EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

by

Rhonda Isler Dent

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

[Doctor of Philosophy]

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APPROVED BY:

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ABSTRACT

Public Administrators recognize Employee Engagement (EE) as a significant component in fostering effective work environments in public sector organizations. EE is a recently established concept on Public Administration's agenda and the mantra for today's workplace, leading organizations to recognize the vested interest in measuring, observing, and increasing employee performance. Evidence suggests EE is vital to an organization's thriving in a competitive global market. The research study evaluated and measured the influences that affect EE in public-sector organizations. A quantitative method using the quasi-experimental design was used to answer the research question and address the corresponding hypotheses. The researcher used the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), an annual organizational climate survey administered by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), to gauge the perceptions of government employees regarding their work experiences. The public release data file was imported into SPSS software (version 29) to analyze and process the data. Standard multiple linear regression was used to evaluate the relationships between the variables. The researcher used the three dimensions of Byrne's engagement model to operationalize variables into measurable factors. Findings showed a statistically significant and positive relationship between the predictive and outcome variables: Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation influencing Employee Engagement. The independent variables explained a significant portion of the variance influencing Employee Engagement in public sector organizations.

 Key Words: employee engagement, disengagement, extrinsic motivation, senior leadership, professional development and growth, work-life programs, intrinsic motivation

Dedication

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this dissertation manuscript to my mother, Ethel

Belle, who showed me by example that hard work and dedication will take you to heights you

never imagined.

To my husband, Tim, who believed in me through this journey and sacrificed our time together

with nothing but patience, understanding, and love.

Last but not least, this manuscript dissertation is dedicated to all government employees, former

coworkers, supervisors, and senior leaders in public sector organizations who aspire to transform

the workforce into positive and engaged environments that serve the public effectively.

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Thank you to my family and friends for being there throughout this process. To those who asked, yes, it was worth it. My Mom is Proud.

I also want to acknowledge and thank my chair, Dr. Tory Weaver. Your guidance, knowledge, and insight throughout this process are much appreciated. I do not believe in coincidences. I believe God brought us together for such a time as this. Not only did you see me through this journey, but you also inspired and encouraged me. Thank you for your guidance and the fellowship.

I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Marcia Bennett, for all the insight and excellent feedback. Without such an incredible committee, this would not have been possible. I am grateful.

Romans 11:36 ~ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the Glory forever.

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List of Abbreviations

American Public Administration (APA)   Job Demands Resource (JD-R)

Artificial Intelligence (AI)   Job Demands Resource Theory (JDRT)

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)   Journal Storage (JSTOR)

Coronavirus Disease (COVID)   Merit System Protection Board (MSPB)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)   National Capitol Region (NCR)

Dependent Variables (DV)   National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Digital Era Governance (DEG)   New Personnel Management (NPM)

Electronic Government (E-Government)   Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP)

Emotional Intelligence (EI)   Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Employee Engagement (EE)   Organizational Excellence (OE)

Extrinsic Motivation (EM)   President's Management Agenda (PMA)

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)   Psychology Information (PsycINFO)

Fiscal Year (FY)   Public Administration (PA)

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)   Public Service Motivation (PSM)

Government Accountability Office (GAO)   Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Human Resources (HR)   Senior Leadership (SL)

Human Research Development (HRD)   Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Independent Variables (IV)   Transformational Leadership (TL)

Information Communication Technology (ICT)   Utecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

Information Technology (IT)   Willis Towers Watson (WTW)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)   Work-life Programs (WLPs)

Intrinsic Motivation (IM)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Administrative reform has been a constant concern of American Public Administration (APA) (Kim, 2021). These reforms are being adopted worldwide to increase EE and to advance positive, sustainable organizational development (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019). The accumulated evidence available suggests that increased levels of engagement are related to many beneficial results in organizations, such as increased performance, efficiencies, reduced retention rates, absenteeism, and safety that benefit the health and well-being of organizations and employees (Bailey, 2022; MacLeod & Clarke, 2011; Rayton et al., 2012). Many organizations strive to become sustainable in today's workforce, which is vital in their ability to thrive in an unpredictable and ever-changing global market (Di Fabio, 2017). Healthy administrations across industries focus on Employee Engagement (EE) to achieve a competitive advantage by fostering a more engaged workplace that promotes employee well-being, performance, and talent management opportunities. Therefore, they create an open culture characterized by creativity and innovation and uphold an organizational climate supporting positive relationships and effective leadership styles that increase engagement (Di Fabio, 2017).

Background

In the last several decades, organizational sustainability has received much interest from practitioners and academics (Florea et al., 2013; Khusanova et al., 2021; Spreitzer et al., 2012). Organizations must sense the urgency of engagement in organizations, especially in the public sector, to measure drivers and factors that can increase engagement levels (Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020). EE has risen as one of the main concepts of public administration's agenda and is a primary interest in public work sectors that incorporate relevance, values, social equity, quality,

and change to help shape the political agenda and execute good governance. Public administration is often associated with the implementation of solutions and government policies. According to Cropf (2015), public administration consists of managerial and political processes in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches for public policy creation, assessment, and implementation by public organizations. The federal bureaucracies deliver the services and set national policies, which include administration, regulation, and implementation of the laws set by the national government.

Max Weber claimed that an ideal bureaucracy has well-defined tasks and hierarchy, explicit rules and regulations, separation of work and ownership, and impersonality (Carr et al. 2018). Top-down bureaucracies were admired decades ago, but the current digital world requires an organizational setting that can adapt to everyday market changes without going through numerous layers for a decision to be made. Bureaucracies are often criticized for inflexibility, budget-maximizing wastefulness, and excessive rules and procedures. While technological advances may transform public sector organizations' operations, they can strengthen the bureaucracy's core purpose (Newman et al., 2022). Bureaucracies are institutions that are hierarchical and exist to formulate, enact, and enforce public policy efficiently and equitably in a way that provides structure and capability.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president of the United States, is known as the father of Public Administration. Wilson sought to move Public Administration's concerns a step further by investigating the organization and the procedures or systems of public sector organizations to determine what the government can properly and successfully do and how it can do these things with effectiveness and with the least number of resources (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017). Public Administration has profound implications for the effectiveness and efficiency of

government (Kettl, 2015). Therefore, there is considerable discussion on new assumptions for improving quality and performance in organizations and the need to transform how organizations are administered. In organizational contexts, a new awareness of the value of developing early interventions and new approaches from a primary preventive perspective to adopt healthy work environments is needed (Di Fabio, 2017).

Public Administration is the planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling of government operations to ensure this transformation occurs effectively and efficiently (Thapa, 2020). According to Wilson (1887), public administration is the detailed and systematic application of the law in the execution of the policies and activities of government with a high level of competency, transparency, and neutrality, and it is called government in action. Public administration covers the three branches of government and their interrelationships.

The United States consists of three separate branches, The Judicial, Executive, and Legislative Branches, each of which has its authority and responsibilities to ensure the effectiveness of the government and that American citizens' rights remain protected. Although these branches are separate, they are equal and have special responsibilities regarding laws. The Legislative Branch (Congress) makes the laws, the Executive Branch implements the laws, and the Judicial Branch interprets the law according to the Constitution (Tushnet, 2021). The Executive branch comprises the President, who is responsible for the execution and enforcement of the rules created by Congress and can veto laws created or proposed by the legislative branch. The President has the power to sign the legislation into law or veto bills presented by Congress, although Congress can override a veto with a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate. The Judicial branch can strike down laws created by the legislation and approved by the president.

They each have unique responsibilities regarding laws and principles governing the United States of America. Having these three branches prevents the concentration of power in one branch.

When the three branches of government work together to create laws, the bureaucracy is responsible for administering the law. Bureaucratic organizations are the agencies that, while separate from the formal three branches of government, are responsible for planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling, and ensuring policies are enacted. Bryson and George (2020) state that Public Administration involves government policy implementation and encompasses all government operations and services, including management. Public Administrative agencies (the federal bureaucracies) are informally called the fourth branch of government because they exercise substantial power derived from the bureaucracy's role in implementing and interpreting laws and its ability to develop and enforce regulations.

The Partnership for Public Service Annual Report (2018) states that decades of persistent neglect and antiquated systems have left the federal government inefficient when meeting the demands of today's interconnected, technology-driven world. Bureaucratic settings within an organization involve individuals with clearly defined roles or tasks and a hierarchy of authority with rigid structures, career pathways, and long-established running methods; with this, the government has faced a more significant challenge than most sectors. Hiring and training a workforce adaptable to these changes are imperative, and building an atmosphere of engagement will ease the process of transformation, recruiting, and retaining the best and brightest to usher in these revolutionary changes.

Organizational leaders must be abreast of emerging technologies and their potential implications for the federal workforce. The public sector's purpose is to provide essential goods and services to the general public and ensure the well-being of society. The public sector

provides essential programs, services, and goods to the general public, including civic life promotion, guardianship of the communities, and providing public goods requirements. As cited by Tannuri and Perez-Nebra (2018), Farah (2000) points out that instability and discontinuity in public administration, which is widespread, negatively impact social policies such as well-being and welfare, poverty reduction, social security, justice, unemployment insurance, living conditions, crimes, and animal rights to name a few.

