Assessing the Factors Affecting Employee Engagement: A Preliminary Studies

Yusuf Nasidi[1], A. U. Makera[2], A.M. Kamaruddeen[3], I.M. Jemaku[4]

[1]A School Technology Management and Logistics, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

[2] School Technology Management and Logistics, Universiti Utara Malaysia, 06010 Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia

[3]School of Built Environment, University Collage of Technology Sarawak,96000 Sibu Sarawak. Malaysia

[4]Niger State Geographic Information System, Ministry of Lands and Housing Minna, Niger State, Nigeria

Corresponding Author Email: y.nasidi580@gmail.com

Abstract: Highly engaged workers make a substantive contribution to their agency and may envisage success of the organization contrary to this, lead to poor performance, declining productivity, low rate of employee engagement and the behavioural attitude of the bureaucratic system. Inspite of various government intervention and efforts, the Nigerian universities score-card is still a subject of discussion among the management as well as the curious minded citizens as a result of poor performance and inefficiency. The main purpose of this study is to assess the factors affecting employee Engagement Studies. (ii) For the process of validation instrument developed for the current research, and the identified constructs of the study. Data were collected from forty respondents using a fifty-item instrument. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software for the data collected. The Cronbach's Alpha test result ranges from 0.883 to 0.947 which reveal a strong internal reliability of the construct and the overall instrument. This indicates that the research is significant since it explores the implementation of employee engagement in Nigeria Federal Universities of Technology and validates the instrument where most of the constructs still need further exploration.

Keywords: Team and Co-worker relationship, Work environment, Leadership, Training and career development and Employee engagement.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, there has been an eruption of research activity and elevated enthusiasm in employee engagement among consultants, associations and management scholars. According to Crawford et al., (2014) [1] employee engagement has turn out to be one of the most significant concepts in the management field as most organizations find it difficult to engage employees. Many scholars claimed that employee engagement is an important aspect intended for organization's accomplishment along with competitive advantage (Macey & Schneider 2008; Rich et al., 2010)[2];[3]. The importance and impact of employee engagement on productivity is vital especially in the area of organizational management. Employee engagement has grown into a key business priority for top leaders in that highly engaged workers in a competitive market can intensify innovation, productivity as well performance while minimizing costs related to recruitment and retention (Sibanda & Ncube, 2014)[4]. Despite these views' employee engagement has turned into an intriguing issue lately among the consulting firms and in the well-known business press, however it has not been frequently studied in university settings (Karatepe & Demir, 2014)[5] . In the Federal Universities of Technology, expected outcomes are quite specific, since organizations compete to stay profitable with a specific end goal to survive and grow (Bendell, 2005)[6]. The dwindling rate of performance in the Federal University of Technology Minna, Nigeria demands some attention to the curious minded individuals. Some of the issues that are of concern are poor performance, declining productivity, low rate of employee engagement and the behavioural attitude of the bureaucratic system. In spite of various government intervention and efforts, the Nigerian universities score-card is still a subject of discussion among the management as well as the curious minded citizens as a result of poor performance and inefficiency. There is massive purge or dismissal of university employees that were alleged inefficient, declining productivity, and doubtful probity

(Adebayo, 2004; Okoye et al., 2013)[7];[8]. The Nigeria university workplace context had for decades been embattled in the demands for increased wage and earnings, good infrastructures, awards, health packages, and others, which form part of the components of motivation that lead towards enhancing engagement (Akinwale, 2011)[9].

There is a measure of success stories in this regard, particularly where people and productivity issues occupy the centre stage, morale commitment and engagement are positively affected. Nonetheless, some organizations have year after year made an intensive stride to tackle employee engagement issues and as always, successes have varied from organization to organization (Wellins et al., 2005)[10]. This study attempts to examine factors that influence employee engagement among Federal Universities of Technology, Nigeria.

