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Employee Engagement and Organisational Productivity: Analysing the Role of Leadership and Workplace Culture

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Abstract
Employee engagement is seen as one of the ways and methods to enhance OP, EP and overall work effectiveness of the organisation. The present research study titled "Employee Engagement and Organisational Productivity: Analysing the Role of Leadership and Workplace Culture" will analyze the correlation between employee engagement and Organisational productivity with an emphasis on the role of leadership and workplace culture. This study aims to know the effect of leadership styles on employee's commitment, communication on employee's commitment, motivation of employees on their commitment, recognition on employee's commitment, teamwork on employee's commitment, organizational support on employee's commitment and work performance of employees. A structured questionnaire will be employed for collecting primary data from a sample of 200 employees working in the different organizations; a quantitative research approach will be used. Data collected will be analyzed using suitable statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis to look into the relationship between the selected variables. The study will also delve to understand how an employee-friendly and encouraging working environment will impact job satisfaction, teamwork, engagement and output. Moreover, it aims to discover best practices attracting employees participation, professional development and commitment to the organization. The results are likely to offer valuable perspectives for managers and HR to design better employee engagement strategies and build a productive organization. In the end, the study sets the agenda of how important it is to bring effective leadership together with a positive workplace culture to enable sustainable productivity of the organization.

Keywords: employee engagement, organisational productivity, leadership, workplace culture, job demands–resources theory

1. Introduction

Organisations compete on the energy, commitment, and skill of their people. In a labour market marked by remote and hybrid work, rapid technological change, and rising concern for employee well-being, the question of how to sustain high performance has become more pressing. This paper examines how leadership and workplace culture shape employee engagement and, through engagement and directly, organisational productivity.

Employee engagement is a sense of positivity, fulfillment and motivation which results in employees putting in their effort, dedication and attention into their job. Bailey et al (2017) compiled the literature to demonstrate that there are various ways of understanding engagement, yet all of them share the same meanings of engagement with meaningful work, supportive management and positive outcomes for both person and organisation. For this, Shuck, Osam, Zigarmi, and

Nimon (2017) contend that engagement is different from satisfaction and commitment, and its measurement and management is of importance.

The interest in engagement has increased practically, as it is linked to outcomes that are of interest to organisations. A recent large scale meta-analysis by Harter, Schmidt, Agrawal, Plowman, and Blue (2020) concluded that business units with higher engagement were more successful in their business outcomes, including productivity and profitability. But engagement is more than just a human resource issue, and it is important to managers to understand what influences it.

Engagement has also evolved in the context of organizing with the nature of work. Fewer informal interactions between colleagues and bosses and increased speed of work brought about by remote/hybrid work make it easier to lose track of time and boundaries. Here, the elements that lead to energy and commitment such as supportive supervision and a sense of belonging must not be assumed and deliberately managed. It is important to differentiate the organizational conditions, which are most closely associated with engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Engagement: Concept and Theoretical Foundations

One widely utilized theory of engagement is the job demands–resources (JD–R) theory. Demands in the job can cause strain and exhaustion, and Bakker and Demerouti (2017) indicate that job resources like supervisor support, feedback and autonomy contribute to both motivation and engagement. Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel (2023) provide a review of the theory's development and demonstrate the extension of the theory to illustrate the influence of personal characteristics and resources on engagement and performance. Within this context leadership and culture can be seen as a resource that employees can access at work.

A complimentary account is offered by social exchange theory. Consistent with this, in a reciprocal exchange, that is, in which employees' focus on support causes them to give greater engagement, engagement is predicted by resources and by perceived organisational support (Saks, 2019). Saks (2022) builds this argument by demonstrating that engagement is positively related to caring human resource practices. These approaches are combined by Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey and Saks (2015) who suggest that through engagement, a link exists between job resources, personal resources and human resources and performance and competitive advantage.

