



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Employee engagement and performance of lecturers in private Universities in Ghana

Enock Katere <sup>1,\*</sup>, Eunice Dorgbetor <sup>2</sup>, Peter Sutinga <sup>1</sup> and Veronica Asare Bediako <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of OD and Entrepreneurship, College for Community and Organization Development, Sunyani, Ghana.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Management, Catholic University College, Fiapre –Sunyani, Ghana.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Registry, St. Joseph's College of Education, Bechem, Ghana.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2022, 15(03), 416–424

Publication history: Received on 30 July 2022; revised on 21 September 2022; accepted on 23 September 2022

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2022.15.3.0893>

### Abstract

The study looked into the employee engagement and performance of lecturers at private universities in Ghana. It used descriptive and correlation research designs. Stratified random sampling was used to select five private universities in Ghana, yielding a sample size of 94 using Taro Yamane formulas. The reliability of the survey instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which provided a reliability value of 0.808, which is greater than the usually accepted criterion of 0.70 and thus regarded appropriate for the study. The Pearson Product Moment Coefficient was used to evaluate the hypothesis. With a coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ) value of 0.710, the findings show that, with the exception of organizational culture and leadership, there is a positive relationship between the independent variables of effective communication, the work environment, compensation and benefits, training and development, and lecturers' performance. The findings suggest that private universities in Ghana should encourage participation by enhancing communication and giving academic staff enough training opportunities in order to raise organizational visibility and ranking.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement; Job Performance; Job Satisfaction, Private Universities; Organization Development

### 1. Introduction

The discussion of employee engagement among experts in human resource management has increased in the last decade. According to Lee [1], this concept is a novel human resource strategy that relates to the manager's demand for solutions to employee issues and concerns about motivation and performance at work. It is argued that through understanding efficient procedures of employee engagement, organizations can manage uncertain and chaotic industrial situations. Disengaged personnel may display robotic behavior, lethargy, and a lack of effort in their work, which can be harmful to the success of the organization [2]. Additionally, performance, productivity, and customer service may be impacted by decreased employee engagement levels. However, a large portion of the literature on employee engagement comes from practitioner publications and consulting organizations. Academic research on employee engagement is seriously lacking [3]. More research is needed to back up the concept because it is still relatively new to academic circles.

Major stakeholders in Ghanaian universities recently started to recognize the issue of employee engagement as a serious national concern [4]. It has been reported that the management of Ghanaian universities, both private and public, appears to be having difficulties retaining their employees, particularly academic staff. Poor working environment caused by insufficient or absent teaching and research facilities, poor pay, unfavorable policies like high taxation, and poor job security with non-pensionable incomes all contributes to this dilemma [4]. These issues might have contributed to the behavioral attitudes of the bureaucratic systems, a decline in employee engagement, a decline in productivity,

\* Corresponding author: Enock Katere

Department of OD and Entrepreneurship, College for Community and Organisation Development, Sunyani, Ghana.

and pervasive lecturer discontent [5]. If lecturers perceive that university administrators sincerely care about their welfare, they are more likely to increase their participation and fulfill their contractual obligations to the institutions.

According to Ayers [6], employee disengagement is like a disease that has the potential to progressively kill an organization. In a study on employee engagement in Nigerian universities, Teferra and Knight [7], found that over 65% of the necessary teaching staff from different institutions in Nigeria abandoned their jobs and moved to western countries where they could find steady employment and competitive pay. Therefore, staff disengagement threatens lecturer retention, productivity, and satisfaction at universities. Managers at universities are said to be expected to create an engaging workplace by showing interest in and confidence in their team, operating with honesty, acting as a trusted mentor, and monitoring employee performance [2].

