

Psychological Determinants of Employee Engagements among Public and Private Sector Employees of Rivers State

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate how selected psychological factors determines employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and their corresponding null hypotheses. The ex post facto research design was adopted for the study with a sample of 435 employees drawn using. For data collection, three instruments were used which were properly assessed for validity and reliability. In analyzing the data obtained, mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while one-way ANOVA and independent samples t-test were used in testing the null hypotheses were applicable. Result revealed that length of service, leadership style, locus of control and financial remuneration significantly determine employee engagement. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the employee engagement of public and private sector employees. Based on this result, appropriate recommendations were made.

Key words: Employee engagement, length of service, leadership style, locus of control, financial remuneration.

INTRODUCTION

Developing a robust economy, especially in a developing country like Nigeria requires considerable synergy between both the public and private sector. In Nigeria generally, and Rivers State specifically, it has generally been argued that that lack of public sector regulation and private sector collaboration is a recipe for poor economic development, decadent infrastructure output with the attendant social ills (Adeyinka & Olugbamila, 2015). It is therefore on this basis that the concept of Public-Private Partnership has been a common feature of most government policy thrust, especially since the return of democratic governance in 1999. While PPP has been defined as the contractual arrangement which is formed between public and private sector partners which involve the private sector in the development, financing, ownership and or operation of a public facility or service, the role of the private sector in national development extend beyond such contractual agreement (Ekpo, 2016). Furthermore, the role of either the public or private sector in a nation's development is anchored on the level of commitment, skill and engagement of their labour force. Thus, the imperative for investigating the factors that influence employee engagements, either in the public or private sector.

The concept of employee engagement has become a widely used and popular concept among both researchers, academics and practitioners from various areas of specialization including business, organizational development, psychology and human resource management (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). While the concept has had a fairly long history, it was popularized by Kahn (1990:694) who defined it as "the harnessing of organization members selves to their work roles; and they are willing to employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances. This definition which has been picked up and followed by many academic researchers, there remains much gap in the literature on the determinants and consequences of employee engagement. One area of research that has shown a significant increase is the result that employee engagement reduces employee turnover, while it enhances job performance, task performance, organizational citizenship

behaviour, productivity and promotes a positive psychological climate in the workplace (Shokunbi, 2016).

For these and other positive benefits of employee engagement, organizations, both governmental and non-governmental are making considerable interventions for improving employee engagement among their teams. Various strategies and approaches have been adopted in establishing what works in terms of employee engagement. According to Saks (2006), efforts aimed towards improving employee behaviour include surveying employees to establish what impacts on their engagement. From this line of research, identifying and managing the determinants of employee engagement is a prerequisite for building an engaged workforce.

Results from much of the literature have provided various factors as being responsible for influencing employee engagement. Some predictors of employee engagement as gleaned from the literature include job characteristics, job fit, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition, value congruence, work-life balance, and workplace safety. Much of these research have been conducted using employees in the private sector (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). Besides, the concept, predictors and outcomes of employee engagement have not been adequately investigated in the Nigerian context. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the psychological determinants of employee engagements among public and private sector employees in Rivers State, Nigeria. The factors considered in the context of this study included the length of service, leadership style, locus of control and financial remuneration.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered to guide the study

1. What is the influence of length of service on employee engagement among public and private employees in Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of leadership style on employee engagement among public and private employees in Rivers State?

3. What is the influence of locus of control on employee engagement among public and private employees in Rivers State?
4. What is the influence of financial remuneration on employee engagement among public and private employees in Rivers State?
5. What is the level of engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to further aid in the conduct of this study:

1. Length of service does not have any significant influence on employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers.
2. Leadership styles do not have any significant influence on employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State.
3. Locus of control does not have any significant influence on employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State.
4. Financial remuneration does not have any significant influence on employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State.
5. There is no significant difference in the level of engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Engagement

For most people, the term "employee engagement" is synonymous with other terms such as employee commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and job satisfaction. However, the term is conceptually and operationally different from the above other terms. According to the Scottish Executive Social Research (2007), the defining feature of employee engagement from the other related terms is that it is a two-way relationship between the employer and the

employee, whereby focus is often placed on the extent to which the employee views the relationship.