Effective Administration requires revisiting leadership theories and styles to appropriately deliver services to the public by engaging public servants, providing the skills to use technological advancements, and bringing in the best and brightest talent to apply these approaches. Further, the discussion on the complaints due to poor services rendered by government agencies or departments can expose the probable loopholes in the Administration and develop appropriate strategies to fix the problems. The issues experienced are distinctive and raise the need for implementing a different manner in governance to increase the public perspective of government and effectively attract, retain, and recruit public sector employees.

New Personnel Management (NPM) is the implementation of management ideas from the private sector into public services and has transformed how administrations work (Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020). All over the world, public organizations have adopted the two central NPM goals: effectiveness and efficiency of outputs. Citizens should be perceived as external customers and entitled to quality services and programs, one of PA's core values and approaches (Parry, 2002). Researchers have found that engaging employees is crucial to executing these policies and performances effectively and efficiently and that the outputs are results-driven.

Implementing engagement initiatives ensures that public organizations efficiently and effectively administer community programs and services to society. Since EE is characterized by

quality, effectiveness, efficiency, a can-do spirit, focus on solutions, going above and beyond, exceeding expectations, contributing to the team, trustworthiness, adaptability, passion for lifelong learning and development, and a commitment to meet the needs and concerns of American citizens (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2013). These attributes contribute to both the speed and quality of services and programs to promote the common good of society. According to Fernandez & Moldogaziev (2013), the last several decades have witnessed the spread of EE practices and evidence suggesting that empowering employees can improve job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovativeness, performance, and retention throughout organizations.

Employee Engagement (EE) is critical within governmental agencies, where employees influence the well-being and safety of the public in a myriad of ways, such as conducting advanced scientific research, verifying and administering benefits, and ensuring the security of our airports and national borders, protecting the public, affordable healthcare, preserve the economy and reducing poverty, to name a few (Simpson, 2016). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) posit that the public sector has attempted to transform the bureaucracy model in response to pressures from public demands to restructure programs and services that are more efficient and more accountable.

What drives these changes is the significant differences in the initial concepts, the changing global economy, technological advancements, and a new generation of workers taking over the workforce with different ideologies and workplace requirements from past generations (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Because of the many revolutionary changes in how the government operates in the 21st century, engaging employees plays a significant factor in competitiveness, sustainability, and regaining public trust.

Governmental agencies must be led by highly skilled, technically competent, and highly engaged employees who undertake the duties and responsibilities competently and responsibly. Public sector employees are called public servants or civil servants, who perform the duties to execute government responsibilities. The values the public service upholds and the duties assigned to public servants are crucial in ensuring that the nation accomplishes its goals and reaches sustainable development. Engagement in public organizations is necessary to give quality service to the public.

Public sector organizations need to run effective, efficient, viable programs and services to meet the country's needs and execute policies for the common good of the public. Public Administration is essential because it formulates governmental policies, ensures citizens' welfare, provides goods and services, and discovers solutions to public issues. To carry out these crucial responsibilities, organizations must motivate employees to provide the highest performance and achieve customer-oriented programs and services that increase societal value, quality, and equity. EE plays a significant role in the organization's outcomes. The success of organizations depends upon the motivation of employees; they will be motivated to come to work daily and be inspired to bring positive change to communities worldwide (Burnett & Lisk, 2019).

As communities and political systems develop and become more complex, public workers will face new difficulties. To effectively serve the public interest, public employees must learn new skills and adapt to new situations presented by these difficulties. Critical challenges public servants are expected to encounter include the increasing speed of technology advancements, which creates both possibilities and problems for government officials. Digital technology has irreversibly changed organizations.

Digitalization shapes organizations, work environments, and processes, creating new challenges. In the face of these challenges, leaders are responsible for a range of responsibilities, including but not limited to creating positive digital cultures, motivating employees to embrace transformation and upskilling, and attracting digital experts, among other roles (Haddud & McAllen, 2018). Leadership also influences the direction and outcomes of technology implementation and digital transformation. Trenerry et al. (2021) add that if employees perceive that a particular technology or system will be helpful in their work, increase their performance, and is easy to learn and use, they are more likely to accept it. Engaged employees are linked to increased support for digital transformation (Blanka et al., 2022). Transformation to digital processes provides effectiveness and efficiencies, as outlined in Public Administration's agenda, and is imperative for organizations to remain competitive and survive in the 21st century.

Organizations must ensure data privacy, security, and ethical use while navigating the complexities of new sustainable technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), which, according to Alshahrani et al. (2022), has transformative potential for public sector organizations through enabling increased performance, productivity and novel ways to deliver public service products and services. Gasparovich et al. (2021) suggest that digital transformation is the most effective way to increase the efficiency of organizations. Public managers must cultivate a digital mindset and harness newer, sophisticated technology to enhance service delivery, simplify business processes, and increase public engagement. To maintain and recruit employees to sustain these constant changes, public administration must focus on public servants and engage employees in all aspects of the organization to carry out their formidable missions.

Public servants today must be skilled in data analysis, data management, and digital tools to keep up with the demands of an ever-increasing competitive market. Employees will be essential in using data to enhance decision-making, create evidence-based policies, and make data-driven decisions to boost service quality. Nonetheless, they will also be confronted with proper implementation of the latest advancements and must do this with budgetary restraints and economic instability. Because of budget constraints, they must get creative in providing essential public services, setting spending priorities, and making responsible economic choices. While also balancing economic development and other societal and environmental concerns.

 As organizations become more complex, the need to have a committed, loyal, adaptable, and engaged workforce during this transformation is imperative. Retaining and recruiting a skilled workforce that can transform and be engaged at the levels needed to meet these complex changes tied to the public administration agenda is also essential. Digitalization of organizations significantly improves the opportunities for attraction and content of the work for many hard-to-recruit employees, such as Millennials and Gen Zs. The younger workforce is looking for processes that free them from the need to perform many long and grueling routines and monotonous functions (Gasparovich et al., 2021).

According to Shuck and Wollard (2010), the advantages of EE have been examined in private and public organizations, and it was found that employees are more innovative and willing to accept changes the more they are invested and engaged in the organization's goals and vision. Engaged employees are believed to perform at higher levels, be more productive and profitable, practice safety, be healthier, are less likely to resign, abuse sick leave, and are more adaptable to changes and discretionary efforts (Sundaray, 2011). MacLeod and Clarke (2009) posited that engaging the workforce is vital in increasing performance, innovation, and

acceptance of technological advancement and advancing the well-being of the workforce and the organization.

In the 21st century, workplaces are becoming more age, culture, ethnic, and socio-economically diverse, creating various cultural demands. Employees at all levels must adapt to a more diverse population and communities by learning about many subgroups. They must understand several cultures to provide services and policies to a diverse population. Understanding diversity requires understanding the participants' unique values, perspectives, and experiences and being able to create customized programs to meet their needs. The public sector needs a highly proficient, engaged, and motivated workforce of leaders and employees committed to public sector goals, objectives, and values to give them the advantages needed to catapult them above the rest.

An engaged workforce will enhance these experiences and bring efficiency and effectiveness to programs and services, which is one of the main goals of sustainable public management. Boyd and Martin (2022) posit that sustainable management is critical across public sector organizations because its practice is tied to some of the world's most pressing environmental and social problems. Boyd and Martin (2022) suggest that engagement is imperative in the public sector due to its global scale and scope, the tangible impacts that public service delivery can make in resource efficiency and effectiveness, and in directly tackling crucial developmental goals.

According to Ras et al. (2017), how organizations operate is becoming overwhelmingly complex and will become more challenging as globalization increases in the world economy, data-driven decision-making, internationalism, advanced technology, and digital applications in the workforce become the norm in work sectors. The globalization of markets is accelerating the

dissemination of technology and the pace of innovation. Because of technological advancements, new jobs are developing, and others are being replaced. Public administration experts acknowledged that when employees are engaged, they are motivated to improve public service deliverables during the transition of technological advancements regardless of policy limitations, the lack of investment growth, and the concept of doing more with less (Ancarani et al., 2018; Burke & El-Kot, 2010).

Baltzley (2016) states that successful organizations have skilled employees who focus on improving an engaged workforce's benefits. Larkin (2009) adds that Employee Engagement (EE) is an umbrella concept because employees are satisfied in their jobs and demonstrate their satisfaction by performing at higher levels, increasing productivity and commitment to organizational goals, increasing viability, trust, and confidence in the government. According to Harter and Mann (2017), organizations with higher engagement levels are more successful and double their ability to thrive in this economy than those with woefully disengaged employees. According to MacLeod and Clarke, 2009, engaged employees have a personal connection to their positions and the organization and go far beyond the call of duty to ensure that the goals and objectives of the organization are successful.

Engaged employees are crucial to organizational excellence, innovation, and competition in all industries in today's job market (Mann & Harter, 2016; Ruck et al., 2017). Al Shobakib et al. (2017) define organizational excellence as a concept that goes beyond meeting expectations but encompasses outstanding performance and an ongoing commitment to improving, innovating, and achieving the highest standards in organizations. Ference (2009) concluded that engaged employees work passionately and enthusiastically to perform their jobs. Employees who are enthusiastic about their work are likelier to feel fulfilled and show loyalty to their employer.

