

Impact of Performance Appraisal Practices on Employee Engagement in the Civil Service

Adilah Othman,^a Muslim Diekola Akanmu,^b and Ahmed Bawa^c

Abstract: *Employee engagement is critical to an effective civil service because it greatly influences achievement, according to a survey conducted in the administrative domain. However, in the context of the public service, relatively little consideration is given to performance appraisal practices (PAPs) in connection to employee engagement. Analysing PAPs (i.e., training, job promotion, financial reward, and performance recognition) in connection to employee engagement is the main goal of this study. Thus, this study examines the possibility of these practices to serve as predicting factors that influence employee engagement. A sample size of 510 was drawn from the Nigerian civil service using a stratified sampling technique. PLS-SEM techniques were used for data analysis and hypotheses testing. The findings reveal that employee engagement is positively and significantly affected by job promotion, performance recognition, and financial reward. On the other hand, training has no positive or significant relationship with employee engagement. This outcome suggests that training requirements are not recognised through the process of performance appraisal practices. However, promotion prospects, financial rewards, and performance recognition serve as stimulators for employee engagement. Drawing from the concepts of the social exchange theory (SET), PAPs are crucial to effective employee engagement in the civil service.*

Keywords: Employee engagement; Financial reward; Job promotion; Performance recognition; Training

JEL Classification: O15, M1, P35

^a Corresponding author. Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kuala Dungun, Terengganu, Malaysia. Email: adilahothman@uitm.edu.my. ORCID ID: 0009-0009-5492-443X

^b Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. Email: makanmu@uj.ac.za. ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4713-9950

^c Johannesburg Business School, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. Email: ahmedb@uj.ac.za. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5889-5295

1. Introduction

In both management theory and practice, employee engagement is crucial. However, the concept, theory, influencing variables, and results of employee engagement continue to differ significantly, and there is still no reliable benchmark (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Employee engagement is crucial to the growth and development of most organisations around the globe, which explains the need for a human resource (HR) system that strives to boost employee competence, commitment, and productivity levels. As part of the indispensable approaches to human resources management (HRM) in various establishments, performance appraisal practices (PAPs) play a significant role in providing vital information that may lead to fundamental decisions with respect to HR activities (Cheng, 2014). Performance appraisal (PA) is also a crucial instrument of personnel management, as it recognises workers' present level of occupation performance, classifies strengths and weaknesses, facilitates an increase in employee engagement, offers a basis for recompensing or disciplining workers, inspires greater performance, distinguishes training and development desires, inspires supervisory comprehension of staff, as well as offers information for authentic selection procedures, succession planning, and training (Shehu, 2008). Thus, PA practices remain a significant determinant of employee engagement.

Ismail et al. (2021) posit that employees are essential to every organisation's development, particularly after the onset of Covid-19. Workers play a critical role in achieving corporate goals, and employee success is dependent on their ability to execute corporate strategy and planning, as they must possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies (Zakaria et al. 2023). Thus, one of the most important components of an organisational performance management system for achieving results for both the organisation and its employees is PAs (Memon et al., 2020). In particular, a number of behavioural and attitudinal outcomes, including workers' intrinsic motivation, innovative behaviour and career growth, commitment and loyalty, and low turnover intention, depend on their level of satisfaction with a performance rating system. Existing HR studies show that PAPs are vital for excellent employee engagement. A number of studies (e.g., Biswas, 2011; Shabbir et al., 2016) investigate employee engagement predictors, but the most essential for employee engagement is the PA system (Eliphas et al.,

2017). Lim and Ahmad (2021) also reveal that PAPs are strong predictors of employee engagement. It then follows that PAPs represents a vital part of HRM that promote employee engagement.