In most of the literature, engagement is often conceptualized as workers willing to go the extra mile and exerting discretionary effort beyond what their job roles required to get things done. Key elements of an engaged workforce or employee often focus on motivation, satisfaction, commitment, finding meaning at work, advocating for the organizational product and services. Most definitions of engagement of employee engagement often emphasize the connection of the employee to the overall strategy and objectives of the organization (Schmidt & Hayes, 2002).

Specific definitions of employee engagement have identified various aspects of the concept in work-related roles. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) defined employee engagement as the positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Engagement at work was conceptualized by Kahn, (1990) as the harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. Rafferty, Maben, West & Robinson (2005) posited that both organizational citizenship behaviour and job commitments are elements of employee engagement.

The centrality of engagement has informed the need for organizations to identify and control factors that lead to engagement. Some factors or drivers of effective engagement include leadership, effective management, two-way communication, pay and benefits, fair and equal treatment, employee qualified workforce, career development and training, quality working hours, and effective health and safety programmes. This wide array of engagement drivers has led to significant research which aims at exploring how employee engagement can be enhanced. "However, there is no 'one size fits all' model of engagement, and different employees will place different emphases on the extent to which they value each of these elements in return for 'going the extra mile' (Scottish Executive Social Research, 2007). This paper takes a specific view of four of these elements length of service, leadership style, locus of control and financial remuneration.

Length of Service and Employee Engagement

Length of service is a factor that has been identified as being critical not only to the performance of a job but its effect on the commitment of employees is one that has not received significant attention in the scientific literature. According to Mayer, Stanley, Herscovitch and Topolnytsky (2002) the longer a person stays in an organization and the older they become, the greater their feelings of responsibilities for the outcome of the organization. Salami (2008) also revealed that as workers get older on a job, the more time they have to reevaluate their job. Furthermore, individuals who have stayed for considerable time on the job feel they have given much to the job and may see no reason leaving the organization, thus the higher level of job engagement as identified by Morrow (2003). However, Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004) that there is an inverse relationship between employee engagement and length of service. With Shah, Alf and Parkpoom (2003) not finding any relationship between the length of service and employee engagement. Among hotel employees in Thailand. Thus indicating a mixed result on the influence of length of service and employee engagement.

The pathway through which length of service influences employee engagement has been a subject of empirical investigations, and has remained a big challenge for management and organizations. While it is well acknowledged that long-serving employees contribute to knowledge sharing which in turn promotes an effective organizational culture (Islam, Ahmed, Hasan, & Ahmed, 2011), some long-serving employees have been shown to display work behaviour that blunts out the positive effect of their knowledge (Robinson et al, 2004). Some reasons for the reported low level of engagement among long-serving employees include career frustration, boredom from performing routine jobs, job cynicism and self-disappointment. To further address this question of the impact of length of service on employee engagement, this study is a step in the right direction.

Leadership style and Employee Engagement.

The leadership of any organization has been described as the engine room of any organization development according to Aydin, Sarier and Uysal (2013). Leaders act as dynamic forces that not only monitors but also directs an organization to realize its objectives to achieve

organizational success by enhancing employee engagement (Papalexandris and Galanaki, 2009). It is for this purpose that various organizations, both government and corporate, have focused attention on the leadership pattern of top management.

Various leadership style has been proposed in the literature, with each having their merits and demerits. According to Ojokuku, Adetayo and Sajuyigbe (2012), leadership style is a combination of a leader's skills, characteristics, attitude and knowledge when interacting with employees in a work-related role, Various conceptualization of leadership skills have been advanced in the leadership literature but in the present study the leadership styles dimension considered most appropriate to the corporate and governmental environment is that proposed by Bass and Riggio (2006) in which leadership is categorized into two broad types namely transformational and laissez-faire leadership.