As was already noted, it appears that there is no special empirical research on the factors that influence the engagement of lecturers in tertiary education in Ghana, and achieve the maximum degree of performance from them. This poses a problem to tertiary institution administrators in terms of figuring out the best ways to foster commitment, tenacity, and loyalty in order to preserve standards of education and learning. This study will contribute to filling a vacuum in the body of knowledge on human resource studies in Ghanaian universities by focusing on employee engagement and the performance of lecturers in selected private universities in Ghana. Additionally, it will significantly advance our understanding of employee engagement, add to the body of knowledge on this subject, and help us harness lecturers' performance through effective employee engagement.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

The Social Exchange Theory, first suggested by George Homans in 1958, serves as the framework for this research. It explains why people chose to work for an organization. According to the theory, obligations that must be honored by both parties are generated by interactions between parties seeking mutual reliance. According to the social exchange theory, as long as parties follow specified exchange-related principles, relationships grow over time into ones marked by trust, loyalty, and commitment on both sides. These reciprocal norms of exchange often involve laws of reciprocity or repayment, whereby one party's activities elicit a response or action from the other side [8]. This viewpoint is consistent with Milledzi [4] depiction of engagement as a two-way connection between employer and employee.

### 2.2. Empirical Research

Employee engagement is a vague concept without a standardized definition [9]. But relevant research typically makes reference to two well-known definitions. Employee engagement, according to Kahn [10], is the process of integrating one's self into one's work function. People who are involved in their work express themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally as they complete their tasks. On the other hand, employee engagement is defined by Schaufeli [11] as "a good, satisfying state of mind linked with work that is characterized by energy, commitment, and immersion." In other words, according to Schaufeli [11], the workplace environment influences employee engagement. Therefore, a positive, healthy work environment may promote engagement, whereas a negative, toxic work environment may deter it. In recent publications, efforts have been made to define employee engagement by expanding on the work of Kahn [10] and Schaufeli [11]. According to Habraken [12], employee engagement is "the state of emotional and intellectual participation that inspires people to produce their best work." All of the definitions make it clear that employee engagement is a conscious effort to behave positively while at work in order to complete tasks and organizational goals and, most importantly, to feel personally fulfilled. To do a task in a way that is results-driven, it necessitates a worker's complete focus.

The level of job engagement in both private and public institutions has been attributed to a variety of factors [13]. Suharti and Suliyanto [13] cite organizational culture as one of the single most significant elements affecting employees' performance. It is considered that a friendly, open work environment helps create loyalty and trust among employees, igniting their interest in their line of work and fostering a sense of devotion to the organization. Owners, managers, and employees are all a part of the organization, and a strong organizational culture affects and ties them to act in ways that fit their personal and collective interests with the organization's aims [13]. The culture also promotes the development of interpersonal relationships as well as organizational standards, goals, attitudes, and values among organizational members [13].

Again, Popli and Rizvi [14] discovered that there was a strong association between the organizational managers' leadership styles and the measures of implementation effectiveness for employee engagement in their research on the

determinants of employee engagement. They point out that leaders' ability to effectively convey organisation strategies to their teams affects employee engagement. Employee comprehension of how to accomplish the overall organizational goals grows when the appropriate leadership is demonstrated in organizations.

Additionally, according to Azmy [15], organizations need to communicate well in order to increase organizational internalization and employee involvement in accomplishing work goals. Promoting the organization's brand, products, and public image is the responsibility of corporate communications, a subset of public relations. It is also argued that internal communications within an organization play a significant role in team building, commitment, and task execution [15]. Employees are more willing to put in long hours and make the best contributions to a business when it develops a positive reputation.

In addition Azmy [15], assert that a positive work environment encouraged people to take an active role in accomplishing goals and upholding organizational standards in the workplace. The organization may aid in creating a healthy work environment through strong leadership and consistent worker performance. According to some, attaining an organization's objectives improves the working environment for both the employees and the organization as a whole [16].

Zeb et al. [17] discovered that benefits and compensations have a major impact on how well people complete work-activities. They point out that combining these two elements is necessary to keep workers motivated and boost productivity. Each labor result needs to be evaluated and quantified in terms of units of monetary worth in order to replace the costs with productivity and profit for the organization.

Additionally, according to Jain and Khurana [18], training and development increased employee participation in upholding organizational standards. Osborne and Hammoud [16] assert that training offers the precise knowledge and abilities that the organization needs in order to respond to changing market trends. Creating human resources that are prepared from the perspectives of competence, management, and conduct is frequently the goal of training and development programs.

