JETMASE
Journal of Emerging Trends in Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship
Volume 7(2), Pages 330 - 341 December, 2025
ISSN: 2384-762X
https://www.jetmase.com

Employee Engagement and Efficiency of Catholic Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the employee engagement and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. The sub-objectives were to: determine the relationship between leadership and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State: evaluate the relationship between communication and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State. This study is anchored on Kanter's theory of Empowerment**.** Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. The method for data collection was the questionnaire which was administered randomly among the staff of the catholic secondary school. The population of the study was four thousand five hundred and eighty-seven (4587). A sample of 882 respondents was drawn from the population by Boig and Gall (1973) formula. Eight hundred and seventy three (873) copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and this represents 98.9% of the total sample size. The hypotheses were tested using correlation analysis method at 0.05% level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that; Leadership has significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State., T=3.797, p=0.000; Communication has significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State. T=10.224, p=0.000; The study recommended that Leaders should instill in their subordinates a sense of ownership, direction and belongingness to the organization; All cadres of staff should be involved in communication issues that affect their overall performance, for it will lead to organizational development and growth;

Keywords: Employee engagement, efficiency, catholic secondary, communication, leadership and efficiency

INTRODUCTION

In the past, employees were seen as strategic tools by organizations. However, since the corporate environment has evolved, employees are now viewed as strategic partners (Singh, 2020). As a result, organizations face the challenge of devising strategies to purposefully position their employees in that direction. Employee Engagement (EE) is the essential nutrient that modern organizations require in order to thrive (Dixit & Singh, 2020). Metaphorically, EE is being prescribed as the antidote to the recent crisis in the corporate institutions setting, and just as the world is relying on a vaccine for survival, organizations rely on EE to stay in business. Furthermore, Rao,

Narayana, & Niranjan (2021) asserted that EE is a powerful tool that can assist organizations in transforming their employees from strategic tools to strategic partners. Hence, organizations must go beyond employee motivational strategies and in-corporate workplace practices that promote EE (Beri & Gulati, 2021; Okeke & Ahaiwe, 2024).

Businesses usually face various types of challenges in their efforts to develop interaction with their employees in order to build a robust labour force (Dinh, 2020). As a result, human resource managers and business leaders are compelled to focus more on engaging their valuable assets, as the output and performance of these assets have a direct effect on organizational productivity (Dhir & Shukla, 2019). Simon & Jeromy (2018) noted that when human resource managers improve employee engagement, it leads to improved institutional performance, lowers staff turnover, and enhances employee well-being. According to Balogun & Afolabi (2018), organizations globally have become much more aware of the importance of their human resources serving as a competitive edge over their competitors. Through their performance, employees create a competitive edge for their organizations. Therefore, organizations should find ways to embed engagement strategies into the overall organization's policies to achieve the highest possible levels of performance from their employees.

In today`s innovation driven business settings, organizations are under intense pressure to survive and remain competitive. Business organizations all over the world are advancing through hyper competition where engaging employees is inevitable for their survival (Sinurat & Berampu, 2021). They are expected to properly utilize their resources to reach their desired targets and stated goals (Tshukudu, 2020). Engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that employees are committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, and are able at the same time to enhance their own sense of well-being (Satata, 2021; Okeke, 2024; Unukpo, Nwankwo, Chendo & Okeke, 2025).

Employee engagement made its appearance around the 1990s. In fact, the very first use of the term employee engagement can be traced back to a paper, "Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work" in the Academy of Management Journal by William A. Kahn in the year 1990. The paper explored the premise that, "people can use varying degrees of their selves[sic], physically, cognitively, and emotionally in work role performances, which has implications for both their work and experiences."

