

Employee Engagement as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Motivational Factors and Job Performance



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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the link between motivational variables, work performance, and employee engagement, as well as the influence of motivational factors on job performance via the use of employee engagement as a mediator in the Sultanate of Oman's government sector. The research used a quantitative technique and examined six hypotheses using 111 representative government workers from the Ministry of Education. This is pilot research. This research used quota sampling and analyzed data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and path analysis approaches. The study's results suggest that these elements are associated positively, that motivational factors are associated positively with employee engagement and work performance, and that employee engagement functions as a partial mediator in the link between motivational factors and job performance. This report is crucial for public sector executives and regulators interested in improving job performance in Oman. This is one of the few research that examines employee engagement's mediating role in the relationship between motivational characteristics and work performance. This is one of the first studies of its sort for the public sector in Oman. In future studies, other motivating elements might be studied and assessed in the private sector.

KEYWORDS: motivating elements, work performance, employee engagement, and the Sultanate of Oman's government sector

Institutional performance is a significant aspect in managing personnel (June & Mahmood, 2011) and has developed into a vital component of an enterprise's success (Ahmad et al., 2018). The institution's leadership is committed to enhancing staff performance via effective communication and motivational tactics (Ahmed et al., 2016). Staff success is vital for an organization to accomplish its mission and commercial goals, and employee efficiency is critical for an institution to develop (June et al., 2013). To accomplish these objectives, the company's regulatory authority employs several techniques and procedures designed to maximize efficiency in a variety of operating situations and to provide the best possible outcomes for the organization via employee efforts (Ahmed et al., 2016). Key personnel are critical to attaining objectives (Mohamed et al., 2020). Reduced organizational issues come from increased efficiency. Employees are a business's most important asset (Detienne et al., 2020).

Numerous studies have shown an unmistakable link between work happiness and performance (Anitha, 2014; e.g., Gorgievski et al, 2010; Dajani, 2015; Ismail et al., 2019). Numerous research have shown that contact enhances results. Without concern for job performance, firms would be unable of energizing and motivating individuals to achieve their objectives (Dess et al., 2006; Ghaffari et al., 2017). According to psychologists, if businesses put a greater emphasis on employee performance via motivation and engagement, they will be more able to drive employees to accomplish objectives (Aarabi et al., 2013). According to Detienne et al. (2020), communicating the optimistic value of tasks as a motivating resource increases employee engagement significantly more than discussing the negative consequences of an incomplete job, and framing tasks and jobs in terms of rewards increases their expected attractiveness and inner drive significantly.

(b) In research and industry, work output is described and understood differently. Lawler and Porter (1967) defined work performance as an individual's contribution to a situation by his or her talents, skills, and effort. Bernardin and Beatty (1984) defined job performance as a database containing information on the outputs of a work process or activity over a particular time period. According to Hunter (1986), job output is the consequence of an employee's labor. Campbell (1990) defined job success as "the actions or behaviors that contribute to the achievement of the organization's objectives" and

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employee success as "the consolidated financial or nonfinancial contribution made by employees to the achievement of the organization's goals both internally and externally." Borman and Motowidlo (1993) defined job performance as having three important components: (a) it must be defined in terms of behavior rather than outcomes, (b) it must be confined to activities relevant to the institution's aims, and (c) it must be a multidimensional notion. According to Viswesvaran and Ones (2000), work performance is defined as the adaptive activities, behaviors, and outcomes that employees engage in or bring about that contribute to the attainment of institutional goals. Employee output, according to Price (2001), is an individual's alignment with their job. The term "performance" refers to the monetary value of an individual's or team's effort (Reynoldsa et al., 2020). Griffin (2007) defined job output as the sum of an employee's actions and behaviors. Pushpakumari (2008) defined job output as the worker's purpose applied to the concept of effort. Additionally, Addair et al. (2019) defined job success as the value that employees provide to the organizations in which they work. The degree to which obligations and responsibilities are carried out is used to determine an individual's work performance. The quantity of jobs available and the type of the labor are two critical aspects to consider when evaluating employment outcomes (Reynoldsa et al, 2020). Addair et al. (2019) defined job performance as "all workers' behaviors and practices that may have an effect on the results of the recruitment institution." Job output may be defined as the workers' conduct that influences the institution's results (Jalalkamali et al., 2016). Employee success is a subtle and complicated phenomena in modern society, shaped by a web of shared values, roles, and goals across cultures (Aliakperova, 2018).