II. FRAMEWORK

In this study, the framework is underpinned by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)[11]. Consequently, the research framework of the study is summarized in Fig.1. which shows the relationship between independent variables (team and co-worker relationship, work environment, leadership and training and career development) and the dependent variable (employee engagement).
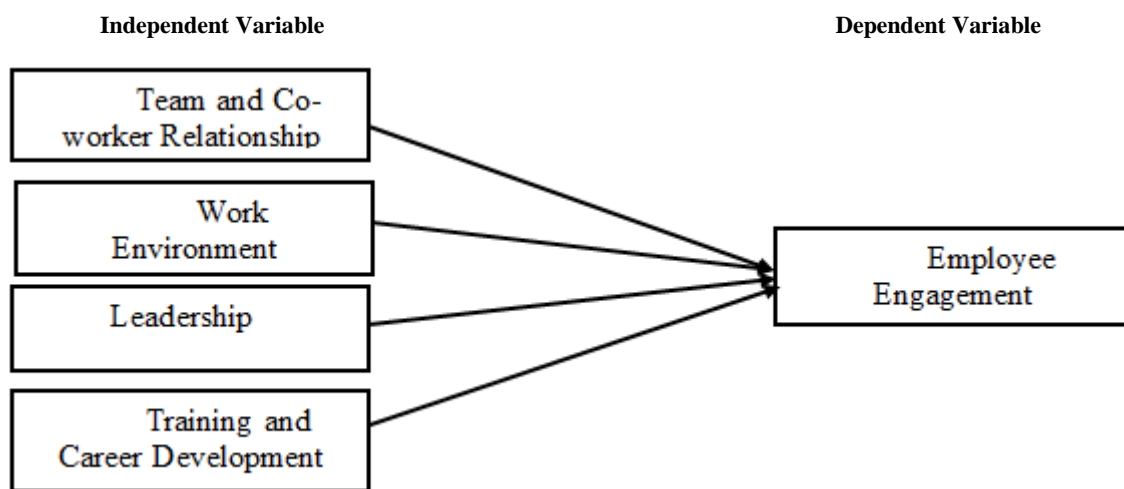

Fig 1: Framework

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is defined as "the harnessing of organization members selves to their work roles in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (Kahn, 1990)[12]. Employee engagement is a high-quality tool that helps every organization towards making every effort to achieve competitive advantage over their rivals. Individuals are one aspect that can't be replicated by the rivals and is measured as the main valuable asset if controlled and occupied in a proper manner. This position has been highlighted by Baumruk (2004)[13] in that engaging employees are measured to be the main dominant factor when it comes to determining company's vigour.

Employee engagement was a renowned idea in industry amid the period 1999-2005 when it was broadly thrashed out between leaders, policymakers and consultants. Later academicians got involved by the idea to a large degree from 2006 Welch (2011)[14], when different of research broaden the idea of employee engagement to work engagement and organization engagement. Saks (2006)[15] utilized Khan, (1990)[12] definition and developed the construct together with job and organization engagement.

Team and Co-worker Relationship

Team and co-worker relationship is referred to as the relatedness need individuals possess and having rewarding interpersonal interactions with their co-workers, (Locke & Taylor, 1990)[16]. Team and co-worker relationship is also considered as the relatedness need individuals possess and having rewarding interpersonal interactions with their co-workers, (Locke & Taylor, 1990[16]). Team and co-worker is a different phase which highlight plainly the interpersonal synchronization aspect of employee engagement. Kahn (1990)[12] fined that helpful and trusting interpersonal relationship, as well a supportive group, encourages employee engagement.

Work Environment

Working environment is considered as some different characteristics of work like the way job is done and completed, involving the tasks like task activities, training, control on one's own job-related activities, a sense of achievement from work, variety of tasks and the intrinsic value for a task (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000)[17].

Kohun (1992)[18] describe work environment as an entity which involves the entirety of powers, activities and other compelling elements that are currently and or possibly contending with the worker's activities and performance. The working environment is the sum of the interrelationship. According to Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza (2000)[17] described working environment as different characteristics of work like the way job is done and completed, involving the tasks like task activities, training, control on one's own job-related activities, a sense of achievement from work, variety of tasks and the intrinsic value for a task.