This study exclusively considers promotion, financial reward, training, and performance recognition as PAs and to enhance work engagement, because in the end, a well-run performance assessment system ensures organisational sustainability and success by pushing high performers to keep up their current level of performance and low performers to do better. Notably, the ability of a PA to improve employees' views of fairness is crucial to raising their level of satisfaction with the system. Thus, this study sets out to assess the roles of PAPs (promotion, financial reward, training, and recognition) on employee engagement in the civil service of a Nigerian state.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Constructing performance appraisal practices (PAPs)

PA activities are one of the key HRM components so long as they produce indispensable information needed to make fundamental conclusions with respect to different HR engagements and consequences (Cheng, 2014). The principal aim of PA practices is to aid organisations to make decisions on pay, promotion, training needs, feedback, and recognition (Denkyira, 2014). It is widely asserted that a motivated, highly committed, and dedicated workforce is paramount for the sustainability and survival of an organisation. In the same vein, Ojokuku (2012) reports that organisational success is highly reliant on contributions from employees. However, bearing in mind the contextual disparity amongst regions, nations, and even within nations, PAPs are conceptualised to suit the context of the study. To this end, PAPs connote financial reward, performance recognition, job promotion, and training in the present study.

Moreover, Zubair and Khan (2015) posit that employee training comprises practices created to enhance competences and skills as required for employee engagement on the current and future tasks. For the best performance during job training, the priority for the organisation is to create an environment where employees have the opportunity to acquire new skills (Liu & Lu, 2016). Hence, training becomes an imperative segment of the

design to integrate HRM within an establishment's occupational technique (Dabale et al., 2014) with a direct influence on the functional capacity of the organisation. In addition, training is an indispensable element of PAPs. PAs facilitate workforces to obtain responses on their accomplishments, recognise training needs and make further strategies for improvement. Ryan and Deci (2000) add that training enhances ingenuity and performance by increasing a sense of competency among employees, and consequently, an enhanced intrinsic motivation. Moreover, effective human resource practices, such as providing training facilities, help firms gain a competitive edge by enabling them to retain their staff for longer periods of time (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020).

Additionally, promotions are one of the PAPs which defines procedure through which a worker in an organisation is given greater obligations of a greater pay scale. It is a gradual advance that workers select while executing their tasks as far as grade or position is concerned (Anatasia, 2015). It is evident that job promotion is paramount for any organisational practice as it induces great labour productivity, high profitability, and employee engagement (Rahaman & Uddin, 2022). Promotion could be a worker's compensation for good performance, i.e., constructive evaluation. Accordingly, HR procedures and employee retention have gained significant importance as a result of workers striking in various sectors throughout the globe of late to demand that their job demands be met. The main causes of strikes are discrimination, low service fees, lack of pay increases, promotions, housing, food, and unfair pay for local workers (Imna & Hasan, 2015).

Recognition systems/practices involve recompense, inducements, and reimbursements offered to the worker as recognition for their support (Khan et al., 2017). It is among the tools to handle performance in an organisation, and managers must consider some form of this in an evaluation system. Recognition can be either in the form of monetary or non-monetary rewards, or just simple acknowledgements of tasks well done. Employee engagement rises once workers get rises in remuneration and recognition, and can encourage them to be more productive in performing their jobs. Caruth and Handlogten (2001) state that poor recognition systems lead to dissatisfaction and lower productivity. Workers that feel occupation satisfaction are expected to be more industrious, active, and devoted to the organisation. In the contemporary working environment and expanding economy, these

benefits and recognition can take on new forms, like employee recognition, performance-based incentives, non-cash pay, intangible benefits, and global benefits (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020). In the process of recognition—which is a crucial component of the requirement to acknowledge and assist employees—workers feel valued, and engagement, retention, and productivity all rise as a result (Danish & Usman, 2010).

Besides, according to Heathfield (2019), financial reward is a key factor in PAP and HRM in attracting, retaining, and motivating diligent employees. It is universal belief that the use of financial rewards (e.g., incentives) inspires employees to engage more and perform better (Vandenabeele, 2007). Some researchers (e.g., Shahzad et al., 2008) note that financial reward could be a good apparatus in retaining skilled experts. Therefore, organisations need to be aware that practices like remuneration can create connection and disincentivise those who might be considering moving elsewhere. Additionally, training facilities may help retain employees longer since they foster skills development, managerial competency, and offer both monetary and psychological benefits. It demonstrates the substantial commitment that businesses must make in order to invest in financial reward and keep employees (Kalyanamitra et al., 2020).