Numerous variables influence job performance, including the individual and the work environment (Tripathy, 2013). Tamkin (2005) argued that cooperation would result in increased work efficiency. Outstanding abilities and preparedness contribute to an organization's success (Misra, 2013). Searle et al. (2001) argued that social support would benefit employees by improving their performance. George (2000) said that emotional intelligence has a role in professional success. According to Ghaffari et al. (2017), the following variables contributed to increased job efficiency: compensation, fringe benefits, monitoring, progression, accountability, and preparedness. According to Aarabi et al. (2013), career success factors include salary, job security, development opportunities, independence, a pleasant work environment, and preparedness. Dajani (2015) observed that job efficiency was influenced by elements such as leadership, organizational justice, pay and benefits, work practices and procedures, and preparedness. Numerous ideas, such as Herzberg's two-factor hypothesis, Vroom's expectation theory, and Maslow's want theory, address human desires (Ghaffari et al., 2017).

The purpose of this investigation is to ascertain the relationship between job performance and motivational variables (work environment and leadership). The purpose of this study is to examine the role of employee engagement as a moderator in the relationship between the work environment, leadership, and performance. This research focused on the government sector in the Sultanate of Oman, with the Ministry of Education serving as the case study.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Numerous governments and organizations across the globe have suffered economic difficulties as a result of poor job performance. According to a Blue Cross Blue Shield report, depression diagnoses among millennials and adolescents are increasing at a quicker rate than in any preceding generation. In any case, the illness is predicted to cost the United States \$44 billion yearly in lost productivity (Detienne et al., 2020).

In actuality, Oman continues to suffer with poor job performance in the public sector. Currently, the public sector lacks credible performance measurements. Regardless of the method utilized, institutional or human, performance is poor (Orabi, 2020). Diversification of the economy and growth of the national GDP are unachievable unless and until government entities enhance their performance (Orabi, 2020). It is vital to implement activities and programs to improve government performance (Almatani, 2020).

The purpose of this research is to provide a more in-depth understanding of the work environment and leadership as motivational factors affecting workplace performance in the Sultanate of Oman's public sector, utilizing the Ministry of Education as a case study. Government officials in the Sultanate of Oman may benefit from this study in terms of formulating policies and techniques to inspire and motivate staff to continue attaining corporate objectives.

Additionally, the current study contributes to a greater understanding of the relationship between motivation and performance by examining the mediation role of employee engagement.

LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Government sector in the Sultanate of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab Muslim kingdom situated on the Arabian Peninsula in western Asia. It has a total population of around 4.6 million people, of whom only 58% are Omani and the remainder are foreign nationals. The Sultanate of Oman is considered as a middle-income Sultanate. Oman's revenues are mostly derived from oil and gas. Oman employed almost 2.4 million people in 2019. The Sultanate of Oman is composed of fifteen authorities and twenty-three ministries, all of which are controlled by labor law (National Centre for Statistics and Information [NCSI], 2019).