Leadership

Leadership has been considered as those individuals who articulate, create and craft a shared vision that ultimately guides their organizations towards new direction and also achieving organizational success through individuals, not strategic vision (Nathan, 2004)[19].

Adair, (2002) [20] defined leadership as the process where an executive guide, influence and direct the work and behaviour of others towards accomplishment of precise objectives in a given situation. He further emphasized that the aptitude of the manager to persuade the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal is regarded as leadership. Furthermore, Daniel (2002)[21] defined leadership as the ability to persuade a group towards realizing of goals. Leaders are required to build up future vision, and to inspire members of the organization to want to accomplish the vision and to enhance performance.

Training and Career Development

Training and career development is defined as an arranged learning experience intended to achieve lasting change in individuals' knowledge, attitude and skills (Campbell et al., 1970[22].

Training and career development is another significant factor which is to be considered when it comes to the issue of employee engagement, since it helps the employees to be focused. Service precision is improved through training and hence, influences service performance and employee engagement (Paradise, 2008)[23]. Employees are more engaged in their job as a result of built up confidence due to training and learning development programmes, which further motivates them. As suggested by Alderfer (1972)[24] career development is equivalent to rewarding people, if an employee is offered a chance to grow. In addition, he emphasized that "satisfaction of growth needs to depends on a person finding the opportunity to be what he or she is most fully and become what he or she can". The management needs to give more significance to career path ladder through training and career growth which will lead to a timely opportunity for improvement. This automatically enhances the height of engagement.

Moreover, training and opportunities for career development is nevertheless another way of making workers engaged in other to accomplish and maintain high-performance level. Training enhances service delivery, precision, and efficiency in the place of work. When workers are well trained, the level of competence, ability to cope with job demand, and enthusiasm to do better improves tremendously.

III. HYPOTSES

We hypothesized that:

H1 Team and Co-worker Relationship is significantly related to employee engagement.

H2 Work Environment is significantly related to employee engagement.

H3 Leadership is significantly related to employee engagement.

H4 Training and Career Development is significantly related to employee engagement.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Since this study is a pilot test of an on-going research, samples of the construction organizations in Nigeria were randomly selected. In pilot study, a range of few respondents (15-30) are required, however there may be a significant increase in the sample size for a pilot study (Malhotra, 2008)[25].

A total of fifty questionnaires was personally administered. Forty-five questionnaires were returned out of which 40 are retained for the analysis.

Instrument Design

In a survey research questionnaire is regarded as one of the most suitable instruments (Asika, 1991)[26]. In this study to ensure that all the variables are fully measured, an item pool and content validity items for this study were drawn from several sources, including the findings of previous researches on the constructs of this study (Team and co-worker relationship, Work environment, leadership and Training and carrier development and Employee engagement). These items were considered, adapted and modified from previous literatures Hain &Francis (2004)[27]; Chandrasekar (2011)[28]; [29]Bass & Avolio (1990); [30]; ORC International purse (1990)];[31] Gallup Organization (2008)[32] in establishing the validity of the construct the following are considered: "(a) establishing contact prior to the main study between the researcher and the organizations (b) determine the reliability of the constructs and (c) predict the possible challenges that may arise prior to the main data collection of the study". The use of a five-point Likert scale rating to measure the responses to the questions was adapted in the present study. Krosnick & Fabrigar (1991)[33] was not in support that a scale of 5 to 7 points reliably and validly measure items better than a shorter or a longer scale point. However, Garland (1991)[34] and Dawis (1987)[35] opined that the choice of the measurement scale largely depends on the researcher's preference because no better single method for scale construction. Consequently, this study adopts the following as the key variables contained in this study: Team and co-worker relationship, Work environment, leadership and Training and carrier development (2) Employee engagement. All the variables/ constructs in this study are unidimensional.