Prior to that, while personnel management was a widely accepted practice, nobody really gave much thought to employee engagement. Until Kahn's mention of the term employee engagement, employees and the work they did was only considered in the context of how involved they were with their job and how motivated they were with respect to their job. In fact, even though employee engagement made its 'debut' in 1990, it wasn't well until the early 2000's that academia in general took note of it. A number of research papers were published on the topic of employee engagement from the early 2000's onwards and continue to be published even now, speaks literal volumes about employee engagement's popularity as a concept. According to Eze, Nwakwo & Okeke, (2025) employee engagement is now a popular enough term that it has become something of a buzzword in HR circles. Its status as a buzzword does not deny the fact that, now more so than ever, employees aspire to achieve a good work-life balance that allows

them to have a life outside of work (Okeke, 2025) . You will notice this is in stark contrast to early depictions of work life where employees were expected to go above and beyond the call without any thought of reward or rest, something along the lines of a necessary sacrifice. While it was important for people to be good at their job, it was not important for them to be happy at their job or even stay engaged.

In fact, before employee engagement came on the scene, work-life balance wasn't a concept that many even agreed with or considered. But now, not only do employees consider being engaged and happy an important part of their job but organizations too aspire to high levels of employee engagement and actively seek to improve levels of engagement.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect employee engagement and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State. This study specifically identified the following objectives to:

i. determine the relationship between leadership and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State

ii. evaluate the relationship between communication and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State

1.3 Statement of Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

Ho_1: Leadership has no significant positive relationship with efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

Ho_2: Communication has no significant positive relationship with efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Kanter's theory of Empowerment

Kanter (1993) defined empowerment as the ability of an individual to independently make decisions and utilize available resources to accomplish the necessary goals. She postulates that if an organization is structured to provide empowerment and access to job-related empowerment opportunities, the structure will have a positive impact on employees and their performance to work. Alternatively, an organizational structure that does not provide empowerment and access to job-related empowerment opportunities will have a negative impact on the employees and their performance at work. Kanter (1993) posits that in an empowerment-structured organization there is increased autonomy, job satisfaction, and performance among employees. Consequently, feelings of burnout and job stress will decrease, and the result is employee performance. Kanter stated that the work environment structures and perceived employee access to power and opportunity structures is related to employee attitudes and behaviors in an organization. Kanter believed that employees display attitudes based on the presence of perceived power and opportunities. According to Kanter, there exist four work empowerment structures: access to information, resources, support, and opportunity. Access to information refers to the data, technical knowledge, and expertise needed for job performance.

Access to resources refers to the ability to obtain needed supplies, materials, money and personnel to meet established organizational goals. Access to support refers to the guidance, feedback, and direction provided by supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Access to opportunity refers to the growth, mobility and the chance to build upon knowledge base (Kanter, 1993). Kanter believed that if employees within an organization perceive opportunities for success is present, the employees' attitude, job satisfaction, and

overall employee performance will be enhanced. In order for an employee to perceive that opportunity exits, the employee must be in a position that allows access to resources, information, and support. Empowerment is achieved by identifying organizational policies and practices that foster a sense of powerlessness and implementing strategies and tactics that can be used to remove them. Based on this premise fronted by the Kater's theory on empowerment and organization performance, the study postulates that when employees are able to access the constructs of structural empowerment within their organizations: access to support, opportunity, resources and information they will be committed to their roles within their organizations. Kanter believed that if employees within an organization perceive opportunities for success is present, the employees' attitude, job satisfaction, and overall organizational performance will be enhanced. In order for an employee to perceive that opportunity exits, the employee must be in a position that allows access to resources, information, and support (Seibert, Gang & Stephen, 2011).

2.2 Empirical Review

Adepoju, Oluranti, Abubakar., Bagobiri (2024) investigates the connection between employee engagement and service quality in the Asset Management Company of Nigeria (AMCON), which is a key player in Nigeria's financial sector. This study utilized a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with AMCON employees. The analysis employed the SERVQUAL model to evaluate service quality and multiple regression analysis to explore the influence of each engagement dimension. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a theoretical understanding of the impact of employee engagement on service quality within the asset management sector. Additionally, this study aims to provide practical insights for AMCON, potentially improving service delivery strategies and effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate. The broader implications of this study extend to similar asset management entities in emerging economies, providing a comparative perspective, and understanding of these dynamics in diverse economic and regulatory environments.

