

Employee Competence and Work Engagement of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between employee competence and work engagement of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design. Primary data were sourced through structured and self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study comprised 283 staff of twenty-two (22) deposit money banks in Port Harcourt; whereas a sample size of one hundred and sixty-five (165) staff was drawn through the Taro Yamane formulae. The reliability of the instrument was determined by the use of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, with 0.70 as benchmark. Data generated were presented with tables and descriptive statistics while hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between competence and work engagement of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. The study concludes that when employees are empowered through competence improvement, work engagement is enhanced. The study recommends that Deposit money banks should build the competence of the employees through training and development. Employees should be given enough freedom and authority to make decisions concerning their day-to-day work roles to enhance their perception of autonomy in decision making.

Keywords: Employee Competence, Work Engagement, Vigour, Absorption, Dedication

DOI: 10.7176/EJBM/14-9-01

Publication date: May 31st 2022

Introduction

Work or employee engagement describes a situation where employees feel involved, committed, passionate, and empowered at work (Mone & London, 2010). Employee engagement has been a subject of attraction for almost two decades (Albercht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey and Saks, 2015); and in recent years, it has been echoed strongly among business executives (Macey, Schneider, Barbera and Young, 2009). Engaged individuals display high energy and self-efficacy at work (Borst et al., 2019a), whereas the disengaged employee would result in significant loss to the organization (Othman, Rapi, Alias, Jahya, & Wei Loon, 2019). Engagement remains a main source of competitive advantage; as such, the impact of employee engagement cannot be overemphasized.

It has been shown to influence a range of attitudinal, behavioural, performance, and financial outcomes (Christian, Garza and Slaughter, 2011; Halbesleben, 2010; Macey et al., 2009). Halbesleben (2010) meta-analysis revealed that engagement is positively linked with commitment, health, turnover intention and performance. Thus, it is an approach that increases the probability of business success, beneficial to both individual and organization, as well as improves productivity and well-being of employees.

On the other hand, a sense of personal mastery that one is capable of successfully completing a task is referred to as competence. Competence is further defined as the ability to perform the tasks assigned to one. It addresses the question of whether or not the employees who will be empowered has the skills necessary to perform the tasks that will be assigned to them if they are empowered. Following the identification of what is required to pursue and achieve a goal, the level of actual (rather than perceived) skill relevant to the task becomes significantly important.

The issue of competence is addressed through the identification of existing skills and the acquisition of new skills. Several studies have investigated work engagements using other predictors such as autonomy (Alzyoud, Othman, & Isa, 2015; Johari, Tan, & Zulkarnain, 2018), supervisor support (Nasurdin, Ling, & Khan, 2018; Rothmann & Jordaan, 2006; Swanberg, McKechnie, Ojha, & James, 2011; Thongpoon, 2013; Toyama & Mauno, 2017). But we intend to study it through employee competence.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between employee competence and dedication of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between employee competence and absorption of Deposit Money Banks in

- Rivers State?
 iii. What is the relationship between employee competence and vigour of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State?