2.2 Employee engagement

Kahn (1990) classifies personal engagement as “the simultaneous employment and expression of a person’s ‘preferred self’ in task behaviours that promote connections to work and to others, personal presence, and active full role performances.” Shuck (2011), in a review of the literature, identifies the four major approaches that define the existing state of employee engagement: Kahn’s (1990) needs-satisfying approach; Maslach et al.’s (2001) burnout-antithesis approach; Harter et al.’s (2002) satisfaction-engagement approach; and Saks’ (2006) multidimensional approach.

Shafi et al. (2024) state that employee engagement involves the contribution of a worker who can be informed of grievances. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), meanwhile, describe employee engagement in relation to administrative commitment, specifically protraction commitment (i.e., desire to stay with an organisation), affective loyalty (i.e., emotional attachment to an organisation), and additional responsibility attitude (i.e., discretionary behaviour that increases effective functioning of an organisation). As workers

are a vital administrative resource, Alfes et al. (2013) note that persistent engagement builds employee loyalty, desire, and vigour, and is allied with administrative aspirations and rising organisational performance. Thomas (2007) establishes a one-dimensional engagement conceptualisation, with an end result (i.e., conduct) in three sets: physical, cognitive, and emotional. These are the three measures of employee engagement that will be used in this study.

2.3 Hypothesis formulation

2.3.1 Relationship between training and employee engagement (EE)

Employee training is an indispensable part of engagement (Azeem et al., 2013). Employees who are given sufficient training are likely to be more industrious and productive. Training linked to employment engagement is one of the most researched areas across the globe (Manuel, 2014). Yap et al. (2010) show that employees who have a positive perception of the effectiveness of training are more significantly engaged, committed, and contented in their organisations than those who perceive training as ineffective. Equally, Lam et al. (2009) establish a significant correlation between employee responsibility and training and development. The more committed employees are in an organisation, the less their desire to leave, and the better their attitude towards their employment. Training, therefore, enables the workforce to be engaged, as well as attain skills and knowledge.

Studies also show that training enhances workers' level of obligation to the occupation, thus increasing engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015). Choo and Nasuridin (2014) discover that work engagement can be enriched via improved training. Azeem et al. (2013) stress that the correct kind of training can influence employee engagement in many ways, and that there is a significant and positive relationship between training and employee engagement. Paradise (2008) adds that training significantly enhances engagement, which is positively correlated with the quality, frequency, and breadth of learning opportunities. Thus, the literature supports the notion that an engaged workforce is one that continuously learns and evolves (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_1 The relationship between training and employee engagement is positive and significant.

2.3.2 Relationship between job promotion and employee engagement

Promotion is one of the essential practices under HRM that encourage workers' loyalty to an organisation (Rubel & Kee, 2013). According to Khan and Iqbal (2013), individuals who are highly inspired are more engaged in their jobs compared to those who are not. Ameen and Baharom (2019) reveal that there is a significant and positive correlation between job promotion prospects and workers' engagement in an establishment. Their study finds that on-time and easy occupation progression opportunity persuade workers to be committed and loyal to their organisations. Khan and Iqbal (2013), meanwhile, state that job promotion has a direct relationship with employee engagement. Other studies report that job promotion prospects significantly affect workers' obligations in the organisation (e.g., Kehoe & Wright, 2013). In addition, job promotion prospects serve as an instrument to enhance commitment and a sense of belonging, which effectively translates to long-term ties with the organisation (Holtom et al., 2008).

Moreover, Brown (2011) states that for a workforce to be engaged, employees' desire for career progression is indispensable. Mutunga (2009) posits that organisations require powerful structures and approaches that support and promote engagement. For instance, systems such as recognition, hiring, career development, training, performance management, compensation and promotion collectively offer the organisation a basis upon which to fast-track engagement. Hence, promotion should be encouraged by organisations in order to enhance employees' engagement in their given tasks. Organisations must offer opportunities for job promotions. This would go a long way to equipping employees to be more engaged in discharging their responsibilities efficiently and effectively (Mohda et al., 2016). Job promotion does not only inspire personnel to perform better, but motivates them to be more committed to their own professional progression and growth. Srivastava and Bansal (2016) maintain that job promotion is an indispensable factor that significantly influences employee engagement in every organisation. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2 The relationship between job promotion and employee engagement is positive and significant.