Nkansah, Gyimah, Sarpong, and Annan (2023) examine the effect of EE on Employee Performance during the COVID-19 pandemic and how job resources moderate this relationship. The study used a sample size of 395 respondents who were chosen from a variety of MSMEs via a convenience sampling method. The study used a survey questionnaire design as the main method for collecting primary data. The results of the correlation analysis showed a statistical significant correlation between EE and employee performance. It was revealed that job resources moderated the relationship between EE and employee performance. Finally, the result showed that job resources had a significant effect on EE. Thus, it can be concluded that, in the face of COVID-19, EE is a significant predictor of the employees in the MSMEs sector performance.

Ifechukwu-Jacobs, Arinze, & Nwangwu, & Atueyi, (2025) The study analyzed the financial literacy and its impact on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. The objective of the study was to; ascertain the effect of financial knowledge, financial behaviour and financial expertise on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. Three research hypotheses are formulated in line with the above objectives of the study. Descriptive survey design method was used; Structured questionnaire were use to gather

information from the population. The population of the study is made of youths from age 20-39 in South East zone of Nigeria, which is 50,222,32 target population. It comprises of all the youths in South East Nigeria, while the sample size is 399 were gotten through taro yamane formular. The researcher distributes three hundred and ninety-nine (399) questionnaires but only three hundred and seventy-three (373) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Correlation and t-test method of data analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The finding of the study shows that; Financial knowledge has significant positive effect on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria. Financial behaviour has significant positive effect on youth entrepreneurship in South East Nigeria.

Nwangwu, Ohanyere, Nwangwu, & Atueyi, (2025) examined the effect of artificial intelligent (AI) on decision-making in supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Technology Acceptance Theory (TAT). A structure questionnaire was developed for data collection. The population of the study comprised of 281 management staff from thirteen (13) lubricant firms in Anambra State. Two hundred and sixty-nine (269) were duly filled and returned data was analysed using correlation analysis with the aid of statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23. Findings from the study show that. Machine learning has significant effect on decision support system on supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state (T=2.244, P=0.006). Neural networks has significant effect on creative decision skill on supply chain management of lubricant firms in Anambra state (T=9.790, P=0.009). The study concludes that AI-powered predictive analytics improved decision-making in supply chain management in lubricant firms in Anambra state, Nigerian..

Ohanyere, Arinze, & Atueyi (2025) Investigated the digital cyberspace cost on firm performance of deposit money bank using data for the period of 2012-2023. Panel least squared (PLS) method of data analysis was adopted because of its Best Linear Unbiased Estimators (BLUE) properties. The data for the variables used was sourced from annual report of the selected deposit money bank in Nigeria. The variables were on cyber security maintenance cost and cyber security acquisition cost. The study adopted the descriptive statistics, correlation approach, as well as panel least square. E- View software was used for the analysis. The study found that Cyber security maintenance cost has significant effect on performance of deposit money bank in Nigeria. (t-test 3.491757, p=0.0008). Cyber security acquisition cost has no significant effect on performance of deposit money bank in Nigeria. (t-test 0.959399, p=0.3405).