According to a 2020 Gallup report, engaged, enthusiastic, energetic, and cheerful employees feel better about their work and workplace and have better physical health (Hickman & Robison, 2020). Engaged workers are likelier to practice preventative health measures and have a more balanced lifestyle than their less involved or disengaged counterparts. Mani (2011) adds that engaged employees are enthusiastic and committed and care about the organization's ability to thrive, grow, and produce high-quality products.

Employee Engagement (EE) is used in management theories. However, its impact and benefits to public sector organizations have not been widely researched. Since EE consists of characteristics such as loyalty, commitment, and devotion (Schaufeli et al., 2009), one of the main goals is to steer public service employees' responsibilities and dedication toward the state and the citizens. In organizations, engagement stems from a sense of purpose, meaningful work, availability, and psychological safety (Kahn, 1990). Public sector employees are called to a higher purpose that involves a duty to something larger than themselves; they must act with the nation's interests and need to put forth an honest effort to serve rather than do their jobs (Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2020), and strive to meet the demands of taxpayer citizens.

Employee engagement is crucial in defining employees' commitment and connection toward their jobs, colleagues, and organization. It is pivotal in achieving organizational success, as engaged staff are motivated, creative, content, committed to the organization, and conscientious when performing their duties. In return, this can profoundly impact business performance. Allen et al. (2010) acknowledged that the costs of recruiting and training new employees often exceed 100% of the yearly salary to fill the position and that the indirect costs, work disruptions, and losses of organizational history and experienced employees that leave organizations are significant challenges that specify the importance of retention. Kim (2012)

argued that the high cost of losing talented employees reinforces the need for 21st-century organizations to identify and implement practices that support employee retention.

Another critical benefit of Employee Engagement (EE) is enhanced performance. Engaged employees are more proactive, initiative-driven, and willing to go beyond the call of duty. They are also more focused, dedicated, and enthusiastic about their work, resulting in higher performance and productivity. In addition, engaged employees understand their role in the business strategy, have strong connections, are involved, are intentional about learning new processes, new technology, and digital applications, and are adaptable to change management and process improvements (Jha & Kumar, 2016).

Bakker (2017) adds that because of their positive mindset, engaged employees often perform excellently, typically outperforming their less engaged colleagues, and exhibit high problem-solving and creativity when performing their duties. Indicators of engagement are their desire to actively participate in all work processes, enthusiasm, creativity, and involvement with their team members and peers. Employees who are satisfied with their work roles and environment are more absorbed with their jobs and contribute at their highest level of performance (Delina, 2020). Engaged employees are effective and efficient in what they produce and show high levels of integrity in their work roles.

EE benefits the organization and is a significant factor in well-being. Remembering the words of Terkel (1974), who stated that work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily break, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor, in other words, for a kind of life rather than a 40 plus work week kind of dying. Crowley (2022) posits that when managing people in a work environment, organizations treat employees like any other input: squeeze as much out of them as possible and pay them as little as possible.

In the 21st century, employees want to find more value in their jobs. They want deeper connections, a strong sense of community, flexibility, autonomy, personal growth, holistic well-being, and purpose-driven work. Employees seek more than just employment contracts where a worker provides services solely for compensation. Gone are those days when organizations reaped all the benefits. Employees seek organizations that meet their psychological, emotional, and cognitive needs. Employees want to be engaged, find value, purpose, and meaning in their occupations, and find a work-life balance. Climate surveys can gauge the perspective of the workforce and help assess engagement levels to determine if an organization needs to make changes or process improvements to engage employees. Organizations can hear the voice of their workforce by conducting surveys, asking multiple questions, collecting data from a random sample of employees, and analyzing the collected data to provide a picture of the organization's environment and experiences.

In this study, the researcher will use the responses to closed-ended questions from the Office of Personnel Management Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) as the sample population (n=642.8K) to gain employee perspectives on their work environment and experiences. One advantage of the survey method is that it helps researchers reach definitive answers about a sample group. It can be used to prove or disprove a hypothesis and to show mathematically the degree to which the assumption is valid. The researcher used the quantitative, quasi-experimental design method to examine responses from secondary data captured from the survey instrument.

The researcher will use Byrne's model outlined in the theoretical framework to measure variables that influence engagement. The researcher will select variables that fit in the three dimensions of Byrne's Model to provide a more holistic picture of the factors influencing

Employee Engagement (EE), provide insight into engagement predictions, and bring structure to the Model. The quantitative research method used to measure the variables is a "formal, objective, systematic process used to explain, test relationships, and examine associations between variables (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). Specht (2019) states that the approach uses traditional mathematical techniques and statistics to produce solid and conclusive results. The quantitative method tests a hypothesis, the assumption of the influencers between dependent and independent variables, by drawing a sample of participants from a known population, measuring the variables, and testing them using statistical analyses (Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019).

EE has been a topic of interest for many years and can be traced to the early 1990s; during this period, management experts developed a renewed interest in employee relationships to improve business performance, health, and well-being in organizations. One of the prominent figures in the conception of EE is William A. Kahn, a psychology professor at Boston University. Kahn (1990) introduced the theory as a management concept and provided the first definition of Employee Engagement (EE) as harnessing organization members' selves to their work roles. Kahn added that when employees are engaged, they express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their work performances and connect themselves with their duties.

Kahn's (1990) definition includes the human nature side of employees and their performance in the workforce. According to Harter et al. (2002), Employee Engagement (EE) is an individual's involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work. Wellins and Concelman (2005) state that EE inspires employees to perform their duties at a high level. More recent definitions are by Shuck et al. (2017), who posited that EE is a positive, active psychological state executed by intensity and cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy. Meanwhile, Barden

(2018) suggests that EE links fulfillment, involvement, and loyalty to work and the organization. According to Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019), Employee Engagement (EE) is an employee's participation and dedication to the mission and results of the organization. Eka and Anik (2020) define EE as job satisfaction, passion, and devotion to work. Paul and Young (2021) assert that engagement is the capability and commitment to contribute effectively to the goals and objectives of the organization. Agarwal et al. (2021) define EE as the extent employees feel their skills are used successfully. Sugandha (2022) posited that EE is an employee's level of dedication, connection with their organization and its principles, and work with coworkers to improve job performance that benefits the organization.

Byrne (2022) proposed a unifying definition stating that it is a state of motivation, a psychological focus on the organization's goals and objectives, whereas employees channel emotions and psychological self into transforming work into meaningful and purposeful success. Researchers have defined EE in many ways (Book et al., 2019), and as many as 50 descriptions can be found in literature today (MacCleod & Clark, 2009; Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2018). The fact that EE has been defined and described in many ways has made it a complicated construct, and despite all the research, there is a need for more consistency in the definition, and a universal model is necessary. EE will remain an enigma without a consistent definition, model, and identified outcomes (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Turner (2020) proposes that a proposed engagement model must be multi-faceted and adaptable to the changing environment in which contemporary organizations function.

Table 1: *Traditional Academic Definitions of EE*

Researcher/Year	Year	Definition
Kahn	1990	harnessing organization members' selves to their work roles.
Schaufeli et al	2002	positive and rewarding work-related state of mind that contains dedication, vigor, and absorption.
Wellins & Concelman	2005	the power that can motivate employees to higher levels of performance.
Sharmila	2013	the emotional relationship of employees with the organization, which requires them to be responsible for their actions to accomplish assigned job responsibilities.
Byrne	2015	high-quality and quantity job performance, unrestricted effort, enthusiasm, commitment to the mission, initiative, and collaboration
Byrne, Hayes, & Holcombe	2017	employees who take pride in their organization and work; take ownership of projects; talk positively about their jobs, employer, and the products, goods, and services they help deliver
Bakker	2017	employee's willingness and energy dedicated to an assigned task, level of involvement, and sense of meaningfulness and inspiration after completing a task
Knight	2017	experiences meaning in what they do, develop a sense of psychological safety at work, and have the necessary available energy resources for the job
Shuck, Osam, Zigarmi, Nimon	2017	a positive, active work-related psychological state implemented by the maintenance, intensity, and direction of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral energy
Barden	2018	a link between job fulfillment, employee involvement, and commitment to work and integrates the construct of job satisfaction and an employee's loyalty to the organization.
Sun and Bunchapattanasakda	2019	an employee's dedication and participation in the business and solutions of the organization
Eka and Anik (2020)		job satisfaction, enthusiasm, and commitment to the work
Badrianto and Ekhsan	2020	the degree and extent to which the employees show passion for their roles within the organization, commitment to their fellow employees, and commitment to organizational visions and goals
Paul & Young	2021	employees' willingness and ability to contribute successfully to an organization's goals and objectives
Byrne	2022	a motivational state associated with elevated levels of job performance, positive attitudes, and higher levels of commitment and loyalty
Sugandha	2022	an employee's level of dedication, connection with their organization and its principles

Table 2: *Traditional Practitioner's Definitions of EE*

Table 2 - Practitioners Definitions of EE		
Researcher/Year	Year	Definition
Towers-Perrin	2003	putting forth discretionary effort, extra time, and brain power and energy
The U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB)	2014	effort," defined as extra time, brainpower,
Office of Personnel Management	2015	An employee's sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, resistance, and effort in their work or overall mission.
Partnership for Public Service	2018, 2022	the degree to which employees feel that they are working to their full potential and that their talents are being utilized effectively.
Gallup	2022	the commitment and interest of employees in their work and workplace

Although numerous definitions of Employee Engagement (EE) exist, most focus on theories like absorption in and enthusiasm for job roles and responsibilities (Oorschot, 2021). Engagement, more so than other job attitudes, is associated with a sense of energy (Macey & Schneider, 2008), motivation to act (Rothbard, 2001), discretionary effort (Towers-Perrin, 2003), vigor, dedication, and absorption Schaufeli et al., (2002).