Transformational leadership is thought of as a critical approach in terms of organizational development. Transformational leader supports the holistic development of their subordinates and also infuses excitement and enthusiasm for transformation in working groups (Çelik, 2003). Transformational leaders help in the creation of a positive organizational climate, where employees are encouraged to pursue their goals using available personal and organizational resources. According to Keskes, Sallan, Simo and Fernandez (2018), organizational leaders increase the levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment of stakeholders as a result of motivating followers and paying close attention their career progression (Rowold & Scholtz, 2009).

Bass (1990) defines laissez-faire leadership as an approach in which there is no leadership, no interaction between the leader and his followers. These leaders do not take care of the needs and developments of followers and are only interested in how they can sustain their position without impact. The leader rejects responsibility, delays decisions, does not provide feedback and has no effort to meet the needs of the followers. There is a negative relationship between the satisfaction, performance and motivation of followers and laissez-Faire leadership (Rowold & Scholtz, 2009:45). More specifically, Yao, Woan, Li and Ahmed (2017) found out that the laissez-faire leadership style has the weakest relationship with

employee engagement in the construction industry in Malaysia. In the public sector, Gardner (2018) obtained that there is a weak and insignificant relationship between laissez-faire leadership and organizational commitment. Therefore, across theoretical findings and industrial sectors, most of the result showed that transformational leadership has a greater impact on the reported level of employee engagement than the laissez-faire leadership style.

Locus of Control and Employee Engagement

Nel cited in Carrim (2006, p 112), posits that the word 'locus' originated from the Latin word "loci" which implies "a specific place, location or locality." Control, on the other hand, means the "idea of being in charge of a situation or having an opinion about some events". Based on the integration of ideas from both words, Carrim (2006) therefore defined locus of control as the extent to which people believe their behaviour determines the outcome of their lives as well as other life's event. To Basat (2004), locus of control is the degree of attribution individual make either to themselves or external factors, when events occur. The idea surrounding the concept of locus of control implies that people believe that they or other external factors determine what happens to them (Lester, 1992). Locus of control is the extent to which people believe they influence the events or actions in their lives.

Julian Rotter in 1954 laid the foundation of this concept, wherein he defined locus of control as the degree of personal control people have and exhibit over their lives. In most of the management and psychological literature, there are two broad dimensions of locus of control. These are internal locus of control and external locus of control. Internal locus of control is where an individual believes that he/she has control or influence over the event in their lives that occurs in their lives, while individual with external locus of control often believe that their internal states, feeling, and outputs are determined by other factors beyond their control (Tillman, Smith, & Tillman, 2010). Individuals with internal locus of control believe that his/her behaviour is guided by his/her personal decisions and effort, on the other hand, individuals with external locus of control believes that his/her fate is guided by fate, luck, supervisors, the universe, company

policy etc. As used in this study, locus of control is measured as either external or internal locus of control

Phrases cited in Carrim (2006) stated that locus of control is an offshoot of the social learning theory and deals with the extent to which an individual feels that s/he has control over the outcome that occurs relative to behaviour. In presenting the characteristics of an individual with internal locus of control, Howard in Carrim (2006) stated that:

- They have a higher self-concept
- They are better adjusted, more independent and more achieving
- They are more realistic in their aspiration, more open to new learning, more creative, more flexible and more self-reliant
- They show more initiative and effort in controlling the environment.
- They are less anxious and show more interest in intellectual and achievement matters.

Thus, individuals with a sense of internal locus of control display independence in thinking, cognitively adept, mentally alert, committed to lifelong learning experiences and achievement motivated when compared to individuals who reported external locus of control.