Furthermore, Tepayakul and Rinthaisong [19] discovered that lecturer performance is directly related to how well they believe their needs are addressed at work. They argued that if lecturers are dissatisfied with their current positions, they are said to look for new ones. In desperate situations, some lecturers may respond by stifling the growth of universities, departments, and faculties, and in extreme cases, by committing fraud. When a substantial number of lecturers are unsatisfied with their jobs, they can form a labor union or quit all at once [19]. Even though academic research suggests that extreme responses to high levels of dissatisfaction are uncommon, institutions may suffer large costs as a result of even minor levels of frustration. Most importantly, disgruntled lecturers rarely contribute novel ideas. On the other hand, if university lecturers are satisfied, they will be inspired to go above and beyond to help others.

The findings of this study will provide data from numerous dimensions used to assess staff engagement at Ghanaian private universities. The following are the hypotheses:

- H1 = the culture of private universities has a positive effect on the performance of lecturers,
- H2 = the leadership style of private universities has a positive effect on the performance of lecturers,
- H3 = effective communication has a positive effect on the performance of lecturers,
- H4 = the job environment has a significant effect on the performance of lecturers,
- H5 = compensation and benefits have a significant effect on the performance of lecturers,
- H5 = training and development have a significant effect on the performance of lecturers.

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### 3. Material and methods

#### 3.1. Study design

The research method used in the study was descriptive-explanatory, allowing for in-depth description and analysis of the variables under inquiry, characterizing and describing their properties, and evaluating and describing their relationships without manipulation [20]. Additionally, the design allowed for the creation of generalizations using both inductive and deductive reasoning.

### 3.2. The Sample and Population

The study's participants were lecturers drawn at random from five Ghanaian private universities. The study chose participants from a pool of 165 professors using a simple random sampling technique. According to Krejcie and Morgan [21] size decision rules, the population sample size (P) is 165 (d) 94. 94 lecturers were thus chosen at random to participate in the study.

### 3.3. Data Collection Method

A structured survey with 52 items was used to collect the data for this investigation. In order to evaluate the validity and dependability of the instruments, ten questionnaires were given to pilot project participants. Of those, eight were returned. The results of the pilot testing were used to specify the question structure, language, order, meaning, task difficulty, and responder interest and focus. This assisted in determining the questionnaire's strengths and flaws. Before administering the final questionnaire, all of the problems brought up by the pre-test were resolved. It took over a week to collect the questionnaires from the respondents. A total of 94 questionnaires were distributed, and 94 questionnaires were returned.

### 3.4. Statistical Analysis Methods

After the survey data is gathered, a number of procedures are needed to analyze the data and produce useful information. Making sure the statistics are accurate is part of this. Using Cronbach Alpha, the validity of the pre-test data was evaluated. According to the Cronbach Alpha reliability study, the internal consistency is more consistently dependable the closer the Alpha is to Cronbach's 1.0. [22]. The Cronbach Standards comprise the following:

- Ratings of reliability of 0.6 or below are regarded as bad.
- A dependability of roughly 0.7 is considered adequate.
- A good reliability value is one that is more than 0.8.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Reliability Statistics

**Table 1** Reliability Statistics for all Variables

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
0.837	36

Source, SPSS version 21

Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's alpha on the test of measurement reliability for all variables was 0.837, exceeding the generally accepted threshold of 0.70. Therefore, the measurement is accurate. Cronbach alphas for removing items from the questionnaire ranged from 0.790 to 0.826. [23]. Therefore, it follows that there is no problem with questionnaire item deletion.

### 4.2. Correlation Analysis

The research study finds out the Pearson correlation between lecturers' performance and organizational culture, leadership, communication, job environment, compensation, and training and development.