2.3.3 Relationship between performance recognition and employee engagement

Recognition or appreciation for a job well done is an integral component of a winning strategic reward system. Showing appreciation to employees for excellent performance is likely to enhance inspiration and citizenship behaviours. Praising workers for tasks accomplished or for supporting/impacting the corporate existence of institutions serves as constructive reinforcement for them to be more committed at their duties. Scholars like Kaufman et al. (2013) observe that engagement levels grow once employees are appreciated or recognised for their occupational efforts. If a workforce believes their capabilities and efforts will be acknowledged, they are likely to be more engaged and produce more value. Once recognition is deemed effective, employees have lower turnover levels and accomplish greater corporate outcomes (Gostick & Elton, 2007). However, the shortage of satisfactory compensation packages can discourage a workforce from being seriously engaged in carrying their duties (Maslach et al., 2001). As the literature shows, recognition remains substantial engagement predictors.

In addition, recognition is reported to be a very significant antecedent of employee engagement (Saks, 2006). The level of worker engagement, according to Kahn (1990), is based on their understanding of the benefit they will receive. Then, regardless of the type of the compensation, workers' own view as to their level of contentedness propels engagement. Financial recognition, on the other hand, has a significant effect on engagement (Scott et al., 2010). Thus, it is proposed that non-financial recognition might inspire and engage workers as well. Mutunga (2009) states that performance recognition to a very large extent has a great impact on employee engagement. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H3 The relationship between performance recognition and employee engagement is positive and significant.

2.3.4 Relationship between financial reward and employee engagement

Financial reward is considered a major factor within an organisation as it provides tangible reward to employees for their duties (Thwala et al., 2012). Therefore, pay is a necessary attribute of engagement that inspires employees to concentrate further on their own growth within the organisation. The rate of workers' engagement relies on the attractiveness of payment and welfare packages (Anitha, 2014). Furthermore, Saks (2006) emphasises that pay is a very important antecedent for employee engagement. It is further argued that once employees obtain good pay from an organisation, there is a feeling of indebtedness that will be reciprocated with a high rate of engagement. Thus, the rate of worker engagement of is a function of the remuneration they obtain. Scott et al. (2010) show that pay (e.g., base salary, base salary increases, benefits and perquisites) has a great effect on employee engagement. Thus, good pay would facilitate engagement and positively affect job performance. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that:

H4 The relationship between financial reward and employee engagement is positive and significant.

3. Methodology

The research population of consists of Kwara State government workers. Questionnaires were given out to members of the Kwara State Civil Service Commission agencies and ministries. This was done to ensure that civil servants would have equal opportunity of being selected. The core data for the study came from a self-administered questionnaire survey. The population of this research covers 6,156 civil servants in Kwara State. With reference to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size of this study is 364. However, to guard against the effects that could arise sampling procedure errors and/or non-response rate, the sample size was increased by 40% to 510. This is consistent with a bigger sample size producing more accurate results (Alreck & Settle, 1995).

To select the participants, a stratified sampling technique was employed. This sampling technique involves population definition and determination of the strata, i.e., 19 ministries and two agencies of the Kwara State civil service. Determination of the average population per strata (293) was

achieved by using the number of strata (21) to divide the population size (6,156). To be precise, the percentage of the participants selected from every stratum was arrived at by using the population of the research to divide the estimated sample size. The rate of response from every stratum is 8.28%. Subsequently, the number of samples within a selected sample was determined. This is accomplished by multiplying the overall figure of every component of the population with the estimated percentage. To this end, for the first stratum, the total number of the subjects is 101 (i.e., $1,219 \times 8.28\%$).

Collection of data was achieved by distributing 510 questionnaires to the selected respondents. Only 371 questionnaires were completed, returned, and usable for the analysis i.e., a 73% rate of response. This rate is sufficient and justifiable; as Creswell (2012) notes, a 50% response rate is appropriate for data analysis. Also, the study employed Smart PLS v. 3.8 for the VB-SEM technique as the statistical tool for data analysis. This statistical instrument was adopted due to its robustness in handling research models (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, PLS requires fewer demands on sample size and does not need normal distributed input data (Urbach & Ahleman, 2010).