Validation of Instrument

The pilot test of the instrument for this study was conducted in Nigeria. Those that Participated in study are the Non-academic staff of the universities of technology. This is done to get appropriate feedback to improve the techniques for data collection and the instrument used in the main study. In ensuring that the questionnaire was adapted properly, a content and construct tests was conducted for the validation of the measuring instrument used in this study. The need for this validity is to know whether an important presumption can be drawn from the measure of the instrument of this study by conducting a face validity test on the wordings and the sequence of the items to determine which best suites the respondents among the alternative formats, to determine whether the items of this study will effectively measure the hypothetical conception of the study (Creswell, 2009[36];[37] Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).The final research instrument used in collecting data for the main study, comments received from these expert were implemented.

Reliability Test Analysis

In determining the internal consistency of the instrument, a reliability test of the construct was conducted. Pallant (2013)[38] stresses that thirty (30) or more respondents are adequate in conducting a pilot testing. In view of this, for the purpose of the pilot study, 40 respondents were used. To interpret the result of the pilot study, Cronbach's Alpha value was used as summarized in Table one below:

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF THE PILOT TEST RELIABILITY ANALYSIS OF CONSTRUCTS

Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Team and Coworker Relationship	11	0.890
Work Environment Leadership	8	0.943
	12	0.947
Training and Carrier Development	7	0.880
Employee Engagement	12	0.903

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The framework is presented in this study with Team and coworker relationship, Work environment, Leadership, Training and Career Development as predicting variable while Employee engagement as criterion variable. Based on a meticulous review of the literature and in depth understanding to academicians and practitioners on the relationship between factors affecting employee engagement the proposed framework was developed. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the constructs used in this study. The result of the pilot test analysis presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the constructs used. The Cronbach's Alpha of the variables ranges from 0.883 to 0.947, therefore, following Pallant (2011)[39];[40] Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, (2010) the Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.7 is acceptable. Therefore, any value greater than 0.8 is accepted. In the present study, the result of the internal consistency shows that the Cronbach's Alpha values for all the constructs are greater than 0.8, which indicates that the reliability of the instrument for this research are very good. therefore, on this basis no item was deleted. All items included in the instrument sufficiently proved to reflect on the reality those adequate levels of internal consistency following their respective measure. The reliability result in this study reveals that all the variables are appropriate to be used in the main survey. However, in the main study after the determination of the factor analysis, further reliability analysis will be performed on the main data collected.

This study is limited to investigate the influence of team and co-worker relationship, work environment, leadership, training and career development and employee engagement, future researchers are charged to investigate the engagement drivers and the proposed framework in this study should be empirically validated.

REFERENCES

[1] Crawford, E. R., Rich, B. L., Buckman, B., & Bergeron, J. (2014). The antecedents and drivers of employee engagement. *Employee engagement in theory and practice*, 57-81.

[2] Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. Industrial and organizational Psychology, 1(1), 3-30.

[3] Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2010). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. Academy of management journal, 53(3), 617-635..

[4] Sibanda, P., Muchena, T., & Ncube, F. (2014). Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance in A Public Sector Organisation in Zimbabwe. International Journal of Asian Social Science, 4(1), 89-99.

[5] Karatepe, O. M. (2011). Procedural justice, work engagement, and job outcomes: Evidence from Nigeria. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 20(8), 855-878..

[6] Bendell, J. (2005). In whose name? The accountability of corporate social responsibility. Development in Practice, 15(3-4), 362-374.

[7] Adebayo, A. (2004). "Principles and Practice of Public Administration in Nigeria". Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

[8] Akinwale, A. A. (2011). Labour reform and industrial conflicts mismanagement in Nigeria. Journal of Political Economy October, 11-23. Productivity. Argosy University, MBA.

[9] Okoye, P. V. C., & Ezejiofor, R. A. (2013). The effect of human resources development on organizational productivity. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 3(10), 250.