**Table 2** Correlation Matrix

		<b>Performance</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Compensations</b>	<b>Training</b>
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.617**	0.507**	0.833**	0.610**	0.765**	0.484**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Culture	Pearson Correlation	0.617**	1	0.396**	0.583**	0.832**	0.613**	0.368**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.507**	0.396**	1	0.545**	0.372**	0.644**	0.582**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Communication	Pearson Correlation	0.833**	0.583**	0.545**	1	0.474**	0.917**	0.446**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Environment	Pearson Correlation	0.610**	0.832**	0.372**	0.474**	1	0.549**	0.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.091
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Compensations	Pearson Correlation	0.765**	0.613**	0.644**	0.917**	0.549**	1	0.504**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
Training	Pearson Correlation	0.484**	0.368**	0.582**	0.446**	0.175	0.504**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.000	
	N	94	94	94	94	94	94	94

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

Table 2 demonstrates the correlation matrix of performance of lecturers, organization culture, good leadership, effective communication, good job environment, compensation and benefits, and training and development. The analysis shows that it is positively significant and a strong correlation exists between these variables at a 0.01 level.

**4.3. Regression Analysis**

The research study uses multiple regression analysis in order to analyze the impact of independent variables on the dependent variables. The multiple regression model is as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where;

Y is Performance of Lecturers (dependent variable)

α is constant

X is another factor affecting Performance

β is the regression coefficient that may positively or negatively affect dependent and independent variables.

Performance of lecturers (Dependent Variable) = α + β1 organisational culture + β2 good leadership + β3 effective communication + β4 job Environment + β4 compensation and benefits + β4 training and development + ε..... (2)

**Table 3 ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.234	6	2.206	57.697	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	3.326	87	0.038		
	Total	16.560	93			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of lecturers; b. Predictors: (Constant), good leadership, effective communication, job environment, compensation and benefits and training and development

In table 3, the F value is 57.697 and is significant because the significance level is = 0.000 which is less than  $P \leq 0.05$ . This implies that the overall regression model is statistically significant, valid, and fit. The valid regression model implies that all independent variables are explaining that there is a positive and significant relationship with the dependent variable.

**Table 4 Model Summary**

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.894 <sup>a</sup>	0.785	0.19552

Predictors: (Constant), Training, Environment, Communication, Leadership, Culture, Compensations<sup>a</sup>

The result in Table 4 indicates the regression coefficient „R“ = 0.894 or 89.4% relationship exists between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The coefficient of determination „R<sup>2</sup>“ = 0.799 which show that 79.9% of the variation in the performance of lecturers is explained by training, job environment, leadership, communication, culture, and compensations.

**4.4. Correlation Coefficient**

Table 5 shows the correlation coefficient for the variables under consideration.

In Table 5, the regression coefficient for organizational culture (1) = -0.218 means that, if all other variables are held constant, every 1% increase in organizational culture reduces lecturer performance by -21.8 %. With a significance level of 0.032, the T value is -2.180. There is enough data to indicate that organizational culture has little to no impact on the performance of lecturers in Ghana's private universities because the significance level is less than P.05, which suggests that the alternative hypothesis is not supported.

The regression coefficient for leadership is (2) = -0.023 or -2.3 percent, which means that a one percent increase in leadership results in a -2.3 percent decrease in lecturer performance when all other parameters are held constant. The T value is -0.336 and is statistically significant at the 0.738 level, which is less than P.05. It implies that the alternative

hypothesis is not supported and that leadership has no discernible effect on the performance of lecturers in Ghanaian private universities.

**Table 5 Correlation coefficient for the study variables**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-0.143	0.147		-0.977	0.331		
	Culture	-0.216	0.099	-0.218	-2.180	0.032	0.231	4.322
	Leadership	-0.021	0.064	-0.023	-0.336	0.738	0.474	2.109
	Environment	0.476	0.090	0.504	5.273	0.000	0.253	3.954
	Compensations	0.294	0.111	0.377	2.661	0.009	0.115	8.678
	Communication	0.885	0.115	0.969	7.721	0.000	0.146	6.827
	Training	0.224	0.059	0.246	3.780	0.000	0.545	1.835

Dependent Variable: Performance of lecturers

The regression coefficient for the employees' work environment (3) = 0.504 or 50.4 percent, indicating that a 1% change in working conditions results in a 50.4 percent improvement in lecturers' performance provided all other parameters remain constant. The T value is 5.273 with a 0.000 significance level, indicating that the alternative hypothesis is confirmed: The workplace atmosphere has a substantial positive impact on employee performance.