Engagement also can be enhanced. A meta-analysis of work engagement interventions by Knight, Patterson and Dawson (2017) showed that there is evidence that engagement can be raised through organisations' action. Findings in a review by Kwon and Kim (2020) based on the JD – R, indicate that the engagement is related to innovative behaviour. Based on these studies, it can be concluded that engagement is malleable and consequential, therefore making it a valid and meaningful mediating variable between organisational resources and productivity.

There have been some discussions concerning definition of engagement. Shuck et al. (2017) discuss the existing definitions of engagement, and propose that it is a state of active engagement rather than an interchangeable term with satisfaction, commitment, or involvement. This is significant for measurement, as items that only measure satisfaction would measure a different concept. The term "energy" is followed by items relating to dedication, absorption and commitment which are similar to those dimensions of vigour, dedication and absorption that are frequently used in the engagement literature, however.

The causes of engagement can be broken down into psychological conditions, job design, leadership/management, organisational, team and individual differences and effects of engagement include performance, well-being, and retention (Bailey et al., 2017). This categorization helps to define the role and the location of leadership and culture in the current model: both leadership and culture exist in the organisational sphere as antecedents, but productivity is an outcome. The overall structure of the model is thus similar to the one prevalent in literature.

2.2 Leadership, Culture, Engagement and Productivity: Empirical Evidence

Leadership evidence tends to support the positive links that are reported between evidence of leadership and levels of engagement and performance. Supporting variables of engagement as a mediator between transformational leadership and employee performance are the identification and engagement by Buil, Martínez and Matute (2019). The authors of the study, Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Wu (2018) demonstrate that ethical, authentic, and servant leadership have strong similarity with transformational leadership and also argue that some differences in results are present, reflecting that the supportive and values-based aspects of leadership are equally important. According to Inceoglu et al. (2018) the behaviours of leaders can affect the well-being as the basis for engagement.

Evidence for culture is consistent, too. Culture has been linked to organisational outcomes (Hartnell et al., 2019) and a learning climate has been linked to engagement, which in turn has been linked with extra-role performance (Eldor and Harpaz, 2016). One systematic review and meta-analysis of work environment resources (Nielsen et al., 2017) concluded that supportive workplaces positively affect well-being and performance, highlighting the human and organisational benefits of supportive workplaces.

Harter et al. (2020) found positive associations between engagement and organisational outcomes at business-unit level and Alagaraja and Shuck (2015) suggest that engagement relates organisational alignment to individual performance. However, Mackey et al. (2017) warn that bad leadership reflects poor performance making the impact of leadership less than always positive. In general, the literature lends support to a model where leadership and culture affect engagement and productivity, and engagement affects productivity, with a limited number of studies testing both the direct and indirect paths in a single sample.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study uses a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional design based on a structured survey. The design permits standardised measurement of leadership, culture, engagement, and productivity in a reasonably large sample and statistical testing of the five hypotheses (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). Secondary sources, mainly peer-reviewed articles and books published between 2015 and 2023, were used to define constructs and develop hypotheses, while primary data were collected through the questionnaire.

The conceptual model has four variables. Leadership and workplace culture are the independent variables, employee engagement is both an outcome of these resources and a predictor of productivity, and organisational productivity is the final dependent variable. This structure allows the study to examine direct paths from leadership and culture to productivity as well as indirect

paths that run through engagement, which corresponds to the partial mediation logic of the JD–R and social exchange perspectives.

3.2 Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The population consists of employees working in organisations of different sizes and sectors. The final sample comprises 200 valid responses. This size exceeds the guideline of at least ten observations per questionnaire item, which implies a minimum of 140 for 14 items (Hair et al., 2019), and satisfies the rules of thumb for multiple regression with three predictors discussed by Field (2018). Respondents were selected by convenience sampling through an online questionnaire distributed through professional and personal networks. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and only fully completed questionnaires were retained, so the final data contain no missing values.

Convenience sampling was used because it allows access to employees across sectors within a reasonable time and cost, and because a list of all employees in the target population was not available. The weakness of this approach is that respondents may differ from non-respondents, for example by being more interested in workplace issues or more comfortable with online surveys. The sample is therefore best seen as an illustrative cross-section of employees and not as a statistically representative one, and the interpretation of the findings in later sections reflects this limit.

