

The Mediating Effect of Work Engagement in the Link between Affective Commitment and Employee Competence in Nigeria Universal Basic Education system

By

Isah Sani

Faculty of Business and Management,
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin,
Terengganu, Malaysia.

Rashidah Mohammad Ibrahim

Faculty of Business and Management,
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
Terengganu, Malaysia.

Uzairu Mohammad Gwadabe

Faculty of Business and Management,
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
Terengganu, Malaysia.

and

Shehu Mustapha

Department of Public Administration,
Faculty of Business and Administration
Waziri Umaru Federal Polytechnic, Birnin-Kebbi,
Kebbi State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author: isahsaniwufed@gmail.com

Abstract

Competency is seen as the fundamental feature of individuals which described their job skill, attitude and knowledge. The main aim of this paper is to explore the mediating effect of work engagement (WE) in the link between affective commitment and employee competence (EC) in Nigerian Universal Basic Education system Administration (UBESA). In spite of the importance of affective commitment as an essential practice impelling EC in organisations, prior studies mainly consider other internal factors such as leadership, management practices, and job satisfaction among others. Studies that attempt to examine the influence of affective commitment on EC as well as the mechanism through which it influences EC seem to be scarce in the literature. The current study used WE as a mediating variable in explaining the relationship between affective commitment and EC as well as establishing the link between the given variables. The paper employed the Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) theory and Social Exchange theory (SET) in emphasizing the impact of practices that are capable of enhancing

EC, as well as understanding employee's behaviour and their relationship with their organisation in the quest for achieving success. A quantitative survey method was used, while data were collected within six states UBESA (Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara states) in North Western region of Nigeria. Data was analysed with a total number of 387 questionnaires using SPSS-AMOS software-24. The findings indicated that WE mediate the relationship between affective commitment and EC. In conclusion, the study made some vital suggestions for future studies.

Keywords: Affective Commitment, Work Engagement, Employee competence, Nigeria Universal Basic Education System

Introduction

Competent employees who possess the essential skills, abilities and knowledge have always been the main competitive benefit of modern firms in ensuring efficiency and effectiveness towards service delivery (Sargit et al., 2012). Considering increase in modern competitive field as well as dramatic change in social organisational environment, quite a lot of firms teach, save, and attract employee's competence in attaining both present and future advancements. Hence, employees stand to be the core elements for organisational success (Rastgoo, 2016; Seema, 2016). In fact, the global completion demands for employees who are flexible and possess adequate knowledge, skills as well as abilities in executing their duties towards ensuring the achievement of firms objectives (Mahmood et al., 2016). Policy makers and stakeholders in various organisations have placed much emphasis on employees other than the organisations by regarding them as crucial in ensuring success. Many studies have been conducted with the ultimate goal of determining factors that can boost employee competence and enhance firm's performance. Rossilah, (2008) suggests that, the attainment of firm's objectives largely depends on the competency of human elements that operate within its premises. Likewise, studies from human resource management and other related fields of study have examined different types of variables such as human resource practices, psychological empowerment, affective commitment among others agree the such variables may increase employee competence and ensure improved organisational performance (Alshibli, 2019; Degago, 2014; Mahdi & Muhammad, 2014).

For the past few decades, increase in employee competence towards enhancing organisational performance has been the main issue of management research and other related field of studies (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2016). Governments in all parts of the world have been searching for the best ways of ensuring improvement in employee competence towards efficiency and effectiveness in their organisational performance in terms of policy and programmes outcomes, use of public resources, citizen's satisfaction, preventing corruption and enhancing accountability (Armstrong, 2005). Undoubtedly, increase in employee competence in any organisation towards improved performance has become necessary. Several public sector organisations have placed more priority on enhancing employee competence in the quest to ensure transparency in managing public resources as well as public decisions towards effective performance (Speklé & Verbeeten, 2014). Although, it has been observed that, the Nigerian public sector organisations (agencies) are identified by high level of unethical conduct leading to low level performance in most of the governmental agencies more specifically the public educational sector agencies which attract much concern from the citizens (Inyang & Akaegbu, 2014).

In recent times, the Nigerian government introduced the Universal Basic Education programme with the ultimate aim of providing free and compulsory basic education to all its citizens within the age of 6-15 years (Claudia, 2017). Other objectives comprise reducing the rate of school drop-out through increased quality, catering for the learning needs of young people in the country, ensuring the attainment of appropriate level of numeracy, life skills, literacy and manipulative skills (Claudia, 2017). The government in its efforts created at the federal level, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the state Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) across the entire states of the federation. While Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) were created at districts level (UBE Act, 2004, 2004). In spite of all these efforts made by the government in ensuring free and compulsory basic education is given to all the beneficiaries, the level at which children attend school still remains very low leading to high level of out-of-school children in Nigeria. Although, it has been argued that, organisations that happen to be successful in achieving their set goals in modern economy have started realising that quite a number of factors are said to be the main contributors in enhancing employee's competence towards discharging their responsibilities; such factors include high level of work engagement among employee, psychological empowerment, and affective commitment among other factors (Degago, 2014; Gracia et al., 2013; Mohammad & Usher, 2017). However, the main idea of this research work is to embark on an empirical examination of the mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between psychological empowerment, affective commitment and employee competence within the context of the Nigerian Universal Basic Education System Administration.

Problem Statement

The growing number of out-of-school children in Nigeria is a startling problem that requires attention. The rate at which children enroll into school in most of the developing nations of the world and Sub-Sahara Africa in particular remains very low (World Bank, 2014). This alarming situation has resulted in the increase in the global number of out-of-school children with an estimated number of 262 million populace who did not attend school at all (SDG, 2018). Recently, it has been revealed that Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children among other countries in the world with an overall number of 10.5 million children who did not attend school at all and are considered as out-of-school children in the country (UNICEF, 2018). This condition has resulted in an increase in the level of illiteracy in the country which indicated that out of the estimated number of 170 million population in Nigeria, 75 million out of this population have not attained the basic literacy skills (Jennifer, 2018). Increase in the rate of unemployment with about 33.5 % , and high rate of poverty (Ngige, 2020). Although, there has been a growing concern by the general public about the existence of unethical behaviours in the Nigerian public education system (Sabi'u, 2017). Essentially, it has generated and exposed different types of scandals, corruption and inadequate service delivery within the system (Aminu, 2015; Buhari, 2015; Nasiru, 2015). Consequently, it has been observed that corruption is the main obstruction to the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria (Anthony, 2020; Samuel, 2018). This evidence has clearly shown a signal on the employee's incompetence towards the implementation of the free and compulsory basic education programme in Nigeria. Thus, lack of basic education among children has been among the major problems in the country's educational system which needs an urgent attention in ensuring economic growth and development.