Bailey et al. (2017) state that employee engagement (EE) involves a secure emotional and mental connection between employees and their workplaces and adds the degree or extent to which employees enthusiastically appreciate their work and exercise discretionary efforts in their responsibilities. Organizations must recognize that employees are the number one resource and must motivate each employee to give their best efforts. Engaged employees are happy in their positions, perform their duties to the best of their abilities, and care about the organization's success.

According to Byrne (2022), EE is recognized as a critical factor in understanding organizations' attitudes and behavior. Anderson (2019) defined organizational development as expanding an organization's effectiveness and facilitating personal and organizational change

through interventions driven by social and behavioral science knowledge. Public Administration's premise is to develop and raise the standards of ethical behavior and accountability in government and effectively broaden the public services provided to constituents, especially in American cities (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017).

Kang (2014) posits that engaged employees strengthen an organization's ability to compete with its rivals and generate a favorable organizational environment. According to research, EE increases employee performance and productivity and reduces employees' intentions to leave the organization. Ruban (2018) agrees that organizations with engaged employees perform better and stay longer. Factors like enhanced performance, productivity, profitability, less employee turnover, less absenteeism, safety, enhanced loyalty, goodwill towards the organization, and positive word of mouth are visible in a dynamic working environment. The key is intertwining employee relationships that work with business goals and objectives. An employee engaged at work is more committed and will put in the extra effort to ensure the organization successfully achieves its mission. When organizations function with the employees' and the organization's well-being in mind, they attract the best and brightest candidates. Employee Engagement (EE) also affects retention rates and the organization's ability to retain and recruit the best and brightest talent.

A recent worldwide study by a Gallup Poll (2022b) indicates that 85% of employees are disengaged at work and will eventually leave the organization or quietly quit and only perform the bare minimum. Disengagement costs the global economy $7.8 trillion annually in lost productivity and retention (Pendell, 2023). In the best interest of the organization's and the employees' well-being, there is an urgent need to evaluate and measure the factors and drivers that influence engagement to identify ways to obtain and maintain an engaged workforce (Malik

& Garg, 2020). Researchers agree that engagement increases employee involvement, commitment, enthusiasm, absorption, focus, effort, zeal, and satisfaction, directly affecting performance, productivity, efficacy, modernization, innovation, morale, and well-being (Boyd, 2019; Davidson. 2018; Howell, 2021; Joo, 2022; Wankhede, 2017).

EE has become an ever-increasing phenomenon in public administration because of the critical benefits of keeping employees engaged in the workforce. Researchers and academics realize that when employees are engaged, the organization and the employees thrive at greater levels, affecting both the organization's health and the health and well-being of the employees. Healthier employees are more likely to come to work, not take sick days or abuse sick leave, and are more likely to come to work ready to contribute positively to the overall mission. Employee well-being is another critical reason to care about EE and its relationship with employee health (Byrne, 2022).

Other researchers posit that disengagement is one of the main reasons employees leave their jobs and affects performance, productivity, profitability, work relationships, and well-being (Alvi et al., 2020; Caputo & Evangelista, 2019; DeConinck & DeConinck, 2017). Some reasons employees are disengaged are the feeling of disconnection from the mission or purpose of the organization, unclear expectations, lack of opportunity for development, no work flexibility, poor leadership, work-related stress, poor morale, toxic organizational environment, organizational politics, and mental health concerns. The negative implications on organizations create a significant financial burden and inhibit organizations' ability to maximize competitive advantage and economic growth. The ability to achieve a unique advantage over the competition is a way to explain why some businesses thrive more than others. Disengaged employees feel unsafe being themselves and bringing their true selves to the workplace. Engaged employees in

their organization are willing to stay longer than employees who are not engaged and will bring their authentic selves to work (Rao, 2017).

A disengaged workforce will disrupt all aspects of the office environment, spilling over into other employees' morale and negative feelings about their work roles and the organization. Disengaged employees often are the reason why other employees leave the organizations: the negativity they experience and are subjected to toxic environments that affect their morale, causing retention issues. Disengagement affects retention to the point that employees leave the organization, quietly retreat within themselves, contributing only enough to get the job done, or contributing the bare minimum. This new phenomenon is called quiet quitting.

Employees often quietly quit their jobs without letting their employers know. This form of disengagement is a relatively new term used in the workplace. Quiet quitting refers to doing the minimum requirements of one's job and putting in no more time, effort, or enthusiasm than necessary (Hare, 2022). According to Pearce (2022), the employee does not quit the job but instead does the expected duties without going above and beyond what is expected. The employee does not leave their position and continues to collect a salary. Quiet Quitting refers to reducing the energy and effort one puts into job duties. According to Klotz and Bolino (2022), quiet quitters continue to fulfill their primary responsibilities but are less willing to engage in activities such as staying late, coming in early, or attending nonmandatory meetings. They have not left the job physically but mentally, cognitively, and emotionally, another form of disengagement.

The issue is that the employee is dissatisfied with their job or is going through burnout. Employees may quietly quit to cope with burnout and to reduce stress, negatively affecting their performance and harming the work culture. Mahand and Caldwell (2023) agree that the

employee will not go beyond any job role that does not exceed the job description. Instead, they only perform the tasks assigned to them by the employer and will disengage themselves from coworkers, peers, or any outside activities other than what is necessary. Disengagement causes tangible and intangible losses, including low performance, low morale, low productivity, and high turnover rates, and can cause interpersonal relationship challenges in the work environment. When employees begin to withdraw and hide their identities, ideas, and feelings, they become disengaged and defensive, adversely affecting work performance (Harlos & Knoll, 2021). These disengagement aspects make businesses unable to sustain themselves, compete in the global market, or retain employees (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020).

Disengaged workers are not competitive and do not provide energy to make the workplace more positive and flourishing (Allam, 2017). Their lack of effort or disinterest in their job duties can imply they are prepared to seek employment elsewhere. These employees feel undervalued and unappreciated by their bosses or are overwhelmed and stressed in their work environment. Implementing engagement strategies in the workforce can improve the working conditions for employees, which is the most effective strategy for combating disengagement. Increasing engagement fosters positive work environments wherein organizations can create conditions ripe to handle disengagement because of the negative implications on organizational success (Hansen et al., 2014; Kahn, 1992).

Engaging the workforce is vital to the survival of public and private organizations in today's highly competitive business world. The business world must first understand engagement and then work to implement strategies to measure and increase Employee Engagement (EE) levels in organizations. In today's organizations, employees are searching for meaningful work (Von Devivere, 2018; Weeks & Schaffert, 2019), and organizations are constantly searching for

a secret formula to engage employees better and increase their satisfaction to increase productivity and efficiency (Silic et al., 2020). Improving competitiveness has become the ultimate goal for many private and public organizations worldwide (Kagermann et al., 2016; Li & Liu, 2014).

Engagement, employee performance, and productivity can be affected by structure, social cohesiveness, supervisors' support, data sharing, shared goals and objectives, communication, and trust. Employees want to be valued and respected, to do meaningful work, and for their viewpoints and opinions to be heard. Actively engaged employees perform better, produce higher quality products, and are an asset to their organization. They are also committed to the organizations in which they work. Engaged employees trust their employers. An organization that manages the work culture promotes employee safety and trust. The employer encourages and promotes good interpersonal relations between other employees and all levels of management. This culture creates a comfortable environment where employees are open to sharing their ideas and thoughts with peers and managers.

According to OPM (2020a), it is one of the top initiatives in the President's Management Agenda to engage and motivate public sector employees to bring more effectiveness and efficiency to the American people. Engaged employees are more innovative, less likely to abuse sick and annual leave, and intend to stay in their workplace longer. They voluntarily invest a discretionary effort to accomplish the organizational mission and care about the organization's outcomes. There is a need to add to what is already known about Employee Engagement and meet today's organizational challenges and rapid transformation. EE poses a significant challenge to Administrators, Leaders, and Executives who conduct climate surveys to measure

organizational engagement levels to gauge and implement practical solutions to increase engagement in all workforce industries.

Employers must recognize that the benefits outweigh the cost of investing in their most valuable commodity, the employee. Organizations must realize that their workforce is worth investing in because of the benefits of increased engagement levels that meet the strains of a changing global world market and the ever-increasing dynamics that make the workplace complex in the 21st century. Some of the dynamics are diverse generations, technological advancement, digital applications, the declining number of engaged employees, and the negative social and economic impact of disengagement in organizations, which motivated the call to conduct this research. Harter (2022) posits that for the modern workforce, an engaging work environment is a fundamental expectation, a baseline requirement, and many employees refuse to work in an organization that does not prioritize engagement. The values of an engaged workforce are no longer optional but a requirement.