Table 1: Characteristics of Internal and External locus of Control (Gangai, Mahakud, & Sharma, 2016)

Internal Locus of Control	External Locus of Control
Do better in jobs where they can set the pace	Tends to stay in jobs that they are dissatisfied with longer
As people get older they tend to become more internal	Works better when the pace is automated
People higher up in an organization structure tend to be more internal	Feel victimized by illness or stress
Have a more participative management style	Tends to be negative
Engage in activities that will improve their situation	Gives up easily, does not try hard
Are more likely to attempt to influence other people	Are more influenced by social surroundings
Are more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation	Believes success or failure is a result of luck, fate or chance
Emphasize striving for achievement	Usually humble and agreeable
Work hard to develop their knowledge, skills	Acknowledges and shows praise to

and abilities	others
Generally more inquisitive and try to figure out why things turned out the way they did	Laid-back and easy-going
Take note of information that they can use to create positive outcomes in the future	Tend to like and follow detailed directions

Shapiro (1996) further claims that gaining and maintaining a sense of control has become one of the most popular subjects in management circles and organizational behaviour literature during past decades. Many constructs related to control have been developed and explored and a large number of books and articles on theory, research, and applications of the concept of control have been published. As a result of this large body of research, it is believed by many researchers that, sense of powerlessness is demoralizing and it is a barrier for altering life situations, even in the workplace (Myers, 2014).

As a popular concept in human relations circle, Rotter (1990) claims that the locus of control construct can be best understood in the social learning theory of personality from which the concept originated. Although locus of control is such a popular variable, there have been ambiguities in the conception and measurement of locus of control construct. It is noted that there are several variables similar to locus of control such as hopelessness, helplessness, personal causation and causal attribution (Mark, 1998)

Some researchers regard the locus of control construct as a generalized expectancy whereby an individual consistently display a pattern of action and behaviour across every situation that is reflective of their locus of control. However, other scholars argue that locus of control domain-specific construct (Marks, 1998). This position states that depending on the situation, a person might display either internal or external locus of control. There have also been debates on the unidimensionality of locus of control. For example, some researchers have supported the multidimensionality of locus of control by factor analyses and showed different constructs in external locus of control dimension such as control by powerful others, fate and chance control (Clachar, 1992).

Research on the relationship between locus of control and employee engagement has been a regular decimal in the literature. For example, de Laat (2016) investigated the effect of work locus of control and work engagement of HR professionals. The result showed

that individuals with internal locus of control reported a higher level of work engagement than those with external locus of control. In a related study, Waweru (2015) investigated the relationship between locus of control and organizational commitment among insurance workers in the private sector. The result from the study showed that there is a significant relationship between internal locus of control and organization commitment, while a weak relationship was obtained between external locus of control and organizational commitment.

Remuneration and Employee Engagement

Remuneration is fundamental to the functioning of any employment relationship and a significant factor in job engagement or disengagement. Specifically, it relates to the welfare of the workers with special references to enhanced salary and non-salary rewards and compensation. Such relationships are often expressed in terms of inputs and outputs of the workers in the economy. Based on one's inputs (e.g. efforts, education, competence, skills etc), one can compare outputs (e.g. salary level, promotions etc). However, when people perceive imbalance in their input-output ratio with reference to their referent others, tension is created which results in high accident rate, job dissatisfaction, frequent absenteeism, low productivity, lack of commitment to organizational goals and objectives, and intention to quit, which are indicative of an unengaged employee (Omotayo, Salanke, & Adenike, 2014). Because of these reasons, there is a need for a reformulation of organizational policies, programmes and overall strategies which will cater for emerging dissatisfaction and disengagement among the workforce.

According to Belcher (2007), remuneration is a double input-output exchange between a worker and the employer, i.e. the input of efforts and output of wages to workers are established. Remuneration is the reward employees receive in exchange for performing organizational tasks. Remuneration involves both direct and indirect wages. Direct remuneration includes wages, salaries and bonuses or commission; while indirect remuneration is paid as medical benefits, housing allowance, meal allowance, utility allowances, incentive bonus, shift allowances, hospitalization expenses, out of station allowance, vehicle loan benefits, annual leave allowances, car basic

allowances. According to the result obtained by Taufek, Zulkifle, and Sharif (2015), there is a significant relationship between an organizational remuneration and work engagement among private-sector employees in Malaysia. Also, in their study of the total reward system and work engagement among South African employees, Hoole and Hotz (2016) found a positive and significant relationship between the total reward system and work engagement.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Shuck, Adelson and Reio (2016) theory of employee engagement. According to this theory, engagement refers to the process through which people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. This theory has three sub-dimensions of engagement. These are cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. These components are briefly discussed below.