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Motivational Factors and job performance

Numerous things contribute to motivation. The work environment and leadership will be examined as motivating elements in this study. Training is critical to employee performance because it enables employees to concentrate on the most critical areas of their jobs (Dajani, 2015). In several institutions, Roca et al. (2006) discovered a favorable correlation between a good work environment and job performance. Additionally, Jamal (2007), as quoted in Aarabi et al. (2013), examined the relationship between a challenging work environment and an individual's desire to participate in the organization of North American businesses. According to the research, the majority of organizations have a negative association between a hostile work environment and job efficiency. This implies that if the work environment is generally unpleasant, administrators should establish a structure that fosters a favorable work environment that inspires employees (Hourani et al, 2006). Thus, leadership must play a critical role in fostering a pleasant work environment. According to Aarabi et al. (2013), the work environment has a direct effect on employee performance. When employees feel stressed, a considerable proportion of them are predicted to quit their jobs (Chen & Lien, 2008).

Effective leadership activity that fosters self-awareness, information sharing, transparency, and adherence to the company's fundamental beliefs (Dajani, 2015). Leadership may be defined as the process by which administrators stimulate their staff intellectually and psychologically to feel confident and appreciated while doing their assigned tasks, hence improving their performance (Gözükara & imşek, 2015). Employee performance enhances career productivity and workplace engagement (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). The primary goal of management and leadership is to improve employees' performance in order for them to maintain their success (Manzoor et al., 2019). Naeem and Khanzada (2018) discovered a high association between leadership and work performance. Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 2 (H1 & H2) are as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between work environment and job performance.

H2: There is a significant relationship between leadership and job performance.

Employee Engagement and Job Performance

When workers are engaged, they recruit and integrate diverse facets of their cognitive and psychological selves to translate workplace duties and exceptional relationships into tangible successes (Byrne, 2014). In comparison to disengaged workers, individuals with a high degree of participation are excited about their jobs, committed to their fields, and exhibit their commitment to their businesses (Ismail et al., 2019).

Parker and Griffin (2011) revealed that organizational commitment improves job performance by creating positive feelings and improving motivation to complete assigned tasks and duties. Employee motivation influences work performance (Stairs & Galpin, 2009). Evidence-based research indicates that employee engagement has a direct effect on job achievement (Ismail et al., 2019). Gorgievski et al. (2010), for example, examined the link between employee engagement and success among 54 Dutch educators using a multidimensional approach. They uncovered the existence of a positive link. This finding is consistent with Gorgievski et al. (2010), who analyzed 2,162 employees over a 1.5-year period and concluded that employee behavior had a considerable influence on the project's quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Anitha (2014) and Ismail et al. (2019) confirmed the tight relationship between employee motivation and job performance. Numerous prior studies have shown a clear link between employee motivation and work performance because motivated employees are expected to perform at a higher level than others (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010). Therefore hypothesis 3 (H3) is as follows:

H3: There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and job performance.

Motivational Factors and Employee Engagement

Workplace and leadership environments both have motivating factors. Due to the positive association between it and employee performance. The work environment has a significant impact on the level of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). The work environment is defined as "a physically and emotionally secure setting that motivates employees to be productive" (Anitha, 2014, p. 318). Numerous studies reveal that employee engagement seems to be the result of a variety of organizational elements (Miles, 2001; Holbeche & Springett, 2003; Rich et al., 2010). Deci and Ryan (1987), as cited in Anitha (2014), stated that administration that fosters a friendly work environment is generally concerned with the desires and emotions of employees, provides constructive input, and allows employees to express grievances, acquire new skills, and resolve work-related problems (Anitha, 2014).

Leadership is a fundamental characteristic that has been described as a crucial part in educating employees about employee engagement (Anitha, 2014). Walumbwa et al. (2008) said that effective leadership requires a diverse set of talents, including self-awareness, logical information acquisition, social openness, and internalized moral principles. When leaders encourage their employees, engagement occurs naturally (Wallace & Trinko, 2009). Leaders are responsible for ensuring that employees' contributions are critical to the organization's success (Anitha, 2014). Leaders should place a lower premium on questioning an employee's responsibility and place a higher premium on human qualities that maintain motivation and positively engage

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personnel (Hawley, 1993). When employees believe their leadership values their efforts, they become more driven and involved in their company (Anitha, 2014). Coordination between the employer and the employee may have an influence on employee morale: a boss who communicates plans well to assistants may increase workplace motivation in such workers (Lockwood, 2007). Accurate and inclusive leadership is hypothesized to increase employees' dedication, contentment, and love for given jobs (Schneider et al., 2009). Therefore, hypotheses 4 and 5 (H4 & H5) are as follows:

H4: There is a significant relationship between work environment and employee engagement.