A diverse workforce is preferred due to the various skills and beliefs required for organizations to survive. According to Hatipoglu and Inelmen (2017), a diverse workforce is considered highly productive compared to a homogenous workforce. The primary benefit of generational diversity is the developments that arise from merging different values and experiences in the workforce. According to Guillaume et al. (2017), organizations that recruit a diverse workforce can hire the best talents to help them be more competitive. Lewis and Wescott (2017) backed this view of a diversified workforce by ascertaining that the different generations' skills, prospects, and values increase business success and effectiveness.

Statnickė (2016) posits that employers have a challenge with effectively handling the needs of all ages and matching their management techniques to encompass all generational

cohorts while maintaining diverse and sustainable competitive advantages in a complex global market. The need for critical, social, emotional, and cognitive thinking (creativity, critical thinking, and data-driven decision-making) will increase, and the demand for physical and blue-collar skills will decrease. According to Bughin et al. (2018), the changes will require workers to deepen their existing skill sets or acquire new ones, and businesses will need to rethink how work is structured within their organizations.

According to the US Census Bureau (2019), Baby Boomers will be over 65 by 2030 and will be retiring in considerable numbers in the upcoming years. This group will make up more than 20 percent of US residents and surpass those under 18 for the first time in 2034. This is crucial to the workforce because many sectors will lose expertise and senior leaders in the next seven to ten years. The vacancies due to retirement will mean filling these positions with the younger generations. This generation transition is enormous in the workplace; a Gallup study (2022) states that by 2025, the workforce will comprise 75% of millennials, bringing a new perspective to workplace values and beliefs. Millennials in the workforce bring concerns due to the differences in work beliefs and values among the different population groups (Crastnopol, 2022). Freeman (2019) and Lacey et al. (2017) add that millennials in the workforce are an important focal point for leaders and organizations, as this age group will hold the majority of the leadership roles in the workforce, and it is vital for organizations to understand their preferences as this generation steps up and take on these significant management roles. Understanding the values and expectations of Millennials in the workplace is crucial for not just public organizations but all organizations.

Every generation is socialized differently, bringing different values, behaviors, relationships, cultures, and expectations to the workplace. Unless well managed and motivated,

the mixture of different ages in the workplace can present various challenges and obstacles, compromising an organization's success and ability to reach goals and objectives effectively. Leaders of organizations must ensure that the workforce is motivated, engaged, and effective by understanding the role that engagement plays in the mixture of generational cohorts. Gilbert (2018) states that employers should take generational gaps seriously and be responsible for keeping all generations engaged. Millennials want a work-life balance, instant and continuous feedback, appreciation, mutual respect, fairness, justice, modern technology, and digital services (Hicks, 2019; Holt, 2012) in the workplace, or they will look for other opportunities. Durakovic et al. (2022) posit that, unlike boomers, millennials value the concept of togetherness, a flexible work schedule, prioritizing teamwork and socializing, working as a group, and learning from each other. If they cannot find this cohesiveness, they will leave and seek to find what they are looking for elsewhere.

According to Pawar and Pandit (2023), job-hopping and changing jobs have increased since the pandemic. Job hopping refers to the tendency of a person to work briefly in an organization in a particular position rather than staying in an organization for a longer time (Pandey,2019). Millennials, followed by Gen Z, frequently change jobs within two years. Loyalty is not one of their main strengths, especially if their needs are unmet. This is one of the reasons why it is crucial to know this generation and their expectations, as they will occupy most of the future positions and backfill positions left by baby boomers. One of the main reasons this generation leaves jobs sooner is that they are not getting the career advancement, development, or requirements they desire. The younger generations prefer a working environment where they can get a chance to explore their capabilities and ideas, have flexible working hours, and have options to work from home (Rivers, 2018). With advancements in technology, transportation,

and globalization, more opportunities worldwide are another reason people have more opportunities to leave their jobs sooner (Pandey, 2019).

The continuous decline in engagement and citizen trust is another critical factor in the inability to recruit and retain government employees. The decline has devastated the trust in products, services, and programs that protect and sustain our economy and citizens. The government serves critical roles, yet public trust continues to decline. The Nation faces a significant national debt and annual deficits that require the government to change its operations. Lavigna (2014) states that improved engagement leads to greater trust in the government. The Pew Research Center (2021) posits that trust in government organizations has declined over the past six decades and affects faith in our political system. The recent handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns about ethics and the role of lobbyists and interest groups, to name a few, have devastated our country and have further weakened the trust in our government (Khurshid, 2020). Rebuilding trust in government depends as much on citizens' perceptions as on government capabilities. Governments must increase perceptions of their trustworthiness and the administrative capabilities to deliver trustworthy services, products, and procedures. Governments must transform these capabilities into measurable actions and implement effective policies to ensure societies and economies take action today to thrive in the future.

Figure 1 *Trust in the Government (1997-2021)*
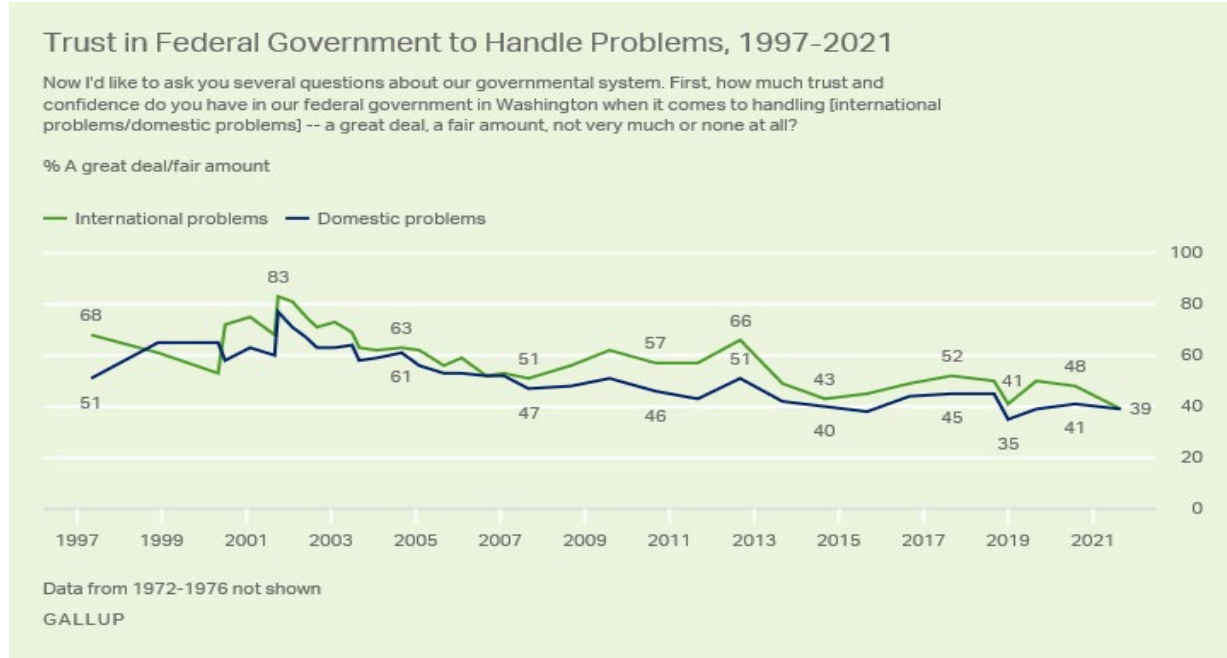
Lavigna (2014b) posits that factors distinguish the public sector from the private sector because of the bureaucracy and red tape in which government managers operate, making engaging government employees difficult. There are frequent changes in leadership in the public sector, hard-to-measure objectives and impacts, complicated and bureaucratic hierarchies, and multiple eternal stakeholders with authority to make immediate change; an older, more educated workforce, and more white-collar employees; strict rules and strong job protections that make engaging public employees challenging (Lavigna, 2014b). How the government operates makes engaging, retaining, and recruiting employees complex and much more challenging than in the private sector. Unlike the private sector, businesses are owned by individuals or groups, sole proprietors, partnerships, or LLCs. In contrast, the government owns and manages public sector organizations for public needs and interests and is accountable to the citizens.

However, Employee Engagement (EE) is a worldwide issue due to the complexity of modern organizations and how the government, private businesses, and non-profit organizations

collaborate to build partnerships in the 21st century. Measuring the factors influencing EE benefits all work sectors to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across industries. This is further justified by the fact that the public sector is becoming more closely aligned with the private sector to ensure that it is getting the total value of its investments and is effectively monitoring and measuring performance (Al-Raisi & Al-Khouri, 2010)

Another challenge with Employee Engagement (EE) is the association with other workplace antecedents, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Employee satisfaction and EE differ because engaged employees are content with their jobs and care about organizational success. Employees can be satisfied with their work experience and what they are getting out of their career; however, they can be disengaged from the mission and be unproductive but satisfied with pay, benefits, and work hours.

Organizational commitment is the relationship between organizations and employees, and employee commitment is based on how satisfied employees are but does not include the connection to the goals and visions of the organization. Improving engagement in organizations leads to partnerships that encompass empowerment, mutual accountability, mutual care, participative decision-making, and shared visions and goals (Fischer, 2017), which increases the health of the employee and the organization. Therefore, more research and understanding of measurements are needed to help the academic community and practitioners better understand the construct and what influences engagement in organizations. Only then can a universal definition and Model and practical solutions be developed.