Previous studies have suggested that, ensuring the achievement of firm's objectives largely depends on the level of employee's competence in discharging their given responsibilities (Rossilah, 2008). In modern economy, firms that tend to be more successful increasingly understand that there are quite a number of factors in existence capable of increasing employee competence in an organisation. Psychological empowerment, affective commitment and high level of work engagement are said to be crucial (Degago, 2014; Mohammad & Usher, 2017). Hence, work engagement has been considered as direct motivational factor capable of increasing employee competence towards achievement of success (Karatepe, 2014). This paper is one that attempts to address this problem since basic (primary) education is the basis to all level of education, critical to human development and engine for national growth and development (Jennifer, 2018). The paper suggests that, changing the unethical conduct of employee in the public education system administration in Nigeria, specifically the Universal Basic Education system through embracing psychological empowerment, ensuring affective commitment may have a significant effect on employee's competence as well as the entire system.

Research Objectives

This study aimed at examining the mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between affective commitment and employee competence within the context of the Nigerian Basic Education system Administration. The main objectives of the study are:

- a. To examine the relationship between affective commitment and employee competence.
- b. To examine the mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between affective commitment and employee competence.

Underlying Theories

Theories are utilized by researchers mostly in a quantitative research work to assist them in answering research questions (Cresswell, 2014). In this study, the main theories used are the Ability Motivation Opportunity theory and the Social Exchange theory.

Ability Motivation Opportunity Theory

The present study is based on Lawshe, (1945) AMO theory view on ability-enhancing practices that are capable of enhancing individual's ability, which in turn lead to achievement of organizational objectives. This theory becomes more appropriate for this study because it has the capacity to explain the complex relationship between how employees are managed and subsequent achievement of organisational goals.

In recent decades, HRM researchers have applied AMO framework to describe factors that influence individual's ability (competencies), towards attainment of firm's objectives (Kellner; Townsend, & Cafferkey, 2019). Employee's competencies, for instance can simply be enhanced through affective commitment. The theory suggests that, the interaction of the given elements can assist in improving individual competence towards achievement of organisational aims and objectives since it gives room for diverse elements to be grouped together (Boselie et al., 2005). Recently, studies have been carried out in the quest to confirm the suitability of applying AMO

theory in the field of human resource management. For instance, the study conducted by Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, (2018), Ujma & Igram, (2019) Marin-Garcia & Tomas, (2016). These studies have confirmed the suitability of applying AMO theory in the field of HRM. Thus, AMO theory stands to be more appropriate in explaining the complex relationship between the variables involved for the purpose of this study.

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory (SET) becomes the main theoretical supporting point for understanding employee's behaviour in organisations (DeConinck, 2010). The perspective postulated that when organisations decide to invest in their respective employees, such employees are likely to reciprocate their organisations in positive manners (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory depends on two parties' relationship. When the first party (UBESA, Management in the current study) ensures a favourable working condition towards the second party (UBESA, employee in the current study), it will motivate them towards high level of work engagement and affective commitment which in turn leads to increase in the level of employee competence to reciprocate the first party in ensuring the attainment of organisational goals (DeConinck, 2010). Several previous studies have applied social exchange theory in the field of HRM in linking different factors capable of influencing employee competence in an organisation. In view of the above explanation, the mediating effect of work engagement in the link between affective commitment and employee competence can be described by the social exchange theory. Although, AMO viewpoints have all the theoretical connectivity with the study variables, SET can as well play a vital role in explaining the research model.

Literature Review

Competence

Competence is regarded as skills, job knowledge and attitudes (Tao et al., 2016). Han et al., (2006) sees competence as essential aspect of an individual which consists of attitudes, skills as well as job knowledge. It has become necessary to stress the significant value of competency since competencies are the most extensively used in modern firms as well as various aspects of HRM studies. It has been argued that, employee competence is one of the vital factors that contribute significantly towards attainment of organisational success (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Vathanophas, 2007).

Affective Commitment and Employee Competence

Affective commitment is regarded as employee's emotional attachment in relation to their organisation as well as identifying with the values guiding the organisational operations (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Thus, commitment has been seen as a replication of employees pride to their organisation (Wirawan, 2008). However, affective commitment has been considered as a situation in which employee in a given organisation accepts as well as believes in the organisational goals and at the same time demonstrates the willingness to continue working with such organisation towards attainment of success (Mathis & Jackson, 2011).

Numerous studies have been conducted empirically in the quest to investigate the relationship between affective commitment and employee competence. For instance, the study by Galletta & Vandenberghe, (2015) in an Italian hospital using 440 employees from two hospitals as respondents. The findings reveal a positive relationship between affective commitment and employee competence. Similarly, another study was carried out by Mohammad & Usher, (2017) in an Indian software firm with 582 employees as respondents, the findings also reveal a positive relationship between affective commitment and employee competence.

Affective Commitment and Work engagement

Several studies have been conducted by different scholars in the quest to investigate the relationship between affective commitment and work engagement. For example, Poon, (2013) conducted an empirical investigation into the effect of affective commitment, work engagement and perceived carrier support using 115 employees from Malaysian public university. The result reveals a positive relationship between affective commitment and work engagement. Likewise, another study was carried out by Van Gelderen & Bik, (2016) to explore the influence of affective commitment, work engagement and service performance among police officers in Netherlands. Data was collected using 114 police officers as respondents. The result also indicated a positive relationship between affective commitment and work engagement. Thus, the above mentioned studies have clearly revealed the significant relationship between the two variables.

Work Engagement and Employee Competence

Work engagement is considered as an extent to which employees in a given organisation relate to their respective job as well as other responsibilities that affect their whole life. This implies that, employees who demonstrate a high level of involvement with their respective duties are mostly identified with their job and they are always thinking about their job even when not at work (Cesário, 2017). In this study, work engagement is regarded as work related positive contentment, state of mind typically characterized by vigour, absorption and dedication. Thus, vigour is considered as high level of energy and mental resilience in performing jobs; absorption is seen as willingness to invest supplementary effort in other person's work; and dedication implies a sense of enthusiasm, pride, significance as well as inspiration and factors to attain a high level of competency and overall performance. Several empirical studies have been conducted with a view to investigating the relationship between work engagement and employee competence. For instance, the study carried out by Seema, (2016) in an Indian IT sector. The result shows a positive relationship between work engagement and employee competence. Another study was carried out by Nawangsari & Sutawidjaya, (2019) in an Indonesia small and medium enterprise using 101 employees as respondents. The findings also reveal a positive relationship between work engagement and employee competence.