4. Results

4.1 Demographic information

Table 1 presents the descriptive demographics of the respondents. The majority of the respondents for this study are male, or 194 (52.3%) out of 371 respondents, while 177 (47.7%) are female. Where age is concerned, a substantial number of the respondents are between 26 to 35 years of age, or 178 (48%) of respondents. This distribution might be a replication of the fact that young adults are represented more in the Kwara State civil service. As many as 292 (78.7%) respondents are married, and the highest level of educational qualification is a Bachelor's degree for 227 (61.2%). Lastly, a considerable number of the respondents (180, 48.5%) have between one to five years' experience.

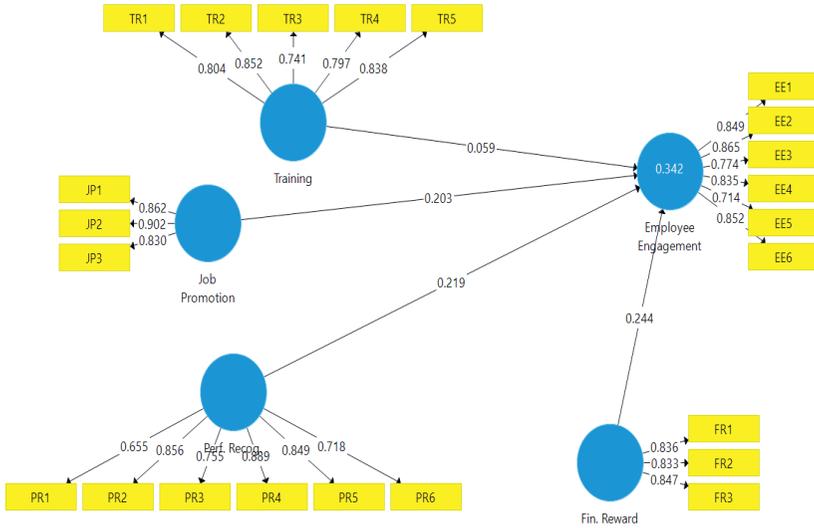
Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Demography	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	194	52.3
	Female	177	47.7
Age	18–25 years	23	6.2
	26–35 years	178	48.0
	36–45 years	124	33.4
	46–55 years	38	10.2
	56 years and above	8	2.2
Marital status	Married	292	78.7
	Single	72	19.4
	Divorced	4	1.1
	Widow	3	0.8
Educational qualification	Diploma and below	68	18.3
	Bachelor’s	227	61.2
	Master’s	76	20.5
	PhD	-	-
Work experience	1–5 years	180	48.5
	6–10 years	104	28.0
	11–15 years	45	12.1
	16–20 years	12	3.2
	21 years and above	30	8.1

4.2 Evaluation of the measurement model

The convergent validity and the internal consistency reliability of the model (as presented in Figure 1) were assessed to comply with the criteria needed for reliability and the validity of the constructs (Akanmu et al., 2023).

Figure 1: Measurement Model



From Table 2, as the values for composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha are all above the threshold of 0.7, the constructs of the study can be said to possess a high level of internal consistency. The minimum requirement of 0.5 for the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) of the reflective scale is also exceeded (Hair et al., 2011). Also, every item has a loading greater than 0.6, which, after multivariate analysis, is deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2: Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Reliability

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Employee engagement	EE1	0.849	0.899	0.923	0.667
	EE2	0.865			
	EE3	0.774			
	EE4	0.835			
	EE5	0.714			
	EE6	0.852			
Financial reward	FR1	0.836	0.789	0.877	0.703
	FR2	0.833			
	FR3	0.847			
Job promotion	JP1	0.862	0.839	0.899	0.748
	JP2	0.902			
	JP3	0.830			

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Performance recognition	PR1	0.655	0.883	0.909	0.626
	PR2	0.856			
	PR3	0.755			
	PR4	0.889			
	PR5	0.849			
	PR6	0.718			
Training	TR1	0.804	0.867	0.903	0.652
	TR2	0.852			
	TR3	0.741			
	TR4	0.797			
	TR5	0.838			