Ifechukwu-jacobs, & Atueyi, (2024) Material management and productivity of Nigeria bottling appraised the material management and productivity of Nigerian Bottling Company. The study adopted survey method of research. Data were generated through primary and secondary sources. The method for data collection was questionnaire which was administered randomly among the staff of Nigerian Bottling Company. The population of the study was 288 staff. while two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires were retrieved. The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis method at 0.05% level of significance. The findings of the study revealed, Planning has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of 14.027. Material procurement has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of 33.048. Logistic has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha given its F-value of

9.418. Stock and waste control has a significant effect on productivity in Bottling Companies in Onitsha.

Onya, Arinze, & Atueyi, (2025) examined job satisfaction and employee's performance among the staff of private universities in Anambra state. The study investigated the relationship between reward, career development, staff training and recognition on employee performance. Relevant theoretical and empirical literatures were reviewed. The study was anchored on Herberg's throry. The study collected data from primary and secondary sources. The population of the study comprised 478 staff of private universities in Anambra state. Formulated hypothesis were tested, using ANOVA. From the analysis, it was discovered that: Reward has significant effect on employee's performance amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state**.** Career advancement has significant effect on employee's performance, amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state. Training has significant effect on employees' performance amongst the staff of private universities in Anambra state. In view of the findings,

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey approach. The uses of descriptive statistics was applied because of its capability to summarize large quantities of data using measures in form of graphical and numerical techniques (Burns, 2000). With respect to this study, the researcher made use of primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources of data collection include the questionnaire; while the secondary sources of data collection includes the journals, magazines, textbooks and internet.

The target population of this study was limited to the number of teaching staff at catholic secondary schools in Anambra state. The population comprised 4587 employees working in Anambra State. Given the nature of this study, it will be difficult to cover the entire population of **4587**. A fair representative sample of the population was therefore considered imperative. Accordingly, the sample size for the study was determined by using the Borg & Gall (1973) formular for calculating sample size as follows:

$n= (Zx)^2(e)\ [N]$

$(Zx)^2= 1.960$

e = Error of margin (0.05)

N = Population of Interest =

X = Significance Level

$n = (1.960)^2\ (0.05)\ [\mathbf{4587}]$

$n = (1.960)^2\ (0.05)\ [\mathbf{4587}]$

n = (3.8461) (229.35)

= 882.1030

n = 882

Thus, the sample size is 882 staff of secondary schools academic staff in Anambra State. This study employed a random sampling technique in selecting academic staff based on factors such as time available for data collection, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the study.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

A structured instrument (questionnaire) was designed to reflect the popular five (5) point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided. The questionnaire contained close-ended statements, which were used to get the views and opinions of respondents on employee engagement and performance of catholic schools in Anambra State.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative data, analysis methods. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to present quantitative data in form of tables. Data from questionnaire was coded and entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 21) for analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

TEST OF STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One

Ho_1: Leadership has no significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

Correlations

					LDS	EFF
Spearman's rho	LDS	Correlation Coefficient			1.000	.890**
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.	.000
		N			873	873
		Bootstrap[b]	Bias		.000	.000
			Std. Error		.000	.012
			BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.	.864
				Upper	.	.915
	EFF	Correlation Coefficient			.890**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.
		N			873	873
		Bootstrap[b]	Bias		.000	.000
			Std. Error		.012	.000
			BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.864	.
				Upper	.915	.

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

b. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 873 bootstrap samples

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	LDS - EFF	.06300	.49020	.01659	.03044	.09556	3.797	872	.000

Table 1 indicates the relationship between the independent variable leadership (LDS) and the dependent variable efficiency (EFF). At a 0.05 level of significant, 95% confidence level interval ranging between 0. 915 and 0.095 at the upper case, and also 0.864 and 0.030 at the lower case, with a 2 tailed test of sample distribution showing the critical area in a distribution. The spearman correlation coefficient shows a value of 0.873%, which shows a high correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variable. This further portrays the high goodness of fit of the model

Model 1= $\mathbf{LDS = \beta_o + \beta_1 EFF + \mu}$

Table 1 indicates the difference in mean value (.06300) and standard deviation (.49020) for the extent of relationship that existed between the variables included in the group. The single group variables in model two of the hypotheses are represented by LDS & EFF (Leadership and Efficiency).