Mediating Role of Work Engagement

Work engagement can be considered as productive work-related positioning basically characterized by vigour, absorption with dedication (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It is also regarded as a direct motivational factor towards improving employee competence and attainment of overall firm's objectives (Karatepe, 2014). In spite of this, studies that examine the mediating effect of

work engagement in the link between affective commitment and employee competence in one model appears to be scarce in the bulk of literature. In the light of this, the present study makes use of work engagement to serve as mediator in examining the relationship between, affective commitment and employee competence. Numerous empirical studies have confirmed the appropriateness of utilizing work engagement in elucidating the composite relationship between two given variables (dependent and independent). For instance, Karatepe, (2013) conducted a study in Romanian hospitality industry with 123 employees as sample size to examine the mediating role of work engagement in a relationship between human resource management practices and performance of employee. The findings indicate that, work engagement serves as a full mediator in explaining the relationship. Other studies comprise the study carried out by Trong, (2018) in investigating the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between high performance work system practices and service-oriented behaviour in a public legal firm located in Vietnam with 100 employees as respondents. The findings also indicated a strong mediating effect of work engagement in explaining such relationship. In most recent times, Aboramadan et al., (2020) in an effort to investigate the mediating effect of work engagement in a relationship between human resource management practices and organisational commitment conducted a study in Palestinian public universities using 237 employees as respondents. The findings also reveal a full mediating effect of work engagement in explaining such relationship. The reviewed literature has clearly confirmed that, work engagement has the capacity to stand as mediator in explaining factors that can enhance employee competence towards achievement of organisational goals.

Findings of the current study will provide a strong empirical explanation on how affective commitment can easily address the problem of employee's incompetency towards the implementation of the free and compulsory basic education programme in Nigeria through work engagement since employee competence has been suggested as a vibrant instrument mostly used in ensuring the attainment of firm's objectives (Vathanophas, 2007).

Hypotheses

H1: Affective Commitment positively relate to WE

H2: Affective Commitment positively relate to EC

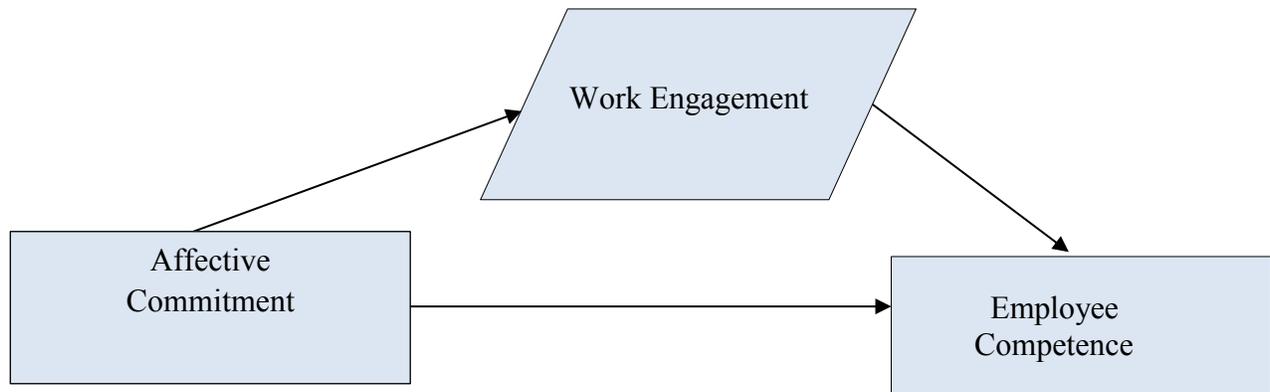
H3: Work Engagement positively relate to EC

H3: WE mediate the relationship between affective commitment and EC

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on the reviewed literature, the positive relationship between affective commitment and employee competence has been confirmed. The literature has also confirmed the significance of work engagement as a mechanism which can be used in explaining the relationship between two given variables (independent and dependent). Findings from these previous studies have been generalised on the basis of the samples from the hospitality industries, educational sectors, small and medium enterprises and other private sectors in Western and Asian context without taking into consideration the Sub-Sahara African countries and Nigeria in particular. Studies that tend to investigate the mediating effect of work engagement in the relationship between affective commitment and employee competence in a single model appear to be scarce in the bulk of literature. This paper in its effort proposed the following conceptual framework;

Figure1: Research Framework



Source: Developed for the study

Methodology

The present study is a survey research work and cross sectional in nature. Data collection for the purpose of this paper was done through the use of self-administered questionnaire across six states of UBESA (Kano State, Kaduna State, Katsina State, Sokoto State, Jigawa State and Zamfara State). While Kebbi State UBESA was excluded from the sampling frame and used for the purpose of pilot study because of its smallest number of employees to enable the researcher to measure the appropriateness of the instruments to be used for the purpose of this research work (Ary et al., 2012). For the purpose of assessing the inter-relationship among constructs, the study makes use of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) procedure in IBM-SPSS-AMOS 24.

Sampling Technique and Data Collection

In this study, four hundred and fifty-five (455) respondents were selected among the Non-managerial employees in the selected states UBESA's using a simple random method from the sampling frame. This technique guarantees the randomness and representativeness of the sample size of the targeted population. Hence, the procedure met the requirement for the statistical analysis for the purpose of this research work. At the end of the data collection, a total number of 368 completed and usable responses were received.

Measurement of Instrument

The main construct in this research work includes affective commitment, work engagement as well as employee competence. Affective commitment is operationalised as employee's emotional attachment to their work and organisation as well as identifying with the actual organisational values towards achievement of success (Meyer et al., 1993). Affective commitment is measured based on Allen and Meyer's Organisational Commitment Instrument (1990) using 8 items scale. The instrument has been used in previous studies in the same context and achieved suitable result (Vem et al., 2019). The items are adapted with some modifications

to suit the current study. Work engagement is operationalised as the satisfying and productive job related outlook essentially considered by dedication, vigour and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Work engagement is measured based on Utrecht work engagement scale (UWES) using 17 items containing three dimensions developed by Schaufeli & Bakker (2003). The researcher adapts these items to suit the current study. Employee competence is operationalised as the combination of related job skills, tacit and explicit knowledge as well as ethical attitude which gives an employee the required potentials in accomplishing their job responsibilities in a more efficient and effective manner (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006). For the purpose of this research work, competence is measured based team competence scale developed by Eby & Dobbins (1997), self-competence scale developed by Tafarodi & Swann (1995), ethical competency scale which was developed by Rest (1994) as well as Communication competence scale developed by Wiemann (1977). Hence, employee competence is measured based on 20 items. The questions are appropriate in determining the moral behaviour and ethical standard of employees in a given organisation. These items were tested in previous studies and achieved suitable result (Nana & Otoo, 2018). Thus, all constructs utilises 10-point scale as it has been considered more suitable in providing more variance and accuracy in determining the variables (Awang et al., 2015).