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As for the assessment of the discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was adopted. Table 3 below presents the discriminant validity to be confirmed as the highest HTMT ratio was between training and performance recognition, which falls below 0.85. Additionally, the bootstrapping method was used to test for the HTMT ratio, and the values are different significantly from 1, indicating that the constructs have discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	EE	FR	JP	PR	TR
EE					
FR	0.569				
JP	0.495	0.585			
PR	0.508	0.637	0.534		
TR	0.479	0.581	0.683	0.742	

Notes: EE = employee engagement; FR = financial reward; JP = job promotion; PR = performance recognition; TR = training

The highlights of the collinearity statistics for the independent variables by model are shown in Table 4. The VIF values are provided automatically because Smart PLS was used in this investigation. The highest level of VIF is 10 (Akanmu et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019), although Ringle et al. (2015) indicates that the maximum level of VIF is 5. A multicollinearity issue is considered to have emerged when the value is greater than 10. The table indicates that there is no problem with multicollinearity because the VIF range values fall between 1.614 and 2.123. Consequently, the results presented do not violate the multicollinearity assumption.

Table 4: VIF and F-squared

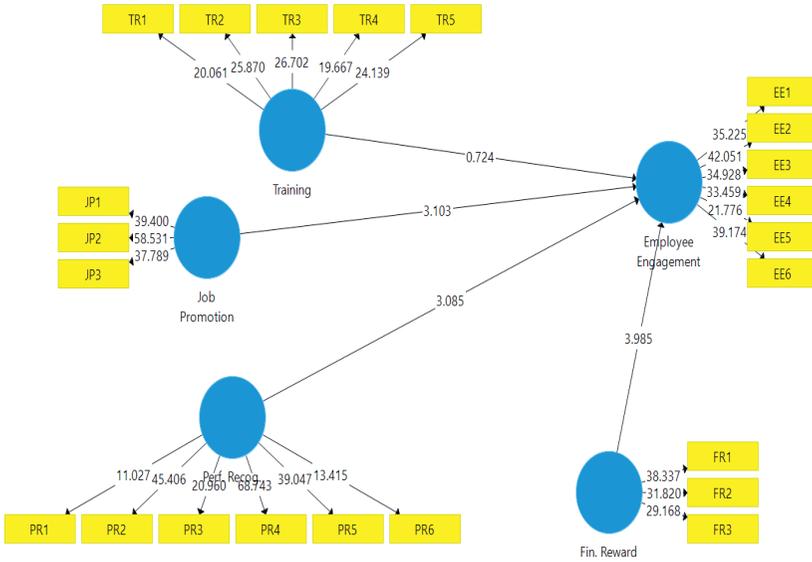
Constructs	VIF	F ²
Financial reward	1.614	0.052
Job promotion	1.714	0.034
Performance recognition	1.985	0.028
Training	2.123	0.005

According to Lee (2016), effect size (f^2) is a statistical notion that quantifies the strength of the association between two variables. Selya et al. (2012) reference Cohen's (1988) criteria, which state that f^2 values of 0.35 ($f^2 \geq 0.35$), 0.15 ($f^2 \geq 0.15$), and 0.02 ($f^2 \geq 0.02$), respectively, are considered large, medium, and small effect sizes. According to Table 4, financial reward, job promotion, and performance recognition have medium interaction with employee engagement for direct impact, but low interaction with employee training.

4.3 Structural model evaluation

With regards to the direct testing of the hypotheses concerning relationship between PAPs and employee engagement (as illustrated in Figure 2), Table 4 shows that three of the four hypotheses are supported. Based on this result, H_2 , which states that job promotion has a significant and positive relationship with employee engagement, is supported ($\beta = 0.203$, $t = 3.103$, $p < 0.05$). Equally, H_3 is likewise supported ($\beta = 0.219$, $t = 3.085$, $p < 0.05$) indicating there is significant and positive relationship between performance recognition and employee engagement. In addition, H_4 is supported ($\beta = 0.244$, $t = 3.985$, $p < 0.01$), signifying that there is significant and positive relationship between financial reward and employee engagement.