[10] Wellins, R. S., Bernthal, P., & Phelps, M. (2005). Employee engagement: The key to realizing competitive advantage. Development Dimensions International, 5, 1-31.

[11] Blau, P. M. (1964). Exchange and power in social life. Transaction Publishers.

[12] Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. Academy of management journal, 33(4), 692-724.

[13] Baumruk, R. (2004). The missing link: the role of employee engagement in business success.

[14] Welch, M. (2011). The evolution of the employee engagement concept: communication implications. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 16(4), 328-346.

[15] Saks, A. M. (2006). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. Journal of managerial psychology, 21(7), 600-619.

[16] Locke, E.A. and Taylor, M.S. (1990) 'Stress, coping, and the meaning of work', in Brief, A. and W.R. Nord (Eds) Meanings of Occupational Work, pp135-170. Lexington, Lexington Books.

[17] Sousa-Poza, A., & Sousa-Poza, A. A. (2000). Well-being at work: a cross-national analysis of the levels and determinants of job satisfaction. *The journal of socio-economics*, *29*(6), 517-538.

[18] Kohun, S. (1992). Business environment. Ibadan: University Press Kyko OC (2005). Instrumentation: Know yourself and Others Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003) 3rd editions: Harloa Pearson Educational Limited.

[19] Nathan, R. M. (2004). Impact of Servant-Leadership on Employee Engagement and Workplace Productivity. Argosy University, MBA.

[20] Adair, J. (2002). Effective strategic Leadership London Macmillan publishers Limited

[21] Daniel, G. (2002). The New leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results. Little brown, Zancaster press, London

[22] Campbell, J. J., Dunnette, M. D., Lawler, E. E., & Weick, K. E. (1970). Managerial behavior, performance, and effectiveness.

[23] Paradise, A (2008), "Influences engagement", ASTD, Training and Development, Vol. 62 No. 1, pp. 54-59.

[24] Alderfer, C. P. (1972). Existence, relatedness, and growth: Human needs in organizational settings.

[25] Malhotra, N.K., (2008). Essentials of marketing: An applied orientation. 2nd Edn., Australian: Pearson Education.

[26] Asika, N., 1991. Research methodology in the behavioral science. Lagos: Longman Nigeria Plc, Nigeria.

[27] Hain, C. A, & Francis, L. (2004). Development and Validation o f a Coworker Relationship Scale. Poster session presented at the 65th Annual Convention of the Canadian Psychological Association, Newfoundland, Canada.

[28] Chandrasekar, K. (2011). Workplace environment and its impact on organizational performance in public sector organizations. International Journal of Enterprise Computing and Business Systems, 1(1), 1-19.

[29] Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1990). Transformational leadership development: Manual for the multifactor leadership questionnaire. Consulting Psychologists Press.

[30] Adair, J. (2002). Effective strategic Leadership London Macmillan publishers Limited

[31] Daniel, G. (2002). The New leaders: Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results. Little brown, Zancaster press, London

[32] Gallup Organization (2008). What your disaffected workers cost. Gullup Management Journal. Retrieved from www.gallup.com.

[33] Krosnick, J.A. and L.R. Fabrigar, (1991). Designing rating scales for effective measurement in surveys. In B. Lyberg, P. Colllins, M. De Leeuw, E. Dippo, C. Schwarz, N. (Ed.), Survey measurement and process quality. (Trewin ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

[34] Garland, R., 1991. The midpoint on a rating scale: Is it desirable? Marketing Bulletin, 2(May): 66-70.

[35] Dawis, R.V., 1987. Scale construction. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 34(4): 481-489.

[36] Creswell, J.W., 2009. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. 3rd Edn., Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

[37] Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2013). Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach: John Wiley & Sons.

[38] Pallant, J. (2013). SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS . Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill

[39] Pallant, J., 2011. SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS program. England: McGraw Hill Open University Press

[40] Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). Multivariate Data Analysis: A Global Perspective (Seventh Edition ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Person Education Inc.