Pretest and Pilot Testing of the Instrument

As the instruments were adapted from previous studies and modified to suit this study, the researcher sent the modified instruments to an expert in the same field of study and three professionals (employees) from UBESA to ascertain the face and content validity (Shkeer & Awang, 2019). After receiving the instruments back, the researcher made all the necessary modifications in accordance with the comments by respective experts and professionals. Hence, the researcher conducted pilot study by distributing one hundred (100) self-administered questionnaires to the Non-Managerial employees in Kebbi State UBESA. While only sixty-six (66) completed and usable questionnaires were discovered at the end of the pilot study. Then, the researcher conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to explore the usefulness of the items measuring each construct in the study (Shkeer & Awang, 2019).

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The Respondents were asked to provide their demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, position and work experience as well as monthly income level. Hence, the researcher computed the respondents' demographic profile based on responses and percentages. Table 1, shows the demographic profile of the respondents;

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents.

Characteristics	Valid N	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	289	74.68
Female	98	25.32
<i>Age</i>		
18-29	68	17.57
30-39	126	32.56

40-49	145	37.47
50-59	48	12.40
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Single	107	27.65
Married	221	57.11
Divorce	28	7.23
Widower	31	8.01
<i>Position</i>		
Managerial	00	00
Non-Managerial	387	100
<i>Work Experience</i>		
Less than 2years	51	13.18
2-5 years	61	15.76
6-9 years	151	39.02
10 years and Above	124	32.04
<i>Educational Qualification</i>		
SSCE Certificate	66	17.05
Diploma/NCE	126	32.6
Degree/HND	165	42.6
Postgraduate Degree	30	7.75
<i>Income Per Month (=N=)</i>		
18,000-29,000	117	30.23
30,000-49,000	144	37.21
50,000 and Above	126	32.56

Source: Developed for the study

The Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Individual Measurement Model

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted for every construct by the researcher in order to determine changes in the dimensionality of items from previous study and to also purify the measurement scale (Awang, 2012). Thus, factors with Eigen values greater than 1 and has the total variance explained with a minimum of 60% are considered satisfactory for the factor analysis. While the Rotation of factors is considered based on Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. The extraction method of principal component with Varimax (Variation Maximization) Rotation was performed on the 12 items measuring affective commitment construct. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (P-Value < 0.05). Likewise, the measurement of sampling adequacy by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is excellent since it has exceeded the required value of 0.6 (Awang, 2010; 2012). These two results (Bartlett's Test is significant and KMO > 0.6) indicate that the data is adequate to proceed further with the data reduction procedure (Awang, 2012). However, the value of Cronbach's Alpha should be greater than 0.7 for the items to achieve the Internal Reliability.

The result of EFA conducted for Affective commitment on 8 items shows that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (P-Value < 0.05) as emerged from the EFA procedure based on the computed Eigenvalue greater than 1.0. The eigenvalues are 2.31. The total variance explained for measuring Affective commitment construct is 62.57% which exceeded the threshold of 60% (Awang, 2012). The value for Cronbach's Alpha is .871 with 8 items. In other words, all items are useful to measure the affective commitment construct. The EFA was also performed on 17 items measuring work engagement construct. The result shows that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant. Furthermore, the measure of sampling adequacy by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (MKO) is excellent since it exceeded the required value of 0.6 (Awang, 2012). Hence three components emerged from EFA procedure based on the computed eigenvalue greater than 1.0. The eigenvalues ranged between 1.35%, and component 3 is 12.93%. The total variance explained for measuring work engagement construct is 64.77% which exceeds the threshold of 60% (Awang, 2012). All items have achieved the minimum requirement of 0.6 for factor loading and the Cronbach's Alpha is .928. In other words, all items are useful to measure work engagement construct. The EFA was performed on 20 items measuring employee competency construct with four (4) dimensions. The result shows that the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (P-Value < 0.05). Again, the measure of sampling adequacy by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (MKO) is excellent since it exceeded the required value of 0.6 (Awang, 2012). The dimensions or components and Total Variance Explained show there are four components emerged from the EFA procedure based on the computed Eigenvalue greater than 1.0. The eigenvalues ranged between 1.28 and 7.10 with variance explained for component 1 is 23.42%; component 2 is 18.84%; component 3 is 18.57% and component 4 is 18.57% respectively. The total variance explained for measuring employee competency construct is 65.43% which exceeded the threshold of 60% (Awang, 2012). The value of Cronbach's Alpha shows 0.885 with 20 items. In other words, all items are useful to measure the Employee competency construct.