H5: There is a significant relationship between leadership and employee engagement.

Additionally, companies make use of a number of tools to promote contact in order to maximize efficiency and effectiveness (Dajani, 2015). Employee commitment contributes to organizational performance by generating positive feelings and raising excitement for job tasks and responsibilities (Ismail et al., 2019). When employees are satisfied with their compensation and recognition inside their organization, the majority of employees respond with a high level of dedication (Saks, 2006). Economic incentives have a significant influence on the productivity and performance of employees (Swapna & Narayanamma, 2019). Numerous businesses have utilized monetary incentives to encourage and retain employees, as well as to boost productivity (Woodruffe, 2000; Cappelli, 2000; Mehrzi, & Singh, 2016). Numerous businesses utilize monetary incentives to increase employee happiness and productivity (Hongal et al., 2020).

The commitment benefit is the most valuable to a business because it has a direct effect on how people do their jobs and results in higher engagement in a supportive work environment (Dajani, 2015; Ahakwa et al., 2021). Leaders can make a substantial contribution to building a positive work environment that enhances employee enthusiasm and productivity (Kahn, 1990; May et al., 2004). Job atmosphere is an important motivation since it encompasses "working settings, tools accessible to workers, and administrators' ethical conduct" (Rasheed et al., 2016, p. 109). By fostering an optimal work environment, job efficiency may be increased (Shah et al., 2010). Employees invest when they feel confident in their leadership and work environment. Both of these factors contribute to mental and emotional well-being (Koyuncu et al., 2006; May et al., 2004). Dajani (2015) and Ahmed et al. (2016) established that employee engagement acts as a moderator between the work environment, leadership, and job performance. Therefore, hypothesis 6 (H6) is as follows:

H6: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between motivational factors and job performance.

Conceptual framework

This study hypothesized that job performance as a dependent variable has significant relationships with employee engagement and motivational factors. The conceptual model also has employee engagement as a mediator. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study.

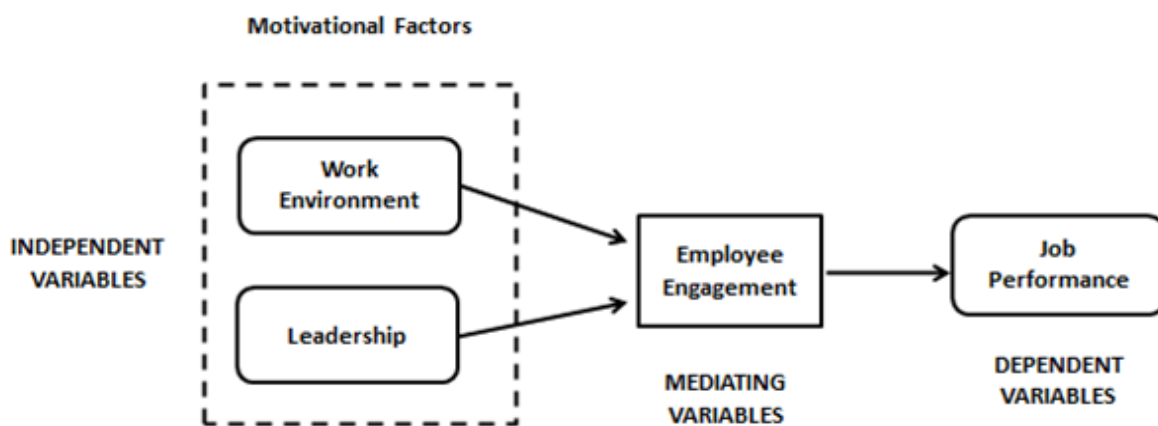


Figure 1. Research Framework

METHOD

On the basis of a review of the literature, this research adopted a causal descriptive quantitative analytic technique. While descriptive statistics are used to report findings, causal statistics are used to show the causal model of variables. The study was conducted using SPSS and path analysis methodologies. The term "path mapping" is often used to refer to both direct and indirect relationships (Riduwan, 2012).