Cognitive Engagement: This subdimension of engagement refers to the level of energy expended towards positive company's outcomes. Employees who are cognitively engaged are concentrated and attentive in their workplace. They express mental laden energy towards work-related activities. Cognitively engaged employees direct their cognitive resources in both direction and proportion, characterized by an employee's expression of focus and attention as well as concentration towards work-related tasks, experiences and context. A cognitively engaged employee would be proportionately concentrated, focused, and attentive toward work-related experiences (i.e., his or her work, his or her job, or within the active role of working).

Emotional Engagement: Entails offering of emotionally connected, personal resources, such as believing in, feeling a sense of personal meaning toward, and being emotionally connected, to a situation, person, or context within the full experience of work. This dimension indicates a deep, active, and emotional connection to the active working experience. Emotionally engaged employees express emotions that are directed toward a variety of work-focused targets that relate to the present momentary experience. For example, emotionally

engaged employees would say they believe in the mission and purpose of their organization and that the organization is personally meaningful to them.

Behavioural Engagement: The subdimension of behavioural engagement is the psychological state of intentions to behave in a manner that positively affects performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Tangibly, behaviorally engaged employees are willing to put in extra effort, work harder for their team and organization, and to do more than is expected. Macey and Schneider (2008) referred to this state of engagement as proactive engagement—because it was a forward-moving, psychological state that manifested as behaviour - but was not yet materialized in action. In other words, behavioural engagement represents a psychological state and is not yet action-related behaviour (which differentiates it from performance, or other related constructs such as organizational citizenship behaviour, which is the actual behaviour).

Summarily, this theoretical framework is considered relevant in the present study because the above dimensions of engagement are readily observable and easily measured within the context of Rivers State. Furthermore, most of the employees can easily make meaning about the dimensions in their daily job roles.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The ex-post facto research design was used for this study. This was because the researchers did not manipulate any variables in the study, but were only interested in exploring the extent to which certain factors, already operational in the employees' job roles determine their level of engagement.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A multistage sampling technique was used for drawing the sample for the study. From the total population of 24,089 workers in the public sector in Rivers State, 200 employees were conveniently sampled, while 235 workers were drawn from the private sector, mainly from banks, insurance and educational institutions. This resulted in a total sample of 435 employees.

Method of Data Collection: The primary method of data collection was the use of three questionnaires. The first questionnaire was a 20-item semi-structured questionnaire titled Modified Work Engagement Questionnaire (MWEQ) which was adapted from Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. The second instrument was titled Work Locus of Control Questionnaire (WLCQ) which was adapted from the Work Locus of Control Scale by Spector (1988). This instrument was made up of 20 items with 10 items each assessing each of the dimensions of locus of control in the present study. The third instrument was a 20-item questionnaire titled Leadership Style Assessment Questionnaire (LSAQ). The three instruments were constructed using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) scored 4, 3, 2, and 1 point(s) respectively.

The instruments were administered to 30 respondents not part of the selected sample to assess for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha method. The result yielded alpha coefficients of 0.91, 0.83, and 0.84 for the MWEQ, WLCQ and LSAQ respectively. The instruments were administered directly to the respondents in their place of employment with the help of two research assistants after permission was sought from their supervisors or managers. The instruments were collected on the spot immediately to ensure a 100% retrieval. Data analysis was done using mean, standard deviation, t-test and one-way analysis of variance where appropriate.