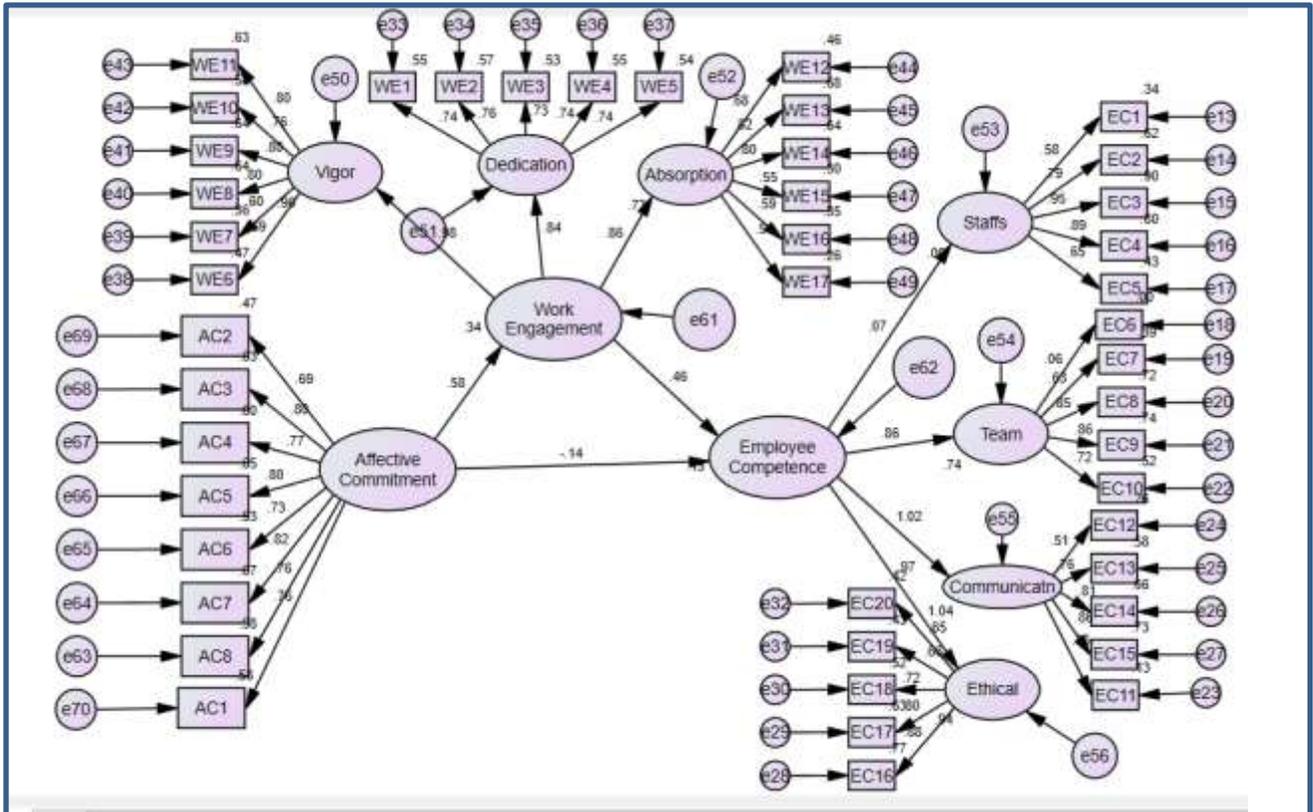
Findings

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

After the implementation of the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and displaying the structural model, the investigation needs to prove the measurement model of all the variables in the study by utilizing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Aziz et al., 2016; Yusof et al., 2017). The confirmatory factor analysis is used to assess the normality distribution, unidimensionality, reliability and validity of the entire construct in the study. The three requirements are referred to as the construct validity. The construct validity is commonly evaluated through the Fitness Indexes (FI). The Discriminant validity (DV) is being evaluated through the Discriminant Validity Extracted (AVE), while the construct reliability (CR) is evaluated through computing the value of CR for each construct involved in the study (Afthanorhan et al., 2018, 2019; Awang et al., 2018). The CFA is clearly presented in figure 2. In this research work, the CFA revealed the following fitness indices: Construct Validity is RMSEA= .080, CFI= .790, and ChiSq/df = 3.451 (Awang, 2015). Hence, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the whole constructs that are higher than 0.5 are evidently reported in Table 1. Thus, the result has confirmed the convergent validity of all the constructs involved in the study. The values demonstrated in Figure 2 shows that the factor loading for all the items in the study are above 0.60 which clearly indicate the unidimensionality of the measure (Asnawi et al., 2019; Rahlin et

al., 2019). The next step is to confirm the evaluation of discriminant validity of the latent constructs, which was observed through the discriminant validity index summary as shown in Table 1. Hence, all the diagonal values are revealed to be higher than the entire values in its rows and columns, the discriminant validity of all the constructs have achieved (Awang, 2015). The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is clearly presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results.



Source: Developed for the study

Table 1: Discriminant validity Index Summary of all constructs, Construct reliability and Average variance extracted.

	AVE	CR	AC	WE	EC
AC	.512	.778	.632		
WE	.732	.912	-.139	.657	
EC	.543	.822	.066	.128	.750

Source: Developed for the study

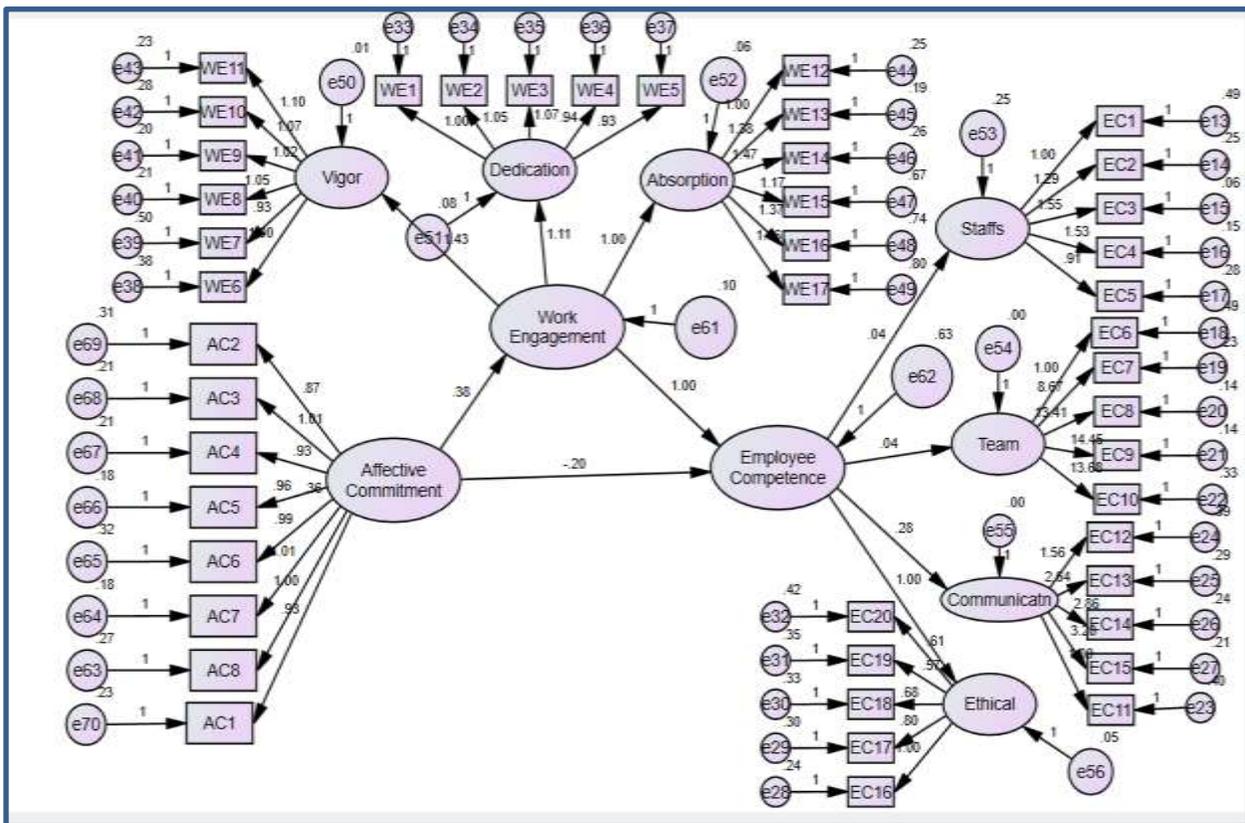
Regarding the composite reliability, the CR value of all the constructs appeared to be higher than 0.6, which suggest that the measurement model of the entire constructs have achieved the requirement for the composite reliability (Awang et al., 2015; Mahfouz et al., 2019; Yusof et al.,

2017). The normality distribution of the dataset is assessed using the value of skewness and kurtosis of all the items. The result shows the skewness for all the items which fall within the range of -.275 to 1.438, while for the kurtosis that falls within the range of -0.121 to 1,924, the two measures clearly indicate that the data have met the assumption for using parametric statistical analysis; it does not depart from the normality distribution (Afthanorhan et al., 2018; Mohamad et al., 2016).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Immediately the construct achieved the requirement for validity, normality, reliability and unidimensionality, the study can continue with the development of the structural model and perform the structural equation modeling (SEM) process so as to test the proposed hypothesis for the research work. Hence, the results derived from the SEM procedure (IBM-SPSS-AMOS) are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The Regression Path Coefficient among the Constructs in the Model.