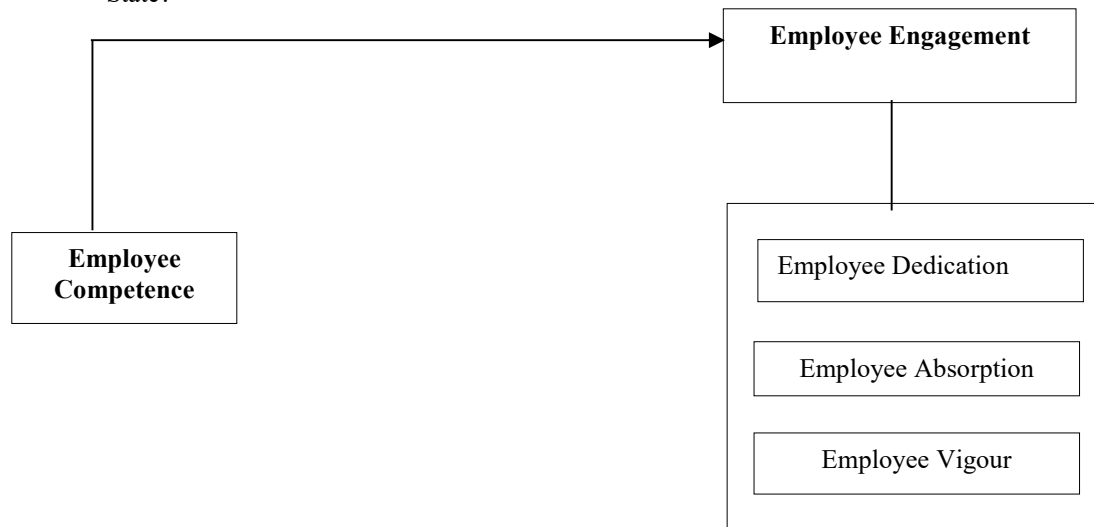


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework for psychological empowerment and employee engagement of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State

Source: Desk Research (2022)

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundation

Kanter's Theory of Empowerment

Kanter (1993) defines empowerment as the ability of an individual to independently make decisions and utilize available resources to accomplish the necessary goals. She postulates that if an organization is structured to provide empowerment and access to job-related empowerment opportunities, the structure will have a positive impact on employees and their performance to work. Alternatively, an organizational structure that does not provide empowerment and access to job related empowerment opportunities will have a negative impact on the employees and their performance atwork. Kanter (1993) posits that in an empowerment-structured organization there is increased autonomy, job satisfaction, and performance among employees. Consequently, feelings of burnout and job stress will decrease, and the result is employee performance.

Kanter stated that the work environment structures and perceived employee access to power and opportunity structures is related to employee attitudes and behaviors in an organization. Kanter believed that employees display attitudes based on the presence of perceived power and opportunities. According to Kanter, there exist four work empowerment structures: access to information, resources, support, and opportunity. Access to information refers to the data, technical knowledge, and expertise needed for job performance. Access to resources refers to the ability to obtain needed supplies, materials, money and personnel to meet established organizational goals. Access to support refers to the guidance, feedback, and direction provided by supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Access to opportunity refers to the growth, mobility and the chance to build upon knowledge base (Kanter, 1993). Kanter believed that if employees within an organization perceive opportunities for success is present, the employees' attitude, job satisfaction, and overall employee performance will be enhanced. In order for an employee to perceive that opportunity exists, the employee must be in a position that allows access to resources, information, and support.

Concept of Employee Competence

When it comes to employees' beliefs in their capability to complete their tasks successfully, Spreitzer (1995) and Quiones, Van den Broeck, and De Witte (2013) define competence as the belief that they have in their ability to complete their tasks successfully. Al-douri (2018) explained that competence is the ability to face challenges in both the internal and external environments by creating an environment conducive to thinking and creativity, as well as training employees in decision-making, initiative, and innovation (Spreitzer, 1995; Ibrahim, 2020). It has been shown that the greater an individual's sense of self-efficacy, the more committed they will be towards accomplishing specific tasks (Taylor, 2013). Those individuals would take more initiative, would be more persistent, and would put forth more effort when confronted with difficult circumstances. Competence is defined as an individual's ability to perform a job correctly.

A competency is a set of defined behaviours that serve as a structured guide for the identification,

evaluation, and development of the behaviour in individual employees. Competencies are defined as follows: Competencies are defined as observable abilities, skills, knowledge, motivations, or traits that are defined in terms of the behaviours required for successful job performance. Notably, employee competencies are inherited with all of these characteristics, and as a result, they serve as the primary source of competitive advantage as well as the primary drivers of improved organizational performance (Ciziuniene Vaiciute & Batarliene, 2016). When people have the ability to choose, they become more self-assured. Being self-assured means being well-organized in your activities and having hands-on experience with their implementation.

Concept of Work Engagement

Work engagement has become a widely used term in the practitioner literature (Saks, 2006). However, there is a lack of consensus among academics on how to conceptualize the concept (Kang, 2014; Saks & Gruman, 2014). Literature suggests that engagement can be defined as both a process and an outcome. According to Yankelovich and Immerwahr (1993), public engagement is a complex process of debate, discussion, and interaction between the public and organizations. Khan first introduced the concept of engagement, defining job engagement as “the harnessing of organisational members’ selves to their work roles” (Khan, 1990). Unanimous with the most definition of employee engagement is passion, drive commitment and involvement of employees in providing consistent and sustained discretionary effort (Cook, 2008; Anitha, 2014 & Carbonara, 2012). These scholars concur that the consequence of good levels of employee engagement is improved customer satisfaction, positive results and organisational performance (Mone & London, 2014; Boikanyo, 2012).