This study reviews the existing literature on Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. The link to Public Administration (PA) is the importance of a highly engaged

public sector workforce to raise the trust in the government and administer policies and programs in the best interest of American citizens. The literature also deliberates on the critical topics linked to disengagement and the effects of the workplace generational cohorts, according to Hoole and Bonnema (2015), meaningful work. Imperatori (2017) adds that people in the same generation share similar values, beliefs, and attitudes. The generational theory states that people are divided into different generations according to groups of people who were born and came of age during the same period, experienced similar trends, are connected by significant events and social changes, have the same or similar values and beliefs (Tang et al., 2017).

Problem Statement

The problem in this study is the statistics of disengaged employees in public sector organizations. Researchers have suggested the developing importance of Employee Engagement (EE) and its benefits to organizational and employee well-being, yet little is known about the drivers and factors of the construct. Researchers suggest that disengaged employees have remained around 70% since 2011, costing organizations $450-550 billion yearly in the United States (Bradberry, 2016; Foertsch, 2021; Meyers, 2018; Rastogi, 2018), affecting the sustainability of public and private organizations in a competitive global market. Zubair et al. (2021) suggest that with the increasing pressures and demands from the public sector to be more efficient, effective, and accountable, Public Service Motivation (PSM) and Organization Performance (OP) are critical. Spurred by the New Public Management (NPM) doctrine, there has been a vital discussion in PA scholarship regarding how public sector organizations can enhance performance and improve the delivery of public services (Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013; Meier & O'Toole, 2002).

McCleod and Clarke (2011) found that EE substantially benefits organizations and benefits employee health and well-being, performance, productivity, innovation, retention, and overall organizational outcomes. However, there are at least 50 definitions or descriptions of the construct in the literature (Briner, 2014; Purcell, 2014; Truss, 2014; Turner, 2020). EE has many definitions but has direct commonalities. The commonalities are the cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects of engagement and the level of employees who are inspired by, invested in, and enthusiastic regarding work performance and the passion they exude to meet the goals and objectives in their organizations offers a definitive definition of EE (Lim, 2022). Many researchers realize engagement is the key to successful organizations and have identified EE as detrimental to organizational success. Researchers understand that performance depends not just on employees' intellectual competencies but also on employee attitudes toward work, experiences, office culture, and practices.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative research study is to evaluate and measure the influences that affect Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. Researchers indicate that engagement can be defined and measured, but the many definitions, lack of empirical research, and academic theoretical perspectives have led to a debate on universally defining and measuring the construct (Gupta & Sharma, 2016; Macey & Schneider, 2008). This study will test Byrne's Engagement Model by operationalizing five independent variables using the Model's three dimensions. Byrne's Model and the dimensions of the theoretical framework are broad but help narrow down significant independent variables that can be measured for statistical significance that identify determinants of engagement.

The three dimensions of Byrne's Model (2015) are Personal and Work Environment and Person (self). The first dimension of Byrne's theoretical framework is personal environment; one independent variable that fits within that dimension will be operationalized. The independent variable is Extrinsic Motivation (Rewards and Recognition). The second dimension of Byrne's theoretical framework is Personal Environment. The researcher has selected three independent factors, supported by research, that will be operationalized within that dimension. They are Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, and Work-life Programs. The third dimension in the theoretical framework is Person (Self). Intrinsic Motivation is the independent variable that will be operationalized within the dimension. The operationalization of variables allows specific indicators to be measured empirically and quantitatively, allowing replication and statistical analysis (Nelson et al., 2021).

This study addresses the need for a clear definition of Employee Engagement (EE) and essential business strategies to be incorporated into organizational cultures, values, and norms. Further, research has yet to focus on a modern approach to the two-way communication between practitioners and academic approach, the multigenerational effects, the measurement of a set of variables, the work-life balances, or meaningful work approaches that employees seek in the 21st-century and post-pandemic workforce changes. The researcher will also control age and gender to see if those two demographics can add value to the study.

Significance of the Study

Employee engagement (EE) has become a massive issue across work sectors, public, private, and non-governmental businesses. The research can help organizations identify improvement areas in their engagement strategies. Byrne (2015, 2022) suggests that EE is the main ingredient for developing healthy, sustainable organizations. Van den Broeck et al. (2017)

posit that public-sector employees are more dissatisfied with their jobs than those in the private sector and more likely to quit or seek employment outside the public sector (Van den Broeck et al., 2017). The benefits of an engaged workforce are well known in both the public and private sectors, and there is an increase in research on identifying factors and drivers that influence engagement in organizations that will ensure that organizations can thrive and compete in today's global market (Fletcher et al., 2020). However, the specific drivers and influencers of engagement in the workplace continue to be unrealized (Baltzley, 2016). Shuck et al. (2011) add that academic research on what influences EE is rare despite EE's heightened awareness and vital role in the workforce.

By synthesizing the accessible literature and empirical evidence, the research can provide a valuable resource for policymakers and practitioners seeking to enhance EE levels in their organizations. According to the New Personnel Management (NPM) doctrine and Congress' Public Management Agenda (PMA) initiatives, this study can develop evidence-based policies and practices that lead to result-driven strategies and outcomes. This research contributes to the broader academic literature on EE and its impact on organizations' excellence. Synthesizing the existing research, identifying research gaps, and collaborating with practitioners can advance the field and steer future studies, which can add to the knowledge and understanding and the measures that governments can use to enhance engagement levels, ultimately leading to improved performance, production, profitability, programs, services, positive work experiences, and increased public trust. It can also develop applicable practices beneficial to employees and organizations that promote healthy, thriving environments that meet the future dynamics of the workforce. Recent calls have been made for more research on determining the potential public sector engagement initiators (Andrews & Mostafa, 2019; Mostafa & Abed El-Motalib, 2020). A

better understanding of EE and its positive consequences is crucial for practitioners, public

administrators, academia, and researchers (Masson et al., 2008).

Research Question

This study explores the existing literature on Employee Engagement (EE) in the

workplace. The literature deliberates on the critical themes linked to disengagement and

workplace generational cohort, including definitions and the benefits of an engaged workforce.

EE is essential to administration, competitiveness, and well-being across the country, costing

organizations billions of dollars annually in employee turnover and lost productivity. Exploring

and measuring engagement in organizations is instrumental to organizational excellence.

This quantitative research study aims to explore the historical development of Employee

Engagement (EE) and update current knowledge through a Literature Review in Chapter 2. The

study will operationalize the five variables using the three dimensions of Byrne's engagement

model. Byrne's Model and dimensions are broad and can narrow down significant independent

variables that can be operationalized to identify determinants of engagement that fit within

Byrne's theoretical framework. The three dimensions of Byrne's Model are Personal

Environment, Work Environment, and Person (self). The dependent variable is Employee

Engagement (EE), and the five independent variables are Extrinsic Motivation, Senior

Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic

Motivation.

The sample population is from secondary data responses from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The independent variables fit within the scope of

the three dimensions, bringing more structure to the model and making it testable for reliability,

validity, and replication. The sample population will come from the FEVS survey to measure and

evaluate factors influencing the dependent variable, Employee Engagement (EE). The researcher will use the quantitative method and the quasi-experimental design to advance the knowledge and evaluate two control variables, age, and gender, to see if they can add value to the study.

The FEVS is an annual climate survey used by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to gain meaningful insight from employees who anonymously convey their perspectives on policies, practices, and procedures and subsequent patterns of interactions and behaviors that support organizational performance (OPM, 2020a). The survey allows federal employees to share their perceptions about their organizations and leaders (National Institutes of Health (NIH), (n.d.). The ultimate goal of the survey is to provide organizations across the federal government with information to build on strengths and improve challenged areas. Given the number of employees who responded to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Viewpoint Survey (n=642,800) and the thousands of recipients of government amenities, the sample size will bring a critical view of engagement in the public sector and yield practical use of the outcomes and findings from this research study.

RQ1: *What factors and drivers influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector organizations?*

Summary

Leaders of organizations have realized that in today's constantly changing business climates, human resources are the most critical resource contributing to organizational success, recruiting new talent, and retaining motivated and committed employees who are crucial in accomplishing innovation in the face of complex challenges in government organizations. Bason (2018) states that most public administrators agree that more positive change is needed in government, as societal challenges ranging from generational challenges to retention, advanced

technologies, and increasing performance pressures are mounting, and one of the main initiatives on Public Administration's (PA) agenda. Government innovation aims to deliver better outcomes, such as better use of public resources, more open and trusting societies, and strengthened justice and care for all citizens (OECD 2017). Empirical evidence also shows that employees engaged in their tasks make a big difference, leading employees to develop and implement novel ideas in the organization (Bakker, 2009).

Some earlier Public Administration (PA) studies argue that effective, efficient, quality products and services are the main factors in citizens' satisfaction with public services (Bei & Shang, 2006; Wisniewski, 2001). According to Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2013), engaging public servants can contribute to a quality, citizen-oriented public service that can bring trust back to our political system and government agencies.