Source: Developed for the study

Data Analysis

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) strategy was conducted by using IBM-SPSS-AMOS 24.0 software. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) deals with the crucial points. First, it can easily measure the relations among latent constructs shown by the indicator variables.

Secondly, it can also consider the existing correlations among measurement errors in the study construct. Thirdly, it can also measure the recurring association between study constructs.

Result

The result content came about following the performance of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique as appeared in Table 2. The direct effect of affective commitment on work engagement was evidently revealed to be significant. Hence, H1 is supported. Apart from the direct influence of WE, it was also observed to be significant and positive on EC. Equally, H2 is supported. Suggesting that, the direct effect of affective commitment on EC was also observed to be significantly positive. As such, H3 is also supported.

Table 2: The Regression Path Coefficient and Its Significance

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label	Result
Work Engagement	<---	Affective Commitment	.384	.046	8.438	***	par_36	Significant
Employee Competence	<---	Work Engagement	.113	.064	1.768	.095	par_47	Significant
Employee Competence	<---	Affective Commitment	.203	.080	2.531	.011	par_37	Significant

Source: Developed for the study

Based on the given fact, the entire indirect effects are seen to be significant. Hence, the study concluded that a mediating effect have occurred in the model and the type of mediation becomes a partial mediation since the direct effect also seen to be significant as shown in Table 2.

Discussion

The first hypothesis recommends that affective commitment has a positive and direct effect on WE. The later investigation also supported this hypothesis that affective commitment has a significant and direct influence on WE. More evidently, the Nigerian UBESA's employees who are affectively committed to their job responsibilities and the organisation itself, tend to be more competent in discharging their given responsibilities. This finding was furthermore upheld by the previous investigations carried out in various settings which proposed that affective commitment WE could serve as one of the best mechanisms for ensuring increase in EC (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016; Nawangsari & Sutawidjaya, 2019). Hence, these studies have uncovered that WE increases EC in the quest for achieving organisational objectives. Also, the third hypothesis proposed that affective commitment has a significant and direct effect on EC. The findings in the current study support the hypothesis that affective commitment has a significant and direct effect on EC among the Nigerian UBESA's employees. This finding is in line with the result of previous studies (Galletta & Vandenberghe, 2015; Mohammad & Usher, 2017). While the last hypothesis considers the indirect link between affective commitment and EC through the mediating effect of WE. The finding of the current investigation reveals that WE mediate the relationship between affective commitment and EC. Specifically, the employees from Nigerian UBESA who are highly affective committed to their organisation and job responsibilities tend to be more competent in ensuring the achievement of organisational goals. More pointedly, the

findings in the current study revealed that WE went about as a partial mediator in the link between affective commitment and EC. This indicates that affective commitment is furnished for influencing EC directly and indirectly through WE.

Conclusion

The current examination researched the link between affective commitment and EC among the Nigerian UBESA's employees. The finding sustained the hypothesized linkage between affective commitment and EC in the system. What more in this investigation, the researcher examined the mediating effect of WE on the influence of affective commitment on EC. The investigation distinguished that WE have significantly mediated the relationship between affective commitment and EC from the Nigerian UBESA's perspective. Thus, the result has some exciting practical and theoretical significances. Firstly, affective commitment can shape up a diverse requirement that can surely influence WE. Thus, WE has been regarded as a mechanism for ensuring high level of EC and achievement of firm objectives (Cesário, 2017; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Secondly, the findings of this research work has added value to the outcome in studies concerning the mediating role of WE. Thirdly, affective commitment ought to be connected to increase EC and WE. Lastly, the current model was introduced so as to demonstrate the relationship between affective commitment, WE and EC, specifically among the employees in Nigerian UBESA.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Despite some of the theoretical and practical consequences provided by this examination, there are quite a number of limitations that will provide pleasant risks for future contributions to the stream of this study. First of all, since the emphasis of the exploration is on the Nigerian UBESA, the assumption of the results to different countries is obliged. The future examination may test the relationship between affective commitment and EC in diverse countries in a comparable extent. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the investigation could be additional limitation. Moreover, examination using a longitudinal process watches out for the relationship between affective commitment and EC through different mediator variable. Hence, recognizing the mediating role of WE in the relationship between affective commitment and EC would strengthen the management of the Nigerian UBESA for an improved knowledge of the contribution of affective commitment on WE as well as on EC. Also, the discoveries offer a pragmatic direction to the entire management of the Nigerian UBESA.

References

- Aboramadan, M., Belal, A., & D., K. A. (2020). Human resources management practices and organizational commitment in higher education The mediating role of work engagement. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(1), 154–174.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2019-0160>
- Afthanorhan, A., Awang, Z., Rashid, N., Foziah, H., & Ghazali, P. (2019). Assessing the effects of service quality on customer satisfaction. *Management Science Letters*, 9(1), 13–24.
- Afthanorhan, A., Awang, Z., Salleh, F., Ghazali, P., & Rashid, N. (2018). The effect of product quality, medical price and staff skills on patient loyalty via cultural impact in medical tourism. *Management Science Letters*, 8(12), 1421-1424.