Figure 2: Structural Model



These results indicate significant and positive relationships of job promotion, financial reward, and performance recognition with employee (civil servant) engagement. However, H_1 , which states that there is significant and positive relationship between training and the civil servants’ engagement is not supported ($\beta = 0.059$, $t = 0.724$, $p > 0.05$). That is, only one hypothesis is not supported by the initial prediction. Summarily, Table 5 below presents the respective results for the relationships between PAPs and employee engagement.

Table 5: Direct Relationships

Hyp.	Path	Beta value	Std. dev.	T-value	P-value	Confidence intervals (CI)		Decision
						LLCI	ULCI	
H_1	TR > EE	0.059	0.081	0.724	0.469	-0.098	0.062	Not supported
H_2	JP > EE	0.203	0.065	3.103	0.002	0.055	0.255	Supported
H_3	PR > EE	0.219	0.071	3.085	0.002	0.070	0.228	Supported
H_4	FR > EE	0.244	0.061	3.985	0.000	0.041	0.223	Supported

Notes: EE = employee engagement; FR = financial reward; JP = job promotion; PR = performance recognition; TR = training

5. Discussion

Based on the results of this research, hypothesis H₁ stipulates that training has no significant relationship with employee (civil servant) engagement. The hypothesis was verified utilising variance-based SEM (i.e., PLS-SEM) (Akanmu et al., 2016). The results indicate that there is no significant relationship between training and employee engagement. This is consistent with several studies (e.g., Ahmad & Bakar, 2003; Manuel, 2014; Rashid et al., 2011; Shore & Barksdale, 1998). This shows that training is not a predictor of employee engagement in the Kwara State civil service. This result does not support the suggestions in the existing literature (i.e., social exchange theory or SET) and empirical findings that indicate that training plays a key role in shaping engagement (Paradise, 2008). This could be possibly attributed to the contextual factors such as political interference (politicisation of service) in Kwara State. Specifically, the selection of civil servants in the state for training is extremely political (Oyedepi, 2016). Moreover, it has been observed that training requirements are not recognised through the process of performance appraisal. Thus, the selection process of civil service trainings is not frequently established based on performance appraisal reports. According to Ohemeng et al. (2015), “training needs should come from the appraisal system, but this does not help, as individuals determine their own training needs.” So, if employee training is undertaken based on the recommended output of a PA processes, the training will enhance or influence the employee engagement efficiency of Kwara State civil servants.

Hypothesis H₂ is supported as the outcome specifies significant and positive relationship between job promotion and employee engagement. The outcome implies that job promotion is a strong and influential predictor of civil servant engagement in Kwara State. This outcome corroborates several existing studies (e.g., Anitha, 2014; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Khan & Iqbal, 2013; Mohda et al., 2016; Srivastava & Bansal, 2016; Taufek et al., 2016). The promotion of employees in the state thus would change the mind set of employees to be more positively engaged at work. This implies that employees who are properly inspired in terms of promotion prospects would have higher engagement levels than those who are not (Muntuga, 2009). For example, promotion prospects serve as an instrument for enhancing a sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation, thereby prompting

employees to be attached to the organisation over long periods without looking to leave for other jobs. Employees can become more engaged, effective, and efficient through the opportunity given to them (Mohda et al., 2016). Therefore, it encourages and inspires civil servants in Kwara State to perform well and give more attention to their personal and career development.

Hypothesis H₃ is supported as the outcome specifies a significant relationship between performance recognition and employee engagement in the Kwara State civil service. This means that organisations that recognise a job well done inspires the employee to be more engaged and committed. The results from these ministries and agencies also provide empirical support to the SET which articulates that an exchange rule is based generally on repayment principle or reciprocity, where the action of one party leads to the reaction or response of other party (Gouldner, 1960; Saks, 2006). Furthermore, these findings are consistent with several studies (Kahn, 1990; Kaufman et al., 2013; Macleod & Clarke, 2009; Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Mutunga, 2009; Scott et al., 2010). Based on the empirical and theoretical evidence, it can be summed up that performance recognition is an important inspiration and reward approach to enhance employee engagement in the Kwara State civil service. This could be in various forms, which include greetings, approval, appreciation, financial reward, on-the-spot awards, high-touch pats on the back, team lunches, handwritten notes, certifications, gifts and other ways of acknowledging employees' efforts at work. It is believed that one of the central drives of evaluating employee's engagement sometimes is to form a basis for honours or recognition for outstanding involvement to the attainment of organisational objectives (Atakpa et al., 2013).