RESULT PRESENTATION

Table 2: Influence of psychological variables on employee engagement in public and private sector

Factors	Variables	PUBLIC					PRIVATE				
		Mean (SD)	n	df	F/t	p	Mean (SD)	N	df	F/t	p
LoS	1-5 Years	49.95 (7.13)	63	2	5.97	0.003	49.72 (6.87)	71	2	7.20	0.001
	6-10	49.84 (2.36)	63				50.07 (2.67)	90			
	Above	53.06 (7.60)	74	197			53.06 (7.08)	74			
LS	TLS	53.04 (7.84)	69	198	3.24	0.001	53.05 (7.85)	69	233	3.57	0.000
	LLS	50.02 (5.25)	131				50.03 (4.94)	166			
LoC	Internal	52.97 (7.82)	105	198	4.63	0.001	53.00 (7.88)	105	233	4.89	0.000
	External	48.96 (3.30)	95					49.24 (3.42)			
FR	Adequate	52.87 (7.57)	76	198	3.15	0.002	52.87 (7.57)	76	233	3.50	0.000
	Inadequate	49.96 (5.32)	124					49.97 (4.98)			

LoS = Length of Service, LS = Leadership Style, TLS = Transformational Leadership Style, LSS = Laissez-faire Leadership Style, LoC = Locus of Control, FR = Financial Remuneration.

From the result shown in Table 2, it can be observed that when the influence of length of service was considered, employees in the public sector with 1-5 years reported a mean engagement level of 49.95 (SD = 7.13), those with 6-10 years of working service had a mean value of 49.84 (SD = 2.36), while those working for more than 10 years reported a mean value of 53.06 (SD = 7.60). Furthermore, when these values were subjected to one-way ANOVA, an F-value of 5.97 (2,197) was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.003. Since the p-value obtained was lesser than 0.05, the chosen alpha of the study, it, therefore, implies that length of service significantly influences the engagement of public sector employees in Rivers State. For employees in the private sector, those with 1-5 years reported a mean engagement of 49.72 (SD = 6.87), those with 6-10 years of working service had a mean value of 50.07 (SD = 2.67), while those working for more than 10 years reported a mean value of 53.06 (SD = 7.08). Furthermore, when these values were subjected to one-way ANOVA, an F-value of 7.20 (2,232) was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. Since the p-value obtained was lesser than 0.05, the chosen alpha of the study, it, therefore, implies that the length of service significantly influences the engagement of private-sector employees in Rivers State.

Regarding leadership style, Table 2 further revealed that respondents in the public sector who reported transformational leadership style as being more obtainable in their organizations had a mean engagement value of 53.04 (SD = 7.84), which was greater than the mean value of 50.02 (SD = 5.25) for those working in laissez-faire organization. When these mean values were further subjected to independent samples t-test, the result showed that a t-value of 3.24 (198) was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it, therefore, suggest that leadership style is a significant determinant of engagement among public sector employees in Rivers State. Furthermore, private-sector employees with transformational leadership style reported a mean engagement value of 53.05 (SD = 7.85), which was greater than the mean value of 50.03 (SD = 4.94) for those working in laissez-faire organization. Further testing of these values with independent samples t-test, yielded a t-value of 3.57 (198) with a corresponding p-value of 0.000. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it,

therefore, suggest that leadership style is a significant determinant of engagement among private-sector employees in Rivers State.

According to the above Table, respondents in the public sector who reported internal locus of control had a mean engagement value of 52.97 (SD = 7.82), which was greater than the mean value of 48.96 (SD = 3.30) for those with an internal locus of control. When these mean values were further subjected to independent samples t-test, the result showed that a t-value of 4.63 (198) was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.001. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it can be implied that locus of control is a significant factor influencing engagement among public sector employees in Rivers State. Also regarding private-sector employees who indicated an internal locus of control, mean engagement value of 53.00 (SD = 7.88) was obtained, which was greater than the mean value of 49.24 (SD = 3.42) for those working with external locus of control. Further testing of the mean values of employees with internal and external locus of control in the private sector resulted in a t-value of 4.89 (198) with a corresponding p-value of 0.000. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it, therefore, suggest that locus of control is a significant factor influencing the employee engagement in River State public sector.