3.3 Research Instrument and Measurement

The questionnaire had two parts. The first collected demographic information on gender, age, education, work experience, and job level. The second contained 14 statements measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Leadership was measured by three items (Q1–Q3), workplace culture by three items (Q4–Q6), employee engagement by four items (Q7–Q10) covering vigour, dedication, absorption, and commitment, and organisational productivity by four items (Q11–Q14) covering target achievement, quality, efficiency, and relative productivity. The items are listed in Table 2, and construct scores were computed as item means.

The constructs were defined as follows. Leadership refers to employees' perception of their supervisor's vision, support, and recognition. Workplace culture refers to the perceived presence of trust, collaboration, fairness, and open communication. Employee engagement refers to a positive, work-related state of energy, dedication, and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Organisational productivity refers to the perceived efficiency, quality, and goal achievement of the employee's team and organisation.

Content validity was supported by basing the item wording on the constructs identified in the literature, and the use of positively worded statements on a common five-point scale made the questionnaire easy to complete. Construct scores were computed as means so that they remain on the original 1 to 5 scale, which simplifies interpretation: values above 3 indicate agreement and values below 3 indicate disagreement. Internal consistency was tested before further analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the profile of respondents, descriptive results, reliability, correlations, regression and mediation results, group comparisons, hypothesis testing, and a discussion. Six tables and five figures are used.

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4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the profile of the 200 respondents. Male respondents accounted for 49.5 per cent and female respondents for 50.5 per cent. The largest age group was 25–34 years (42.5 per cent), followed by 35–44 years (25.0 per cent), so the sample is dominated by employees in early and mid-career. Most respondents held a graduate degree or a postgraduate qualification, and 68.0 per cent worked at middle or senior level. Figure 1 shows the distribution of job levels and Figure 2 shows the distribution of work experience.

Education and experience show a balanced spread. Respondents with a graduate qualification or below accounted for 47.0 per cent, postgraduates for 43.0 per cent, and those with professional or doctoral qualifications for 10.0 per cent. In terms of experience, 36.0 per cent had two to five years of experience and 19.5 per cent had more than ten years, so the sample combines recent entrants with long-serving employees whose views of leadership and culture may differ.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 200)

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	99	49.5
Female	101	50.5
Age (years)		
Below 25	29	14.5
25–34	85	42.5
35–44	50	25.0
45 and above	36	18.0
Education		
Graduate or below	94	47.0
Postgraduate	86	43.0
Professional / doctoral	20	10.0
Work experience		
Less than 2 years	33	16.5
2–5 years	72	36.0
6–10 years	56	28.0
More than 10 years	39	19.5
Job level		
Junior / entry level	64	32.0
Middle level	89	44.5
Senior / managerial	47	23.5

4.2 Questionnaire Items and Descriptive Results

Table 2 combines the 14 questionnaire items with their means and standard deviations. Item means ranged from 3.62 to 4.04, all above the scale mid-point of 3, which indicates generally positive perceptions. The highest-rated item was Q8 (M = 4.04) and the lowest-rated item was Q3 (M = 3.62). Figure 3 ranks the items by mean score. The engagement items (Q7–Q10) had means

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between 3.70 and 4.04, and the productivity items (Q11–Q14) between 3.66 and 3.85, which shows that respondents on average see their teams as engaged and productive, although agreement is moderate and not unanimous.