According to Abraham (2012), employee engagement is the degree to which the employees are satisfied with their job. In the same vein, Mone and London (2010) see employee engagement as a situation where employees feel involved, committed, passionate, empowered and these feelings are exhibited in the work behavior. Employee Engagement is the devotion, passion of employees and effective leadership skills with support from the top management to the employees. Human resource leaders set the drive and creed of their company and spread that positive morale to the employees in the company.

Dedication as a proxy of Work Engagement

The term dedication has no one distinct definition accepted by scholars in the field. But then, dedication simply refers to the type of engagement in which the employee engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha&Zaki, 2010). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, dedication is devoting or setting aside for a particular purpose” (Merriam-Webster, 2015). Also, dedication is characterized by a strong psychological involvement in one’s work, combined with a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” (Mauno, *et al.*, 2007, Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2002). The term dedication has no one distinct definition accepted by scholars in the field. But then, dedication simply refers to the type of engagement in which the employee engaged due to the feeling that his services are retained in the organization, and there will be no need to think of looking for job elsewhere (Williams, Maha&Zaki, 2010). Dedication is ones’ sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Dedication is about being inspired, enthusiastic and highly involved in your job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Dedication is an individual’s deriving a sense of significance from work, feeling enthusiastic and proud about the given job, and feeling inspired and challenged by the job (Song *et al.*, 2012).

Absorption

Absorption is defined as “being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work” (Schaufeli, *et al.*, 2002). The concept of absorption simply advocates the use of bonus, benefits and incentives to arouse employees’ interest at work. This is another indispensable antecedent to employee engagement. It involves both financial rewards, and non-financial benefits such as recognition and other perks exemplified by on-site day care, employee assistance programs, subsidized cafeterias, travel discounts, extra holidays and others. It simply refers to being fully concentrated and happily engulfed in one’s work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with separating oneself from work (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Absorption, refers to a sense of detachment from your surroundings, a high degree of concentration on your job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job (Rayton & Yalabik, 2014). Absorption means concentration and being engrossed in people’s work, whereby passing time will be intangible and being detached from the job has some difficulties for them.

Vigour

The term Vigour also refers to employees’ engagement resulted from the satisfaction derived from key drivers such as leadership style, organizational justice, work policies & procedures of the organization (Williams, 2010).

Vigour is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in ones' work and persistence in the face of difficulty. Vigour also refers to energy, mental resilience, determination and investing consistent effort in job (Rayton and Yalabik, 2014). Vigour is one of the aspects of work engagement that implies high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. There is also a determined investment in the actual work, together with high levels of persistence even when faced with difficulties. This aspect can be determined based on Atkinson's motivational theory. Motivation is strength of doing work or resistance against that. So, strength and resistance are addressed as aspects of work engagement and their concept is constant with popular definition of motivation (Latham & Pinder, 2005).

Employee Competence and Work Engagement

Kaur and Mittal (2020) carried out a study on meaningfulness of work and employee engagement: the role of affective commitment. The main purpose of this research was to study the relationship between meaningfulness of work, employee engagement, and affective commitment. Further, this study is also examined the mediating influence of affective commitment on the relationship between meaningfulness of work and employee engagement. The study used a quantitative approach to collect data for the research by utilizing a cross-sectional survey design. The study included standardized scales and was conducted on 319 employees working in the service sector of Punjab and Chandigarh, India. Results were analyzed with the help of the SPSS 22 version. Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and Cronbach's alpha value are represented in Table 1. Table 2 shows the hierarchical multiple regression to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. The findings of the given study confirmed a positive relationship between meaningfulness of work, employee engagement, and affective commitment.

Furthermore, Fürstenberg, Alfes and Shantz (2020) carried out a study on meaningfulness of work and supervisory-rated job performance: A moderated-mediation model. The study was carried out in a single organization. Participants were 249 employees at one division of a construction and consultancy firm in the United Kingdom. The jobs held by our respondents varied widely and included facilities management, logistics, building, property development, and administrative roles. The study used descriptive statistics, reliabilities, regression analyses and zero-order correlations among the study variables. The findings revealed that meaningfulness was positively and significantly associated with promotive voice behaviors. It is noteworthy that meaningfulness is directly and significantly related to supervisory-rated job performance. Moreover, our results revealed a significant indirect effect of meaningfulness on job performance ratings through promotive voice behaviors.