When the influence of financial remuneration on employee engagement in the public sector was considered, those who considered it adequate reported a mean engagement value of 52.87 (SD = 7.57), which was greater than the mean value of 49.96 (SD = 5.32) for those who considered the financial remuneration to be inadequate. When these mean values were further subjected to independent samples t-test, the result showed that a t-value of 3.15 (198) was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.002. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it, therefore, suggest that financial remuneration is a significant determinant of engagement among public sector employees in Rivers State. Furthermore, private-sector employees with adequate financial remuneration reported a mean engagement value of 52.87 (SD = 7.57), which was greater than the mean value of 49.97 (SD = 4.98) for those who considered financial remuneration inadequate. Further testing of these values with independent samples t-test, yielded a t-value of 3.50 (198) with a corresponding p-value of 0.000. From the p-value which was lesser than 0.05, it, therefore, suggest

that financial remuneration is a significant determinant of engagement among private-sector employees in Rivers State.

Table 3: Employee engagement in the public and private sector

Sector	n	\bar{x}	SD	df	t	p	Decision
Public	200	51.07	6.41	433	0.265	0.791	p>0.05
Private	235	50.91	6.08				Retain

According to the result shown in Table 3, public sector employee in Rivers State had a mean engagement value of 51.07 (SD = 6.41), while their counterparts in the private sector had a mean value of 50.91 (SD = 6.08). When these values were subjected to independent samples t-test, a t-value of 0.265 was obtained with a corresponding p-value of 0.791 which was greater than 0.05, the chosen level of statistical confidence guiding the study. This result, therefore, indicates there is no significant difference in employee engagement among public and private sector employees in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study showed that for both employees in the public and private sector, there reported that length of service was a significant factor influencing their level of engagement. The result revealed that the higher the length of service of employees, the greater their level of engagement. This result is similar to that obtained by Salami (2008) who revealed that length of service is significantly related to job commitment. This result might be due to the position that as workers get older on the job, they begin to see the job as part of themselves. This result is contrary to that obtained by Shah et al (2003).

The second result of the study showed that leadership styles are a significant determinant of employee engagement for both public and private sector employee. Specifically, it was revealed that transformational leadership style has a greater influence on employee engagement than the laissez-faire leadership style. This result might be attributed to the impact of transformational leaders on their workers. Transformational leaders help their works pursue organizational goals through the creation of a positive environmental

climate. Yao et al (2018) obtained similar findings that transformational leadership resulted in greater engagement among workers in the construction industry than laissez-faire leadership.

Consistent with much of previous research, the finding from this study showed that internal locus of control resulted in a significantly higher level of employee engagement than external locus of control in both the public and private sector. This finding may have been obtained because individuals with internal locus of control are more at ease in developing themselves as well as make more effort at ensuring their happiness on the job. This result is similar to that obtained by de Laat (2016) among HR professionals and Waweru (2015) with insurance workers.

According to the result obtained, there is a positive relationship between remuneration and employee engagement both among public and private sector workers. The result showed that respondents who considered their remuneration adequate reported a higher level of engagement than those who considered it inadequate. This result is consistent with the findings of Taufek et al (2015) who obtained a significant relationship between remuneration and work engagement among private-sector employees in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from this study is that individuals who have stayed long on the job are more engaged than those recently employed. Employees with internal locus of control are better engaged than those with external locus of control, while transformational leadership style promotes better engaged employees than laissez-faire leadership style. Finally, financial remuneration is a significant factor contributing to the level of engagement among both public and private workers in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result obtained, the following recommendations are made:

1. Considering the result that length of service is a significant factor in the level of employee engagement among workers in

the public and private sector, effort should be made by management to provide working experiences that stimulate workers to identify with organizational goals and mission.

2. Psychological and leadership training opportunities should be provided for senior leaders in both public and private sectors to enable them to develop transformational leadership practices as this has been shown to increase the engagement level of employees.
3. Effort should be made by the government and other stakeholders to provide adequate, prompt and regular payment of salaries for staff. This is because as the result showed, those who considered their financial remuneration adequate are more likely to be engaged which results in a greater level of engagement.
4. Regular training on positive disposition, including locus of control should be advanced in both the public and private sector of the economy. This is likely to make more people display internal locus of control which results in better engagement of employees.

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