maturity (processes, communication, leadership, values, fairness) is the most effective path to increasing engagement.

## 8. Findings & discussions

The aim of the dissertation was to empirically verify the relationship between the level of organizational maturity and the level of employee engagement, confronting theory with practice through a triangulation of methods: systematic literature review, in-depth interviews (IDI), exploratory study in a medium-sized manufacturing enterprise, case studies, focus group interview (FGI, including tool evaluation), ABM simulation - questionnaire test, and quantitative research (CAWI) on a large sample (PL n=304; ENG n=66).

**Table 1: Table summary of statistical analysis**

Parameter	$\beta$ (Beta)	p-value	Interpretation
Constant ( $\alpha$ )	0,429	<0,001	Baseline level of engagement maturity (PL)
Maturity ( $\beta_1$ )	0,920	<0,001	Each +1 point of maturity increases engagement by +0.92 points – a very strong and highly significant effect.
Language ENG ( $\beta_2$ )	-0,209	0,001	Results in the ENG version are on average 0.21 points lower at the same level of maturity – a statistically significant but practically small difference.

### Answer to the guiding question and Influence Matrix

**YES - a higher level of organizational maturity is strongly and positively correlated with a higher level of employee engagement. The relationship is stable and linear and replicates in the international sample.**

The results confirm a stable, strong, and linear relationship between organizational maturity and employee engagement, replicated across language and organizational contexts. The data demonstrate that maturity is not merely a structural property but a dynamic capability grounded in communication, trust, and leadership behaviors that directly influence employees' cognitive and emotional connection to their work.

## 9. Mechanisms and reciprocal dynamics

The qualitative and quantitative evidence converge on a common mechanism: mature organizations generate engagement through transparency, feedback, value alignment, and fair, developmental practices. These factors translate structural maturity into psychological safety, intrinsic motivation, and initiative. Conversely, engaged employees accelerate organizational learning, process discipline, and innovation by feeding back into the maturity cycle. This reciprocal dynamic supports the conceptual model of a Cycle of Influence, where maturity enables engagement and engagement, in turn, reinforces maturity.

## **10. Integration with theory**

This research bridges organizational development (OD) and organizational behavior (OB) perspectives, linking systemic maturity models with behavioral theories of engagement such as Kahn's psychological conditions, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, and Schaufeli and Bakker's UWES framework. Spiral Dynamics provides a developmental lens explaining how awareness and values evolve within organizational culture, while continuous improvement logics (ISO, PDCA) offer the structural foundation. Together, they frame engagement as both a cultural and structural phenomenon.

## **11. Methodological contribution**

The seven-phase triangulated approach demonstrates how comprehensive validation can be achieved within doctoral research timeframes. It integrates theory building, qualitative exploration, simulation pre-testing, and quantitative verification into a coherent pipeline. The ABM stage proved particularly valuable for verifying internal consistency before field deployment, while the mixed qualitative stages allowed refinement of constructs that traditional surveys often overlook. This framework exemplifies a scalable model for mixed-method research on complex organizational phenomena.

## **12. Significance and practical implications**

The findings provide actionable guidance for managers.

The **Influence Matrix** identifies levers of maturity that most strongly enhance engagement—communication, leadership, values, trust, development, procedural fairness, and cooperation—and links them with specific behavioral outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs). Managers can use this matrix to diagnose their organization's current maturity–engagement configuration and to prioritize interventions. In this sense, engagement becomes a measurable organizational asset rather than an abstract concept, and maturity serves as its systemic enabler.

This dissertation contributes by integrating organizational development and organizational behavior, it deepens understanding of how structures and culture shape attitudes; practically, it identifies organizational determinants that amplify or weaken engagement depending on maturity level, and it proposes a relational model explaining mutual influence, it provides actionable guidance as the Influence Matrix for aligning leadership, culture, and processes to strengthen engagement and, in turn, advance maturity.

**Figure 10: Influence Matrix of Relationships: Organizational Maturity × Employee Engagement**

Engagement / Maturity	1 (very low)	2 (low)	3 (medium)	4 (high)	5 (ideal)
1 Initial maturity	Chaos, lack of structure, burnout	Informal but unstable relationships	Fragmented engagement zones	Desired, requires a strong leader	Difficult to maintain, requires constant attention
2 Maturity Stabilization	Procedures exist only on paper, no one follows them	First mechanisms supporting organizational culture.	Growth occurs if the leader sets direction and meaning	Stable, if the organization invests in culture	High level, but fragile without systems
3 Optimal Maturity	Bureaucracy suppresses enthusiasm	Balance and moderate effectiveness	Least costly optimal configuration	Strong engagement under good leadership	Best practice, values-based culture
4 High Maturity	Risk of perfectionism, lack of empathy	Procedures dominate, but people adapt	Stable learning organization	Ideal setup: processes + values	Market leader requires high investment
5 Excellence	Pressure for innovation – professional burnout	Innovations that support engagement	Innovations that support engagement	Operational and cultural excellence	Best in class, costly to maintain

Below **Table 2** translates the research findings into actionable guidance for practitioners. It identifies key organizational maturity levers that strongly influence employee engagement, outlines operational actions to enhance them, and suggests measurable KPIs to monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented initiatives.