The regression coefficient for staff remuneration and benefits is (4) = 0.377 or 37.7 percent, implying that a 1% increase in lecturers' compensation and benefits will result in a 37.7 percent improvement in performance provided all other parameters remain constant. The T value is 2.661, with a significance level of 0.009. Thus, the alternative hypothesis, that compensation and benefits have a considerable beneficial effect on lecturers' performance, is supported.

Effective communication has a regression coefficient of (5) = 0.969, or 96.9%, implying that a 1% improvement in effective communication will result in a 96.9% rise in lecturers' performance provided all other factors remain constant. The T value is 7.721, which is statistically significant at 0.000. So, once again, the alternative hypothesis is correct: excellent communication has a considerable favorable effect on lecturers' performance in private universities.

The regression coefficient for training and development (6) = 0.246 or 24.9 percent, implying that a 1% improvement in training and development will boost lecturers' performance by 24.6 percent provided all other variables remain constant. At 0.0000, the T value of 3.780 is substantial. Again, this supports the alternate hypothesis that training & development improves lecturers' performance.

Table 5 also includes multicollinearity statistics. A tolerance value less than 0.20 or 0.10 indicates a multicollinearity problem. Tolerance values for all independent variables in table 5 are 0.231, 0.474, 0.253, 0.115, 0.146, and 0.545, showing an excellent to moderate level of tolerance. The Variance Inflation Factor is the reciprocal of the tolerance (VIF). A VIF of 5 or 10 or greater indicates a multicollinearity concern. Table 5 shows the VIF values for the independent variables as 4.322, 2.109, 3.954, 8.678, 6.827, and 1.835. These variables have a high VIF level and no difficulties with multicollinearity.

## 5. Discussions

This study investigate employee engagement and the performance of lecturers in private universities in Ghana in relation to organizational culture, leadership, communication, compensation and training and development. The research study's hypotheses were investigated with the aid of SPSS version 21.0. The outcomes of this study do not support hypotheses 1 and 2. The results of this study concur with those of Yusuf [23], who found that organizational culture had no significant relationship on how committed a lecturer was to his/her work. The same research found that lecturers' performance in tertiary institutions was not significantly impacted by organisational leadership. The study's findings all lend support to hypotheses three, four, five, and six.

In his study on the paradox of teamwork and job satisfaction, Rabey [24] discovered that compensation is one of the single most important factors that supported greater productivity in tertiary educational institutions. The overall regression value of culture, leadership, communication, work environment, salary, and training was 0.894, showing an impact of independent variables on lecturers' performance in Ghanaian private universities of 89.4 percent. The regression coefficient R is 0.894, indicating an 89.4 % correlation between the independent and dependent variables, while the coefficient of determination R<sup>2</sup> is 0.799, suggesting that the independent factors explain 79.9 percent of the variation in the dependent variable. The most significant independent variable was revealed to be effective communication, with a substantial relationship to the dependent variable of Lecturer performance. Job satisfaction, productivity, and engagement are all boosted by effective communication. It also encourages lecturers' dedication and loyalty to private university administration. Ineffective communication can cause misunderstandings, undermine trust, and foster wrath and hostility. Ineffective communication can be caused by a poorly aligned strategy, a failure to execute the strategy, the use of an incorrect communication medium, bad timing, or even little things like word choice or tone of voice.

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## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that, with the exception of organizational culture and leadership, there is a strong and positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables, and that effective communication, the job environment, compensation and benefits, and training and development all have a significant positive effect on lecturers' performance. In order to identify important problems that must be resolved to increase the effectiveness and productivity of lecturers, the study recommends that administrators of private universities implement a job engagement appraisal system that will periodically evaluate the extent to which lecturers are engaged and satisfied with the terms and conditions of their jobs.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Acknowledgments*

The authors would like to thank all the lecturers (of private universities in Ghana) who spent valuable time responding to the questionnaires of this study.

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors agree that there is no conflict of interest.

### *Statement of ethical approval*

The present research work does not contain any studies performed on animals/humans subjects by any of the authors.

### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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