However, the paired sample t-test showed that Efficiency level increased significantly when the perceived effective Leadership skill was adopted. A t-test value of Leadership is said to be significantly high when it is above or equal 2 (t-value > 2.00), but when the t-value is less than 2.00 (t-value < 2.00), it is concluded that the Efficiency within the paired sample has no significant relationship. In conclusion to this result, the t-value was obtained at 3.797 which is significant high. The study therefore concluded that there is a significantly high positive relationship between leadership and efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than 0.05, otherwise, reject.

Decision: We reject the null hypothesis, since the p-value is 0.000^{**} which is less than the critical value 0.05, this study reveals that Leadership has significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Two

Ho_2: Communication has no significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

Correlations

			EFF	COM
Spearman's rho	EFF	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.656**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	873	873

	Bootstrap[b]	Bias		.000	-.001
		Std. Error		.000	.034
		BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.	.288
			Upper	.	.422
COM	Correlation Coefficient			.656**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000	.
	N			873	873
	Bootstrap[b]	Bias		-.001	.000
		Std. Error		.034	.000
		BCa 95% Confidence Interval	Lower	.288	.
			Upper	.422	.

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

b. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 873 bootstrap samples

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	COM - EFF	.47537	1.37379	.04650	.38412	.56663	10.224	872	.000

Table 2 indicates the relationship between the independent variable communication (COM) and the dependent variable efficiency (EFF). At a 0.05 level of significant, 95% confidence level interval ranging between 0.422 and 0.566 at the upper case, and also 0.288 and 0.348 at the lower case, with a 2 tailed test of sample distribution showing the critical area in a distribution. The spearman correlation coefficient shows a value of 0.656%, which shows a high correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variable. This further portrays the high goodness of fit of the model

Model 2= $\mathbf{EFF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 COM + \mu}$

Table 2 indicates the difference in mean value (.47537) and standard deviation (1.37379) for the extent of relationship that existed between the variables included in the group. The single group variables in model two of the hypotheses are represented by COM & EFF (Communication and Efficiency).

However, the paired sample t-test showed that efficiency level increased significantly when the perceived effective communication skill was adopted. A t-test value of communication skill is said to be significantly high when it is above or equal 2 (t-value > 2.00), but when the t-value is less than 2.00 (t-value < 2.00), it is concluded that the variable within the paired sample has no significant relationship. In conclusion to this result, the t-value was obtained at 10.224 which is significant high. The study therefore concluded that there is a significantly high positive relationship

between Communication and Efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.
Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than 0.05, otherwise, reject.
Decision: We reject the null hypothesis, since the p-value is 0.000^{**} which is less than the critical value 0.05, this study reveals that Communication has significant positive relationship on the efficiency of catholic secondary schools in Anambra State.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, employee engagement is a crucial factor that can significantly influence the performance of Catholic secondary schools in Anambra State. Research has shown that engaged employees tend to be more productive, innovative, and committed to their work, which can ultimately lead to better student outcomes.
Employee engagement as a larger part of an organization seeks to align the aspiration of employees with organizational performance objectives. The research provided a structural study of employee engagement as an integrated approach to achieving strategic organizational performance of growth and market value. Employee engagement process plans and shapes the profession of an organization, and analyze employee development program as part of the larger human resource system assisting employees improve performance clarify career options and align employee aspiration with organizational performance objectives.
It is obvious today that employees are no longer satisfied with having just a job and the usual fringe benefits. They want a development that expresses their interests, personality, abilities and harmonies with their total situation. Their loyalty to the organization depends upon the degree to which their employees satisfy their wants. Employee engagement is a function of how effective management is able to design and implement good career development programme in the organization. Employees want management to show interest in their career development.
Employee engagement in this regard will increased workers productivity and greater commitment to the organizational goals. Understanding the trend of collective bargaining and making it suit the aim of the organization, is the premise underlying the career development approach to management. Leaders should instill in their subordinates a sense of ownership, direction and belongingness to the organization. All cadres of staff should be involved in communication issues that affect their overall performance, for it will lead to organizational development and growth

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