Based on the foregoing, the study thus hypothesized that:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and dedication in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and absorption in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and vigour in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population for the study is the 283 staff in the Regional Offices of 22 deposit money banks in Port Harcourt. The study concentrated on the Regional Offices of these banks in Port Harcourt. The sample size of 165 was determined using Taro Yamane's formation. The reliability of the instrument was achieved by the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with all the items scoring above 0.70. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23.0. The tests were carried out at a 95% confidence interval and a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

Bivariate Analysis

The level of significance 0.05 was adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ($p > 0.05$) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ($p < 0.05$).

Employee Competence and Measures of Employee Engagement

The level of relationship between employee competence with each of the measures of employee engagement is to examine the extent employee competence can impact on the outcome of each measure of employee engagement.

Table 1: Correlation for employee competence and employee engagement

			Competence	Dedication	Absorption	Vigour
Spearman's rho	Competence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.915**	.968**	.774**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	144	144	144	144
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.915**	1.000	.926**	.882**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	144	144	144	144
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.968**	.926**	1.000	.827**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	144	144	144	144
	Vigour	Correlation Coefficient	.774**	.882**	.827**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	144	144	144	144

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Interpretation

RQ1: What is the relationship between employee competence and work engagement in deposit money banks in Rivers State?

The result on the relationship between employee competence and the measures of work engagement is shown in table 1 with the correlation coefficient (rho) values used to answer the research question as shown below:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and dedication in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between employee competence and dedication was shown in Table 1.0 Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. The correlation coefficient of 0.915 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a very strong positive correlation between the variables. The tests of significance shows that that this relationship is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee competence and dedication in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and absorption in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between employee competence and absorption was shown in Table 1.0 Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. The correlation coefficient of 0.986 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a very strong positive correlation between the variables. The tests of significance shows that this relationship is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee competence and absorption in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between employee competence and vigour in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

The result of correlation matrix obtained between employee competence and vigour was shown in Table 1.0 Similarly displayed in the table is the statistical test of significance (p - value), which makes possible the generalization of our findings to the study population. The correlation coefficient of 0.774 confirms the direction and strength of this relationship. The coefficient represents a positive strong correlation between the variables. The tests of significance shows that that this relationship is significant at $p < 0.000 < 0.01$. Therefore, based on observed findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a significant relationship between employee competence and vigour in deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The results from the analysis reveal significant relationship between employee competence and employee dedication in deposit money banks in Rivers State. The findings linked the effect of employee competence on employee dedication in deposit money banks in Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with the earlier findings of Rania, Rahmanb and Yusakc (2021) who conducted a study on the study investigated the relationship between the four dimensions of psychological empowerment between employees' performance in the automotive after sales service in Malaysia and found that meaning, competence, self-determination and impact

found significantly correlated and predicted employees' performance.

In the same, the current finding aligns with the previous work of Kumanwee (2017) who undertook a study on psychological empowerment and employee affective commitment in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria and found that there is a significant relationship between competence and personal involvement of employees in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. More so, the finding agrees with Nassar (2017) who conducted a study on study of psychological empowerment and organizational change among hotel employees in Egypt and found a positive correlation of medium effect between the cognition of competence and job satisfaction. This implied that the two variables were related, that is, those employees who perceived that they had the required knowledge and skills to perform their jobs had high level of job satisfaction. In addition, Gachunga, Maina and Kabare (2016) in their study on the influence of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment in Kenyan civil service found that the dimension of competence was positively correlated to job satisfaction, which in turn lead to organizational commitment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that employee competence significantly relates with work engagement in Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State. This implied that employee competence was closely related to employee engagement.

The study recommends that Deposit money banks should build the competence of the employees through training and encouragement of personal development. Employees should be given enough freedom and authority to make decisions concerning their day-to-day work roles which serves as another confidence booster. This would enhance their perception as having some degrees of autonomy in decision making and by extension increase their competence at work which will also enhance their attitude to work, especially engagement.

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