Hypothesis H₄ is supported as the outcome specifies that financial reward has significant relationship with civil servant engagement in Kwara State. This implies that organisation that implements acceptable standards of salary for their employees can achieve a high level of employee engagement. Therefore, good payment will motivate employees to work more effectively and handle the demands of the job. This finding is consistent with several studies in the literature concerning financial reward and engagement (e.g., Anitha, 2014; Mutunga, 2009; Rashid et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2010). Thus, financial reward entailing payment is one of the key issues considered by workforces (Rashid et al., 2011).

Moreover, this result supports the SET, which implies that employee engagement is inspired by the willingness of civil service to provide valuable resources to its employees. Therefore, it is posited that the rate of employee engagement is a function of their perception of the possible benefits they may receive (Kahn, 1990). For instance, employee performance can be broadened through employee engagement (Alola & Alafeshat, 2021; Sung et al., 2017). Persistent PA practices for numerous HR management drive feedbacks with developmental purposes delivered in an informative manner to enhance engagement, as this helps employees to improve relevant skills and domain areas. Finally, this study presents theoretical modelling and empirical analyses to discover the 'black box' in the PAP-engagement relationship. The findings attest to positive and significant effect of certain PAPs (such as job promotion, performance recognition, and financial reward) on employee engagement.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that employee engagement can be influenced positively by PAPs (i.e., job promotion, performance recognition and financial reward), and all are shown to have beneficial effects on the employee engagement of the Kwara State civil service, with the exception of employee training. The literature on strategic HRM posit that PAPs that stimulate involvement of employees are essential to the performance and efficacy of any organisations. This suggests that an organisation's HRM practices is a stable source of competitive advantage.

This study supports the idea that employee involvement in PAPs plays a significant role in the relationship between the practices and outcomes of the civil service. This finding suggests that employee engagement as a mechanism is crucial to the employee performance, and also helps to some extent civil development through government initiatives. Employees that exhibit desirable behaviours that align with the organisation's strategy might be motivated by PAPs. However, unless PAPs encourage employee involvement, which in turn spurs improved organisational performance, they are insufficient to inspire high performance. Furthermore, this data lends credence to SET, which holds that the civil service's readiness to supply important resources to employees motivates them to perform well. Thus, it follows that how engaged employees are depends on how they perceive the

rewards they receive. Through employee involvement, for instance, financial reward can improve performance. This kind of appraisal assists employees in areas where they can improve their domain-relevant skills. HR managers can provide feedback with a developmental purpose in an informative manner to increase employee engagement.

Additionally, this study adds to the current body of knowledge about the link between PAPs and employee engagement. The study's conclusions may serve as a helpful manual for Nigerian stakeholders looking to improve employee engagement and performance. However, as the study's data came from Kwara State civil service, further research may duplicate the study in a different setting to increase the findings' generalisability. The information was gathered from Kwara State civil officials employed by ministries and agencies, designating the organisational unit of analysis. Further research on the subject of PAPs and employee engagement from the viewpoint of the employees themselves would be a worthwhile avenue to pursue. The rationale is that investigating workers' viewpoints about the relationship between PAPs and employee engagement will deepen comprehension and enhance the corpus of knowledge in this area of study. Also, the theoretical model and empirical analysis presented in this study may be investigated further by introducing intervening variables to the direct relationships in order to identify the 'black box' in the PAP-engagement nexus.

Authors' Contributory Statement

Adilah Othman: Conceptualization/formulation of ideas; writing - original draft. Muslim Diekola Akanmu: Data collection/curation; formal analysis/techniques. Ahmed Bawa: Development/design of methodology and proofreading.

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