Table 2

Questionnaire Items with Descriptive Statistics (5-point Likert scale)

Code	Statement	Construct	Mean	SD
Q1	My supervisor communicates a clear and inspiring vision for the team.	Leadership	3.75	0.92
Q2	My supervisor listens to my ideas and supports my development.	Leadership	3.81	0.92
Q3	My supervisor recognises and appreciates good work.	Leadership	3.62	0.94
Q4	Our organisation values trust, respect, and open communication.	Workplace culture	3.73	0.82
Q5	Teamwork and collaboration are encouraged in my workplace.	Workplace culture	3.82	0.88
Q6	Our workplace culture supports fairness and work–life balance.	Workplace culture	3.68	0.84
Q7	I feel energetic and enthusiastic when I am working.	Employee engagement	4.00	0.87
Q8	I am proud of the work that I do.	Employee engagement	4.04	0.79
Q9	Time passes quickly when I am absorbed in my work.	Employee engagement	3.70	0.86
Q10	I am committed to helping my organisation succeed.	Employee engagement	3.86	0.90
Q11	My team consistently meets or exceeds its targets.	Organisational productivity	3.76	0.84
Q12	The quality of work produced in my department is high.	Organisational productivity	3.85	0.85
Q13	My team uses time and resources efficiently.	Organisational productivity	3.67	0.86
Q14	My organisation is productive compared with similar organisations.	Organisational productivity	3.66	0.89

Note. 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; N = 200.

Within each construct, the highest-rated items were Q2 for leadership (M = 3.81), Q5 for workplace culture (M = 3.82), Q8 for engagement (M = 4.04), and Q12 for productivity (M = 3.85). The lowest-rated items were Q3 (M = 3.62), Q6 (M = 3.68), Q9 (M = 3.70), and Q14 (M = 3.66) respectively. The differences within constructs are small, which is what would be expected if the

items measure a common underlying concept, and they confirm that no single item drives the construct averages used in the later analysis.

4.3 Reliability and Construct-Level Results

Table 3 reports Cronbach's alpha and construct-level statistics. Alpha ranged from 0.80 to 0.82, above the 0.70 threshold, and the alpha for all 14 items was 0.88, so the scales are internally consistent. Employee engagement had the highest mean (M = 3.90, SD = 0.69), followed by workplace culture (M = 3.74, SD = 0.71), organisational productivity (M = 3.73, SD = 0.69), and leadership (M = 3.73, SD = 0.78). Leadership therefore received the lowest rating of the four constructs, although only marginally below productivity and culture, which suggests that there is room for improvement in leadership practice. Figure 4 compares the construct means.

Table 3

Reliability and Construct-Level Descriptive Statistics

Construct	No. of items	Cronbach's α	Mean	SD
Leadership	3	0.795	3.73	0.78
Workplace culture	3	0.798	3.74	0.71
Employee engagement	4	0.821	3.90	0.69
Organisational productivity	4	0.816	3.73	0.69
All items	14	0.881	–	–

Note. $\alpha \geq 0.70$ indicates acceptable internal consistency.

The construct means are all in the upper half of the scale, which indicates that respondents on balance rate their leadership, culture, engagement, and productivity favourably. The standard deviations, which are around 0.7 to 0.8 for all four constructs, show that there is real variation in experience across respondents. This variation is necessary for the correlation and regression analyses, since constructs with no variation could not be related to one another.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation matrix. All correlations are positive and significant. Engagement is correlated with leadership (r = 0.405) and with culture (r = 0.409), and productivity is correlated with engagement (r = 0.432), leadership (r = 0.445), and culture (r = 0.465). Leadership and culture are themselves correlated (r = 0.497), as expected given that leaders help to create culture (Schein & Schein, 2017), but the correlation is moderate and does not indicate a problem of overlap. Figure 5 plots engagement against productivity and shows a clear positive relationship.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Leadership	1			
2. Workplace culture	0.497**	1		
3. Employee engagement	0.405**	0.409**	1	
4. Organisational productivity	0.445**	0.465**	0.432**	1

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Note. N = 200. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed); *significant at the 0.05 level.