Developing effective Public Administration through advanced technology is a steady process where the agenda related to administration performance has changed from manual to electronic procedures. Government transformation has influenced almost every functional area of Public Administration and public management. Governments worldwide are transitioning to eGovernment using modern techniques that save citizens and governments time and effort. In doing so, they create effective and efficient programs and services for the public. Professionals and Scholars, including Administrators, Public Officials, CEOs, and Managers in all work industries, agree with the positive outcomes of engaged employees. Byrne (2015, 2022) suggests that measuring the drivers and factors that influence engagement can lead to a better understanding of the construct, is necessary, and will advance the research toward building positive organizations that focus on the citizens and employees and promoting the common good in our country.

Definitions

1. *Artificial Intelligence:* AI is a system's ability to correctly interpret external data, learn from such data, and use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation (Belkhamza, 2023).

2. Competitive Advantage - Competitive advantage refers to factors that allow a business to produce goods and services or programs that are better or less costly than competitors (Novita & Husna, 2020).

3. *Competitiveness* - Competitiveness refers to the capability of specific organizations to provide their products or services more effectively and efficiently than the significant rivals in the marketplace (Kafetzopoulos et al., 2015).

4. *Covenantal Leadership*: A covenantal approach to organizational behavior and leadership can facilitate flexibility and adaptability to foster further innovation by engendering empowerment and more profound, meaningful engagement among leadership and followers (Fischer & Schultz, 2017).

5. *Disengaged Employees* - Disengaged Employees are not invested in the organization's mission (Gallup, 2022a).

6. *Electronic Government (E-Government)*: E-government transforms the Government's relationship with its constituents- the citizens- the businesses- and between its organizations through Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools (Othman et al., 2020).

7. *Emotional Intelligence (EI)* - EI is a multi-faceted construct that reflects the capacity of an individual to (a) understand one's own emotions along with naturally expressing these), (b) discern and accurately appraise the emotions of others, (c) manage or regulate one's own

emotions, so they are not overwhelmed by emotional arousal, and (d) utilize one's emotions to achieve valued outcomes including personal (Bozionelos & Singh, 2017).

8. *Employee Engagement* **-** (EE) is the commitment and interest of employees in their work and workplace. Engaged employees know their roles and desired expectations, perform at high levels, and work consistently to meet organizational goals and objectives (Gallup, 2022a).

9. *Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)* - FEVS is a climate survey designed to capture Federal employees' perceptions of organizational policies, practices, and procedures and subsequent patterns of interactions and behaviors that support organizational performance (OPM, 2020a).

10. *Intrinsic Motivation (IM)* - when employees perform activities for their inherent satisfaction rather than separable consequences (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

11. *Organizational Culture* - Organizational culture is the values that impact behaviors associated with the work environment. An organization's culture defines the proper way to behave within the organization. This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping employee perceptions, behaviors, and understanding (Ridwan & Anik, 2020).

12. O*rganizational Excellence (OE)* - Organizational excellence is the ongoing efforts to establish an internal structure of guidelines and practices to engage and motivate employees to deliver products and services that fulfill customer requirements within business expectations. It is the achievement by an organization of consistently superior performance—for example, outputs that exceed meeting objectives, needs, or expectations (ASQ, 2022).

13. *Private Sector (PS) -* The private sector consists of business activities owned, financed, and run by private individuals. The private sector is usually composed of privately owned organizations and not part of the government (EL Sharkasi, 2019).

14. *Public Administration (PA) -* PA is a cooperative effort to pursue a common objective in managing public affairs and systematically executing and applying the law (Thapa, 2020).

15. *Public Sector* (PS) - The public sector consists of governments and publicly controlled or publicly funded agencies, enterprises, and other entities that deliver public programs, goods, or services, are part of the economy where goods and services are provided (Guidance, 2011).

16. *Public Servants (PS) -* Public Servants are also known as civil servants and are employees in government organizations that execute the government's duties (Tannuri & Perez-Nebra, 2018).

17. *Senior Leadership (SL):* SL is defined as leaders who work in organizations' mid-to-top management levels, generally manage other leaders, and have substantial spans of control (Reynolds et al. 2018). It influences others to guide, structure, and facilitate actions and relationships in a group or organization (Cox, 2016).

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 covers a literature review of what is already known in the academic world based on several theoretical frameworks on which this dissertation research is based. It provides a review of what is known about Employee Engagement (EE) and its importance to organizations and a thorough background of the history of EE. Chapter 2 will also discuss traditional models of EE, break down the variables, explain why they were chosen, and explain

how they will be operationalized. Lastly, this chapter will discuss the two control variables that will be evaluated to see if they will add value to the study.

Chapter 3 discusses the research method, procedure development, and statistical analysis. The chapter begins with an explanation of the fundamental purpose of the study, an effort to understand the factors and influences that lead to EE. According to Creswell (2013), the chapter should also address the target population for the study, participant selection, and the research method. This Chapter discusses the chosen quantitative research method to measure the predictors of engagement using the FY 2020 FEVS survey. The dependent and independent variables will be operationalized, discussed, and evaluated. Two control variables, age and gender, will be measured to determine if they add significance to the study.

Chapter 4 details the method used, a descriptive quantitative analysis, and the study's findings and results. The variables will be operationalized and measured using the three dimensions of Byrne's Model of Engagement. The chapter will end with a summary that will focus on the findings.

Chapter 5 closes with the conclusion of the dissertation and includes a deeper discussion of the findings, discussions regarding the assumptions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research drawn from the analysis and results,

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review contributes to the current knowledge by critically analyzing the research on Employee Engagement (EE) and offers an insightful perspective on the ongoing debates and findings in this area. The literature review will also discuss and synthesize the theories and empirical research, findings, conclusions, implications, and results from various researchers regarding the significance of EE in public sector organizations. EE is a relatively new topic with many subdimensions, definitions, and descriptions that have been studied and conceptualized. Hameduddin and Fernandez (2019) suggest that the current EE literature gives a complex view of engagement, an academic theoretical framework, and a unified definition and engagement model. Most existing literature on engagement derives from practitioner and consulting sources primarily based on best practices rather than theory and empirical research (Sahoo & Mishra, 2012; Saks, 2006; Shuck & Wollard, 2010). Researchers have defined engagement differently, leading to misperceptions and inconsistencies in research findings, making EE a complex concept.

Theoretical Framework

This study presents a conceptual, theoretical framework of several theories of engagement based on Kahn's (1990) Model of Engagement, Hoole and Bonnema's (2015) meaningful work engagement across generational cohorts, and Byrne's model of engagement consisting of three dimensions, Personal and Work Engagement, and Person (self). These concepts and theories are the theoretical frameworks for this research.

Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to define the concept of EE. According to Kahn's (1990) engagement theory, Engagement Employee (EE) comprises various vital aspects,

including cognitive, emotional, and physical subdimensions. Kahn (1990) first introduced the concept as a management theory and provided the first formal definition of Employee Engagement (EE) as harnessing organization members' selves to their work roles. When employees are cognitively engaged, they are committed to their jobs. When physically engaged, they are invested in their work; when they are emotionally engaged, they have an emotional connection to their work (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2019).

Kahn (1990) theorized psychological meaningfulness, availability, and safety as the three main factors determining an individual's engagement or disengagement level. He defined psychological meaningfulness as someone's view of being appreciated for the emotional, physical, and cognitive energy exhibited in accomplishing daily job responsibilities. Kahn (1990) defined psychological safety as the comprehension that people can make decisions without fear of negative repercussions. He described psychological availability as an engaged employee whose physical and emotional energy and a sense of security allow him or her to be fully involved in job performance. According to Kahn (2013), three conditions drive the extent to which people are psychologically present and thus personally engage in task performance. The starting point for Kahn's (1990) engagement theory originated from Goffman (1961), which suggests that employee levels of attachment to their roles vary, and employees can demonstrate various levels of attachment and detachment with each moment.

According to Kahn (1990), engagement means being psychologically and physically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. Through ethnographic research, he discovered that people continuously bring in and leave out various levels of themselves while undertaking separate work tasks. His study also revealed that individuals who were more engaged in their work were cognitively alert and emotionally connected. Knight et al. (2017)

agreed with Kahn years later and posited that engaged employees experience meaning in what they do, develop a sense of psychological safety at work, and have the necessary available energy resources for the job.

Kahn (1990) stated that engaged employees are more motivated than those who are not engaged. His research indicates that employees perform better when given autonomy in their roles, experience meaningful work, and receive feedback regarding their performance. According to an MSPB (2018) report on motivation, employees in jobs with high perceived levels of autonomy are more likely to be highly motivated and perform at a higher level of engagement than employees without autonomy. Research shows that the more freedom employees have to make decisions and direct their work activities, the more engaged they are (Heyns & Rothmann, 2018; Malinowska et al., 2018; Sung et al., 2022).

Kahn's (1990, 1992) study links individuals to their work through the emotional, cognitive, and physical energy necessary to perform at their highest level. Cognitive engagement requires employees to know the visions and strategies of the organization, as well as how they relate to their performance standards. Emotional engagement involves the interpersonal relationships between employees and employers (Singh, 2016). Positive relationships will foster a sense of belonging among the staff while enhancing employees' trust and ability to embrace organizational goals and objectives. On the other hand, physical energy requires employees to exert their whole selves in their duties.