Population

A population is a hypothetical set of people for whom the researcher wishes to generalize the research's findings (Shepherd et al., 2017). This was pilot research. The population for this research is the Ministry of Education's current employees. These

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government employees will be operationally defined as individuals who work in a ministry and have met the criterion of one year of work experience.

Sampling methods

“Sampling” is a term that refers to the act of picking a sufficient number of accurate items from a population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The sampling approach employed to find participants in this study was quota sampling, which often allows the author to exert only a limited amount of control over the survey's selectivity, allowing for the elimination of bias during the selection stage. The quota for this research was established by the number of Ministry of Education employees having at least one year of experience.

Sample size

There were a total of 111 participants. Krejci and Morgan (1970) provided as a reference for determining an adequate sample size for the 111-person research population. Using the Krejcie-Morgan formula, the sample size is 111 employees. Hair et al. (2010) recommended analyzing a minimum of 100 respondents.

Validity

Content validity, sometimes referred to as face validity, is a subjective evaluation of the degree of correspondence between the scale's items and its theoretical justification (Hair et al., 2010). The present study investigates the content validity of the questions tested by determining how effectively they addressed all aspects of the issue.

Reliability

“Reliability” is a term that relates to the degree to which a measurement stays constant over time, or the length of time required to repeat findings (Bryman, 2008). The "rules of thumb" proposed by George and Mallery (2010) were utilized to evaluate these analytic findings. Table 3.8 summarizes the findings of the study's reliability assessment, which covered employee engagement, job performance, and motivational factors. The investigation's results revealed that the instrument was suitable for this research. The researcher selected the items that will be utilized. Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.8 were discovered for employee engagement, motivational characteristics, and job performance, showing a high and positive association between the measurements.

Table 1. The Reliability Analysis's Findings

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha value
Employee Engagement	0.921
Motivational Factors	0.918
Job Performance	0.923

Table 2. Characteristics Demographics

Demography	Classification	Participants	%
Gender	male	70	63%
	female	41	37%
Age	<25	0	0%
	>26-35	34	31%
	>36-45	77	69%
	>46-55	0	0%
	>56	0	0%
Level of study	High School Degree	0	0%
	University Degree (Diploma & Bachelor)	2	2%
	Master Degree/MBA	74	67%
	PhD	35	31%
	Other Degrees	0	0%

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Experience in the workplace	< 5 years	3	3%
	> 6-10 years	16	14%
	> 11-15 years	33	30%
	> 16-20 years	38	34%
	> 21 years	33	30%

This study used the questionnaire process for the distribution of surveys and was based on employee engagement as defined by Rich et al. (2010), job performance as defined by Ramos et al. (2019), and training as defined by Majdalawi (2015). Each inquiry was developed based on a Likert scale (1–6). This research sent 130 questionnaires and gathered 111 replies that were usable. This identifies the workforce demographics of the institution. The bulk of participants (70) were male, while 41 were female. Most responders had a master's or doctoral degree. Almost 71% of staff have worked for the government for more than 16 years.

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the items' reliability; the majority were rated as outstanding with a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.9; all variables are correct. The bootstrapping technique macro was employed in this study to ascertain the significance of indirect effects (Hayes, 2018). Bootstrapping is a common technique for avoiding sample assumptions (Kozlov et al., 2019).