The size of the correlations is informative. They range from 0.405 (between leadership and engagement) to 0.497 (between leadership and workplace culture), all in the low-to-moderate range, which means that each variable shares a meaningful but limited proportion of its variance with the others. The correlation between engagement and productivity (r = 0.432) corresponds to about 18.7 per cent of shared variance. These patterns are consistent with the proposed model, but they are bivariate and do not control for the other variables, which is why the regression analysis follows.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Table 6 combines the five hypotheses with their test results. H1 is accepted because leadership has a positive and significant effect on engagement ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$). H2 is accepted because workplace culture has a positive and significant effect on engagement ($\beta = 0.275$, $p < 0.001$). H3 is accepted because engagement has a positive and significant effect on productivity ($\beta = 0.237$, $p < 0.001$). H4 is accepted because leadership has a positive and significant direct effect on productivity ($\beta = 0.221$, $p = 0.002$), and H5 is accepted because workplace culture has a positive and significant direct effect on productivity ($\beta = 0.258$, $p < 0.001$). All five hypotheses are supported.

Table 5

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Path	β	t	p-value	Decision
H1	Leadership has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.	LEAD → ENG	0.268	3.70	< 0.001	Accepted
H2	Workplace culture has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.	CULT → ENG	0.275	3.80	< 0.001	Accepted
H3	Employee engagement has a significant positive effect on organisational productivity.	ENG → PROD	0.237	3.55	< 0.001	Accepted
H4	Leadership has a significant positive direct effect on organisational productivity.	LEAD → PROD	0.221	3.15	0.002	Accepted
H5	Workplace culture has a significant positive direct effect on organisational productivity.	CULT → PROD	0.258	3.67	< 0.001	Accepted

Note. Decision at the 5% significance level (multiple regression, N = 200).

The hypothesis tests also show how the predictors compare. In the model for engagement, the standardised coefficients for leadership and culture are 0.268 and 0.275, so the two resources have

effects of similar size. In the model for productivity, the standardised coefficients rank workplace culture first (0.258), engagement second (0.237), and leadership third (0.221). The three coefficients are close in size, which suggests that engagement, leadership, and culture each make a comparable contribution to productivity and that none of them dominates. This supports an approach that develops all three together rather than prioritising one.

5. Conclusion

A survey was conducted of 200 employees to analyse the effect of leadership and workplace culture on employee engagement and organisational productivity. The scales were reliable and both regression models were significant with 22.1 per cent of the variance of engagement and 32.1 per cent of the variance of productivity explained. The five hypotheses were all accepted: that is, leadership and culture had both direct effects on engagement, leadership and culture had direct effects on productivity, and engagement had direct effects on productivity. Results of the bootstrapped indirect effects suggested that productivity was partially mediated by engagement for both resources. There were no statistically significant differences in outcomes according to gender, age, experience or job level.

The results have a number of implications. First, there is a need for leadership development; organizations should identify and develop leaders for vision, support, and recognition, noting that positive leadership can boost engagement and negative leadership can have a negative impact on performance. Second, culture should be managed intentionally; trust, collaboration and fairness foster engagement and productivity. Third, engagement should be monitored regularly and viewed as a leading indicator of performance as changes can be made to drive up engagement levels. Fourth, it is important for organisations to integrate the three actions rather than performing one as doing more than one is partly direct and partly indirect and adds to each other.

In addition to its practical suggestions, the study reinforces the concept of engagement as a continuously flowing stream of organisational resources and outcomes rather than simply as an attitude. Leadership and culture provide the resources, engagement is the motivational state that results, and productivity is the outcome. The direct paths are not eradicated by the addition of engagement, indicating that engagement does not wholly account for the impacts of leadership and culture; possession of an engagement survey should not be seen as sufficient to drive improvements within organisations.

The study is important as it tests leadership and culture in one model that distinguishes between direct and indirect effects on productivity, while a lot of previous research studies test leadership and/or culture separately. It has some restrictions that would indicate future investigations. The sample consisted of a convenient sample, the measures were self-reported and cross-sectional, and productivity was perceived. Probability sampling, multi source or objective productivity data, longitudinal and experimental designs, multi item validated scales, and moderators including remote working, organisation size and sector could all be used in future studies. This work would highlight the extent to which leadership and culture influence engagement and performance in the evolving world of work in a more precise manner.

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