**Table 2: Operational Levers of Organizational Maturity Enhancing Employee Engagement**

Maturity Lever (what to strengthen)	Strongest impact on...	Operational actions (short guidelines)	Example KPIs
Internal communication	sense of work; goal identification; energy	1) quarterly all-hands with Q&A 2) weekly team info rhythm (goals, progress, decisions) 3) standard 'one message – one recipient – one goal'	clarity of communication index (survey); % of employees who know the goals; information delivery time
Operational values	sense; satisfaction; proactivity	1) 'values in decisions' – mandatory annotation of values with decisions 2) appreciation rituals aligned with values	% of decisions with value label; number of 'recognitions'/FTE
Leadership and feedback	energy; initiative; influence/voice	1) 1:1 every 2 weeks (agenda: goals, obstacles, development) 2) 3:1 rule (3 positive reinforcements : 1 correction) 3) 'Ask Me Anything' channel	frequency of 1:1s; leader's eNPS; % of submitted and closed ideas
Role and strategy clarity	goal identification; 'flow'	1) RACI for key processes 2) cascading OKRs 3) definitions of completion ('Definition of Done')	% of roles with RACI; % of teams with OKRs; task lead time
Procedural fairness	satisfaction; influence/voice	1) transparent promotion and bonus criteria 2) evaluation committees with employee representatives	perceived fairness index; distribution of promotions
Collaboration and knowledge sharing	energy; 'flow'	1) monthly 'demo/dojo' (mutual learning) 2) communities of practice	number of practices/quarter; employee participation
Development and career paths	satisfaction; proactivity	1) individual development plans 2) 10% time for learning 3) job rotations	% with a development plan; training hours/FTE
Change management and innovation	initiative; sense	1) experiment portfolio (A/B, pilots) 2) 'lightweight change' – one-page change template	number of experiments; % of implementations after pilot

### 13. Conclusions

The dissertation demonstrates that organizational maturity is a strong and statistically significant predictor of employee engagement. The relationship is positive, stable, and nearly linear, explaining up to 87% of engagement variance when controlling for contextual variables. The integrated framework enables both theoretical explanation and practical diagnosis of how organizational systems and human factors co-evolve.

The research delivers **three key contributions**:

1. **An empirically validated instrument** for joint measurement of maturity and engagement.
2. **An Influence Matrix** linking maturity dimensions to engagement outcomes, complete with operational guidelines and KPIs.
3. **A simple predictive heuristic** derived from the regression results allows practitioners to estimate expected engagement levels based on organizational maturity and identify gaps requiring managerial action.

At a conceptual level, the study reframes engagement as the linking mechanism through which human energy sustains organizational development. At a practical level, it offers leaders evidence-based tools to manage both constructs in tandem, ensuring that progress in systems and culture translates into sustainable employee commitment.

#### **14. Limitations and Future Research**

The study's quantitative design is cross-sectional and relies on self-reported data, which may introduce common-method bias and prevent definitive causal inference. However, this approach was intentional and consistent with the study's objectives, as both engagement and perceived maturity are experiential and perception-based phenomena.

Employees' own assessments of communication, leadership, trust, or values reflect the lived organizational reality more accurately than externally imposed metrics.

Although self-reporting may introduce bias, combining responses from multiple organizations and hierarchical levels mitigated the risk of single-source distortion and allowed valid comparative analysis across maturity levels. The sample, while diverse and including respondents from organizations at different maturity levels, was not fully random, as participation was based on voluntary and network recruitment rather than statistical randomization.

The ABM simulation was designed to test questionnaire logic and sensitivity, not to model real-world behavioral dynamics.

Future research should pursue longitudinal and multi-level designs to capture causality and directionality between maturity and engagement over time. Expanding validation across industries and national cultures will strengthen generalizability. Further ABM development incorporating heterogeneous agents and organizational policy scenarios could help simulate complex feedback loops and test interventions before real-world implementation. Finally, integrating objective organizational performance data with engagement metrics would enhance the explanatory power of future models.