- Al-Dhaafri, H. S., Al-Swidi, A. K., & Yusoff, R. Z. (2016). The mediating role of total quality management between the entrepreneurial orientation and the organizational performance. *The TQM Journal*, 28(1), 89–111. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0266242610391930>
- Alshibli, A. S. (2019). The Impact of Selective Human Resources Management Practices on the Employee 's Competences at Jordanian Private Universities . Case Study on Applied Science , Philadelphia , and Al-zaytoneh Universities . *IUG Journal of Economics and Business*, 27(1), 20–41.
- Aminu, W. (2015, December). Sokoto to declare state of emergency in education sector. *The Guardian*, 1–2. <https://guardian.ng/news/sokoto-state-to-declare-state-of-emergency-in-education-sector/>
- Anthony, A. (2020, September 28). ICPC traces N2.67bn school feeding funds to private accounts. *Business Day*, 1–2. <https://businessday.ng/news/article/icpc-traces-n2-67bn-school-feeding-funds-to-private-accounts/>
- Armstrong, E. (2005). *Integrity, transparency and accountability in public administration: Recent trends, regional and international developments and emerging issues*. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/integrity-transparency-un.pdf>
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2012). *Introduction to Research in Education* (8th ed.). Australia: Wadsworth.
- Asnawi, A., Awang, Z., Afthanorhan, A., Mohamad, M., & Karim, F. (2019). The influence of hospital image and service quality on patients' satisfaction and loyalty. *Management Science Letters*, 9(6), 911-920.
- Awang, Z. (2012). *Research Methodology and Data Analysis*. Penerbit Universiti Teknologi MARA press.
- Awang, Z. (2015). *SEM MADE SIMPLE: A Gentle to Learning Structural Equation Modelling*. NPWS Rich Publication Sdn. Bhd. (1132290-K).
- Awang, Z., Afthanorhan, A., & Mamat, M. (2015). The likert scale analysis using parametric based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). *Computational Methods in Social Sciences*, 4(1), 13–21.
- Awang, Z., Lim, S., & Zainudin, N. (2018). *Pendekatan Mudah SEM- Structural Equation Modelling*. MPWS Rich Resources.
- Aziz, M., Afthanorhan, A., & Awang, Z. (2016). Talent development model for a career in Islamic Banking Institutions: A SEM approach. *Cogent Business and Management*. In 3(1) (p. 1186259).
- Boselie, J. P., Dietz, G., & Boon, C. (2005). Commonalities and contradictions in research on human resource management and performance. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15(3), 67–94. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2005.tb00154.x>
- Cesário, F. (2017). Linking Organizational Commitment and Work Engagement to Employee Performance. *Knowledge and Process Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/kpm.1542>

- Claudia, I. (2017). *Universal Basic Education in Nigeria*. Centre for Public Impact. <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/universal-basic-education-nigeria/>
- Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed methods approaches*. (4th ed.). SAGE Publication Ltd.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An Interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874–900. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>
- Cummings, T., & Worley, C. (2001). Organization development and change. Mason, Ohio: South: Western College Publishing. *International Journal of Engineering and Social Science*.
- DeConinck, J. B. (2010). The effect of organizational justice, perceived organizational support, and perceived supervisor support on marketing employees' level of trust. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(12), 1349–1355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2010.01.003>
- Degago, E. (2014). *A Study on Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Employee Performance in Small and Medium Scale Enterprise Sectors*. 6(27), 60–72.
- Draganidis, F., & Mentzas, G. (2006). Competency based management: a review of systems and approaches. *Information Management & Computer Security*, 14(1), 51–64.
- Eby, L. T., & Dobbins, G. H. (1997). Collective orientation in teams: an individual and group-level analysis. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 275–295.
- Ezeamalu, B. (2015, May). For the Records: President Muhammadu Buhari's 2015 Inaugural Speech. *Premium Times*, 1–7. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/183975-for-the-records-president-muhammadu-buharis-2015-inaugural-speech.html>
- Galletta, M., & Vandenberghe, C. (2015). Perceived organisational support , organisational commitment and self-competence among nurses : a study in two Italian hospitals. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 24(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12287>
- Gracia, E., Salanova, M., & Cifre, E. (2013). How to enhance service quality through organizational facilitators , collective work engagement , and relational service competence European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology Versió pre-print GRACIA , Esther , et al . How to enhance service qu. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 22(1), 42–55.
- Inyang, B. J., & Akaegbu, J. B. (2014). Redefining the Role of the Human Resource Professional (HRP) in the Nigerian Public Service for Enhanced Performance. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 5(1), 90–98. <https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v5n1p90>
- Jennifer, V. (2018, February). *Nigeria Comes Face to Face with a Huge Literacy Crisis*. Proliteracy; Proliteracy. <https://proliteracy.org/Blogs/Article/311/Nigeria-Comes-Face-to-Face-with-a-HUGE-Literacy-Crisis#>
- Karatepe, O. (2013). High-performance work practices and hotel employee performance : The mediation of work engagement. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2012.05.003>

- Karatepe, O. M. (2014). Hope, Work Engagement, and Organizationally Valued Performance Outcomes: An Empirical Study in the Hotel Industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 23(6), 678–698. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2014.855994>
- Karatepe, O. M., & Olugbade, O. A. (2016). The mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between high-performance work practices and job outcomes of employees in Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 28(8). <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2015-0145>
- Kavathatzopoulos, I., Kostrzewa, A., & Berg, A. (2012). Measuring ethical competence of organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 1–17. http://www.it.uu.se/research/project/ethcomp/Kavathatzopoulos_et_al._Measuring_ethical_competence_of_organizations_081014-1.pdf
- Kellner, A. K., Townsend, K., & Cafferkey K. (2019). “Ability Motivation and Opportunity Theory: A Formular for Employee Performance?” In T. Keith, C. Kenneth, M. Mcd. Aoife, & D. Tony (Eds.), *Elgar Introduction to theories of Human Resources and Employment Relations* (pp. 311–323). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited.
- Lawshe. (1945). *Elgar Introduction to Theories of Human Resources and Employment Relations*. (T. Keith, C. Kenneth, A. M. MC Dermott, & D. Tony (eds.)). Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/DOI 10.4337/9781786439017>
- Mahdi, S. M., & Muhammad, S. (2014). *The Impact of High Performance Work System (HPWS) on Employee Productivity as Related to Organizational Identity and Job Engagement*. 6(39), 1–25.
- Mahfouz, S. A., Awang, Z., & Muda, H. (2019). The impact of transformational leadership on employee commitment in the construction industry. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 7(10), 151–167.
- Mahmood, A., Khurshid, M. K., Bashir, M., & Sabir, H. M. (2016). *The Impact of High Performance Work System On Employee Attitude: The Mediating Role of Human Resource Flexibility*. 28(4), 61–68.
- Marin-Garcia, J. A., & Tomas, J. M. (2016). Deconstructing AMO framework: A systematic review. *Intangible Capital*, 12(4), 1040–1087. <https://doi.org/10.3926/ic.838>
- Mathis, R. L., & Jackson, J. H. (2011). *Human Resource Management, Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia* (10th ed.). Jakarta: Salemba Empat.
- Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., & Smith, C. A. (1993). Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78, 538–551.
- Meyer, J. P., & Herscovitch, L. (2001). Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human Resource Management Review*, 11(3), 299–326. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822\(00\)00053-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1053-4822(00)00053-X)
- Mohamad, M., Mohammad, M., Ali, N. A. M., & Awang, Z. (2016). Measuring Positive Youth Development: The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). *IJABER*, 14(13), 9441-9451.