RESULTS

Table 3 illustrates the correlations between constructs, along with their means and standard deviations. Employee involvement is associated with employee motivation (training and compensation). With sufficient study data to support the assertion, it is possible to establish that motivating factors ($= 0.462$, $SE = 0.442$, $p = 0.00$) contribute to the maintenance of H1 and H2. The results indicate that job performance is positively influenced by motivating variables ($= -0.138$, $SE = 0.122$, $p = 0.00$) that work together to maintain H3, and that job performance is positively influenced by employee engagement ($= 0.734$, $SE = 0.072$, $p = 0.00$) in the Sultanate of Oman's government sector. This is compatible with H4 and H5.

Table 3. Correlation

	Motivational Factors			Employee Engagement		
	Coeff	SE	p-value	Coeff	SE	p-value
Employee Engagement	0.462	0.442	0.000	—	—	—
Job Performance	-0.138	0.122	0.000	0.734	0.072	0.000
Constant	2.024	0.116	0.000	1.601	0.332	0.000
	R Square	0.164		R Square	0.485	
	F=	10.609		F=	102.729	
	P=	0.000		P=	0.000	

As shown in Table 4, their relevance evaluation is used to determine if employee engagement acts as a moderator in the link between work performance and motivational variables. In conclusion, work performance is influenced by indirect motivational factors (This contributes to the maintenance of H4 and H5), and the projected effect is ($= 0.2882$). Additionally, typical error and confidence intervals are included for bootstrapping from the beginning point. The indirect effect has a b-value of 0.135 to 0.4654. A 0 (showing a beneficial indirect influence) is omitted from this scale since it reflects predicted outcomes. Employee engagement is a factor that links what motivates employees to their job performance; this element contributes to the maintenance of H6.

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Table 4. The Relationship Between Motivational Factors and Job Performance: The Indirect Effect of Employee Engagement

Effect of Motivational Factors on Job Performance				
	Effect	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Motivational Factors ->				
Employee Engagement	0.2882	0.0857	0.135	0.4654
-> Job Performance				

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between motivational factors, employee engagement, and work performance, as well as the influence of motivational factors on these variables in Oman's public sector. Numerous factors, most notably motivational aspects, are associated with employee engagement and work success.

The preceding findings are generally consistent with Aarabi et al (2013) .'s study in the Malaysian service industry, Mensah and Tawiah (2016) in Ghanaian mining companies, and Ghaffari et al. (2017) in a case study at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, who discovered a significant and positive relationship between motivations and job performance. Additionally, Anitha (2014) discovered a favorable and substantial association between engagement and work performance. Like Aguenza et al. (2018)'s results, research has shown that when there is a connection between a person's interests and motivation, engagement is probable. Additional empirical evidence has been discovered to support the hypothesis that motivation has a significant influence on job performance (Ghaffari et al., 2017).

The findings of this study demonstrate that the mediator has the potential to influence the link between independent and dependent variables. Because these characteristics contribute to the prediction of job performance, this research hypothesizes that employee engagement acts as a partial mediator between motivational variables and overall work success, as Dajani (2015) and Ahmed et al. affirm (2016). Motivation is so strong that it has a direct impact on both job performance and employee engagement. Additionally, this suggests that managers may benefit from an employee's job performance and directing techniques to include motivating elements that are reinforced and driven by employee engagement.

This effort is not without limits; the data gathered does not cover all levels of government. Because the data for this study were acquired at a single point in time from a single source, common method bias cannot be removed; however, future research might collect repeated samples from the same population periodically over an extended period.

Overall, this study demonstrated a high correlation between motivating variables, employee engagement, and work performance for employees in the Sultanate of Oman's government sector. A manager who incorporates a dimension of motivating elements will see an improvement in work performance. Employee engagement serves as a buffer between the variables of motivating aspects and job performance in this manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

The goal of this research was to investigate two motivating factors: training and compensation, as well as their relationship to work performance and employee engagement. There is a dearth of research on the mediating influence of employee engagement. Other studies might be undertaken to evaluate additional motivational factors. Furthermore, the conclusions of this research should be confirmed in the private sector.

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