- Mohammad, L., & Usher, F. N. (2017). Linking knowledge sharing , competency development , and affective commitment : evidence from Indian Gen Y employees. *Journal of Knowledge and Management.*, 21(4), 885–906. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JKM-08-2016-0334>
- Nana, F., & Otoo, K. (2018). Impact of Human Resource Management (HRM) Practices on Hotel Industry ' s Performance : The Mediating role of Employee Competencies. *Indian Journal of Commerce & Management Studies*, IX(2), 17–30. <https://doi.org/10.18843/ijcms/v9i2/03>
- Nasiru, E.-R. (2015, October). El-Rufa'i Declares State Of Emergency In Kaduna State Education Sector. *The Herald*, 1–2. <https://www.herald.ng/el-rufai-declares-state-of-emergency-in-kaduna-state-education-sector/>
- Nawang Sari, L. C., & Sutawidjaya, A. H. (2019). Talent Management in Mediating Competencies and Motivation to Improve Employee ' s Engagement. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, VII(1), 140–152. <https://www.ijeba.com/journal/201/download>
- Ngige, C. (2020, May 15). Nigeria's Unemployment rate hits 33.5 percent by 2020 - Minister. *Premium Times*, 1–2. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/328137-nigerias-unemployment-rate-hits-33-5-per-cent-by-2020-minister.html>
- Poon, J. M. L. (2013). Relationships among perceived career support, affective commitment, and work engagement. In *International Journal of Psychology* (Vol. 48, Issue 6, p. 6). Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2013.768768>
- Rahlin, N. A., Awang, Z., Afthanorhan, A., & Aimran, N. (2019). Antecedents and Consequences of Employee Safety Climate in Small Manufacturing Enterprises: Translation, Validation and Application of Generic Safety Climate Questionnaire. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 7(10).
- Rastgoo, P. (2016). The role of human resources competency in improving the manager performance. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 64(1), 341–350. <https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201664010341>
- Rest, J. R. (1994). *Background: Theory and research*. In Rest, J. R. and Narvaez, D. (Eds.), *Moral development in the professions: Psychology and applied ethics*.
- Rossilah, J. (2008). Analisis Kepeluan Latihan Teori dan Praktis, Edisi Pertama,. *Universiti Teknologi Malaysia*.
- Sabi'u, S. (2017). *Relationship Between Aspect of Human Resource Management Practices and Organizational Performance: Mediating Role of Ethical Climate* [University Utara Malaysia]. 900159.
- Sammuel, G. O. (2018). How Corruption is Affecting Basic Education in Nigeria. *International Anti-Corruption Conference*. <https://iaccseries.org/blog/how-corruption-is-affecting-basic-education-in-nigeria/>
- Sargit, S., Nobaya, A., & Babei, H. (2012). Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital and Psychological Empowerment Among Squatter Settlement in Tehran, Iran. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 2(3), 26–50.

- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2003). Utrecht work engagement scale Preliminary Manual. In *Occupational Health Psychology Unit Utrecht University* (No. 1; 1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/t01350-000>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). “The measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach”. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3(1), 71–92.
- Schaufeli, W., Salanova, M., & Gonzalez-Roma, B. A. (2002). The measurement of engagement and burnout: a two sample confirmatory factor analytical approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3, 71–92.
- SDG. (2018). *New education data for SDG4: Focus on out-of-school children*, 27 September 2018. <https://www.sdg4education2030.org/new-education-data-sdg4-focus-out-school-children-27-september-2018>
- Seema. (2016). The Effect of Managerial Competencies on Employee Engagement in Multinational IT Industries. *International Journal of Latest Trends in Engineering and Technology*, 7(3), 28–34. <https://doi.org/DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.21172/1.73.504>
- Shkeer, A. S., & Awang, Z. (2019). Exploring Items for Measuring Marketing Information system Construct: An Exploratory Factor Analysis. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 9(6), 87–97. <https://doi.org/10.32479/imm.8622>
- Speklé, R. F., & Verbeeten, F. H. M. (2014). The use of performance measurement systems in the public sector: Effects on performance. *Management Accounting Research*, 25(2), 131–146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mar.2013.07.004>
- Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B. J. (1995). “Self-liking and self-competence as dimensions of global self-esteem: initial validation of a measure.” *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 65(2), 332–342.
- Tao, Y. H., Yeh, C. R., & Sun, S. I. (2016). Improving training needs assessment processes via the Internet: system design and qualitative study. *Internet Research*, 16(4), 427–449.
- Trong, L. T. (2018). Service-oriented high-performance work systems and service-oriented behaviours in public organizations : the mediating role of work engagement. *Public Management Review*, 21(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2018.1526314>
- UBE Act,2004, Pub. L. No. 2 (1), 113 (2004). <http://nigeria-education.org/literature/compulsory-free-universal-basic-education-act-2004>
- Ujma, M., & Igram, T. (2019). Perception of ability-motivation-opportunity oriented HRM practices and organizational commitment: The role of task uncertainty. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 1(50), 40–287. <https://doi.org/DOI: https://doi.org/10.7341/20191545>
- UNICEF. (2018, April). *Nigeria Has the Highest Number of Out-of-school Children in the World*. Cision PRWeb. <https://www.prweb.com/releases/2018/04/prweb15403959.htm>
- Van Gelderen, B. R., & Bik, L. W. (2016). Affective organizational commitment, work engagement and service performance among police officers. *Policing*, 39(1), 206–221.

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-10-2015-0123>

- Van Waeyenberg, T., & Decramer, A. (2018). Line managers' AMO to manage employees' performance: The route to effective and satisfying performance management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 29(22).
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2018.1445656>
- Vathanophas, V. (2007). Competency requirements for effective job performance in the Thai public sector. *Contemporary Management Research*, 3(1), 45–70.
- Vem, L. J., Mbasua, Y. A., & Davireng, M. (2019). Sanctification of work and turnover of teachers under insurgency: Would career satisfaction and affective commitment mediate the relationship? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 58(2), 171–186.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-03-2019-0039>
- Wiemann, J. M. (1977). Explication and Test of a Model of Communicative competence. *Human Communication Research*, 3(3), 195–213.
- Wirawan. (2008). *Budaya dan Iklim Organisasi Teori, Aplikasi dan Penelitian*, Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- World Bank. (2014). *Out-of-school children: a promise yet to be fulfilled*.
<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/out-school-children-promise-yet-be-fulfilled>
- Yusof, Y., Awang, Z., Jusoff, K., & Ibrahim, Y. (2017). The influence of green practices by non-green hotels on customer satisfaction and loyalty in hotel and tourism industry. *International Journal of Green Economics*, 11(1), 1–14.