Hoole and Bonnema (2015) state that meaningful work originated from the theoretical philosophy of experiencing purpose in one's existence, creating a sense of completeness. Meaningful work indicates that a person can find a sense of completeness in their work environment. Meaningful work is also linked to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, presented

as a theory of human motivation. According to Overell (2008), a sense of completeness can be translated into self-actualization in work and happens when a person absorbs their identity entirely into their work roles. Hoole and Bonnema (2015) extended Overell's (2008) work to develop a concept of meaningful work across generational cohorts. The study demonstrates a positive relationship between work engagement and meaningful work and that efforts to increase engagement levels will positively affect workers' experiences of meaningfulness in their work.

Hoole and Bonnema (2015) posit that age is becoming increasingly critical as a diversity factor and affects engagement in today's workforce. Hoole and Bonnema (2015) add that understanding the dynamics between employee engagement and meaningful work across generational cohorts is imperative to implement the right approach for each organization's challenges (Hoole & Bonnema, 2015). The sociologists of the 20th century last decade (Miller, 1995; Pilcher, 1995; Riley, 1998;) introduced a cohort generation concept and described a cohort as a group of people of the same or similar age united by common demographic events and historical experiences based on which their distinctive worldview is formed that differ them from other similar formations (Valickas & Jakštaitė, 2017). Organizations with a diverse workforce and mixed generational cohorts need to realize that the past methods and engagement models may need revision in more complex and sophisticated organizations embracing revolutionary changes in the workforce.

Lastly, Byrne's model of job engagement has three dimensions: The personal environment, the work environment, and the person (self). The interaction of these three parts predicts how engaged an individual will be. Thereby, the Personal Environment is defined as external regarding the job (e.g., sustainability); the Work Environment is defined as internal (e.g., organizational culture, leadership, internal resources, support, and stability); and the Person

(self) (e.g., personal goals, focus, and motivation) (Byrne, 2015, 2022). The model contains various cycles that show that the engagement process is self-sustaining and can increase engagement outcomes.

Related Literature

The researcher incorporated scholarly and peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, books, government documents, and other relevant material regarding the area of Employee Engagement (EE), capturing critical information from the past and highlighting current information from the last seven years from electronic databases such as The Liberty University Library, Dissertation Search, ProQuest, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global, Psychological Information (PsycINFO), ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and Journal Storage (JSTOR). The keywords used are Employee Engagement, Public Administration, disengagement, Intrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Work-life Programs, public sector, Professional Development and Growth, generational cohorts, and Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation.

According to Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017), there is an opportunity for scholarly analysis and evaluation of EE. According to Asif et al. (2019), the lack of clarity makes it difficult to develop a theoretical framework or universal model for measuring engagement and its impact on organizations. Turner (2019) adds that the areas of examination are finding a universal definition and model, clarifying the benefits of engagement to the workforce, and identifying critical measurable variables. Understanding the drivers and influencers of engagement and how to translate findings into applicable practice is vital to increasing EE levels across work sectors.

Research on private and public-sector organizations found that increased levels of engagement, generally defined as the sense of purpose and commitment employees feel toward

their employer and its mission, can lead to better organizational performance (GAO, 2020). A Gallup (2020) study surveyed 49,928 businesses and organizations, covering approximately 1.4 million employees in 192 companies and organizations across 49 industries and 34 countries, and found engagement has a solid connection to critical organizational outcomes. The Gallup (2022a) study showed that high engagement correlates to more significant organizational outputs, and when businesses motivate their workers to be more invested in their work, they can boost performance (by as much as 20 percent in real terms) and decrease turnover (by as much as 87 percent). Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) add that Employment Engagement (EE) is a significant competitive differentiator for organizations, even in times of economic crisis.

Research conducted by the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (PMAHR) revealed that engaged employees are two times as likely to stay in their organizations, two and a half times more likely to feel they can make a difference, two and a half times more likely to recommend their workplace to others and three times more likely to be content and satisfied in their jobs (Lavigna, 2014a). The study also showed that engaged employees are more motivated, enthusiastic, and passionate about their work. Engagement increases organizational performance as employees become more efficient, effective, and capable of producing higher-quality outputs (Ismail et al., 2019). Engaged employees provide high-quality customer service, internally and externally, which leads to positive customer experiences and drives loyalty and repeat business. EE positively affects customer satisfaction because engaged employees are more likely to provide good customer service internally and externally. Engaged employees are more likely to provide exceptional customer service, striving to satisfy customers.

According to Barik & Kochar (2017), employees are friendlier, helpful, and well-versed in the products and services offered, contributing to increased customer loyalty, repeat business, and positive recommendations that increase the ability of organizations to thrive. Meta-analytic studies have shown that organizations with high EE levels outperform those with low engagement, resulting in higher productivity (Gallup 2018a). According to Turner (2019), an engaged employee is an asset that can provide long-term advantages to organizations and can make a difference in whether an organization is sustainable.

Because engagement is related to other management concepts, there is a debate that engagement may not be a stand-alone concept. Nevertheless, Anitha (2014), Jha & Kumar (2016), Kaushik & Tiwari (2023); Mackay (2016) agree that EE is a concept worthy in its own right. Employee Engagement (EE) originated from job satisfaction and employee commitment. These concepts are related to engagement, but engagement is broader in scope, and the difference is the two-way mutual communication between the employee and the employer and the connection to the goals and objectives of the organizations (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

Employee commitment is an attribute of EE, but Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2018) define engagement as an employee's psychological attachment and the relationship between employees and the organization. In theory, EE and job satisfaction are distinct constructs, although there is evidence for overlap in the definition. The main difference is that engagement emphasizes the cognitive aspect of involvement with job tasks, and satisfaction focuses on effect (Wefald & Downey, 2009). However, employee commitment and job satisfaction are antecedents to EE but can not independently substitute engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Robinson et al., 2004).

EE is a complex and multifaceted concept comprising other job attitudes contributing to an effective workplace. Those antecedents concentrate primarily on how organizations can get the most out of employees and the highest achievement from the workforce for its benefit. Employees and employers traditionally made an unspoken agreement; organizations provide a secure job or fair compensation in exchange for workers' commitment. However, this reciprocity affects commitment, and when organizations do not live up to their implied obligation, the commitment is broken. EE encompasses job satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, citizen behavior, and other previous antecedents.

Pringle (2023) conducted a study on the validity of engagement and found that employee efficacy was the most direct predictor of employee than any other job attitude. Mackay (2016) adds that EE differs from other antecedents, such as job satisfaction and organizational involvement and commitment, but they are all associated. Jha and Kumar (2016) added that engagement encompasses a direct tie to the organization's mission, a mutual relationship between the employee and the employer, and personal developmental success. The highest level of engagement is attained in a self-sustainable culture of engagement grounded on self-discipline, self-motivation, and self-organization, among other aspects, not just employer focus, as the other concepts assume. Employee Engagement (EE) indicates how employees are linked to the organization's culture, duties, coworkers, goals, and objectives (Mittal et al., 2018).

Despite the overlap, some key differences are used to distinguish the two. Researchers have found that EE determines the feelings and how intensely involved people are at work. Interestingly, most engaged employees work beyond their job descriptions, whereby they can become innovative and improve their service delivery; engaged employees show passion and urgency in whatever they do in an organization. According to Gallup (2022c), EE in business

organizations has played a vital role in reducing staff turnover, improving productivity and efficiency, improving customer service and retaining employees, and delivering higher profits. Ultimately, having an engaged team makes a company run smoothly. Engaged employees benefit a company's outcomes and general success (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019). Nonetheless, despite the consensus on the importance of EE and the statistics surrounding disengagement at work, there is not much academic research on the construct. Research indicates that most employees in 21st-century organizations are often disengaged at work (Imperatori, 2017; Singh, 2019; Crowley, 2022).

The power has shifted from organizational results to employees in the new age economy of competitiveness and cutting-edge advantages. According to Bartlett and Ghoshal (2002), organizations must compete not only for product markets or technical expertise but for the hearts and minds of talented and capable employees; after persuading them to become part of their workforce, they must ensure that employees become engaged with the organization's goals and objectives to retain them. Arslan (2018) proposes that increased levels of EE significantly influence daily organizational performance and allow employees to dedicate themselves to organizational values and goals that motivate them to contribute to the organization's success at more significant levels.

Byrne (2022) posits that transporting engagement from practice to science is complex and manifests in many ways across people, jobs, and businesses. This complexity makes increasing EE levels challenging when building productive, healthy, and sustainable modern-day organizations. According to Markos and Sridevi (2010), EE must be considered a core strategy for any organization. It should be wisely planned and executed while considering the needs of the individuals working within an organization. Employees should feel a sense of fulfillment

with their contributions to the organization's core values and success, which helps them increase their commitment and loyalty to organizational performance and promotes a long-term work relationship. The organization's core values should always be positioned toward employee and organizational success. Byrne (2022) confirms that engagement is a motivational state positively associated with performance and productivity, which differs from organizational attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment.

Researchers note that EE is a precise predictor of organizational performance, showing the two-way association between employee and employer, and is the basis of organizational behavior. The two-way aspect of engagement has yet to be widely measured, although many climate surveys gauge employees' perceptions. Organizations cannot stay static and must evolve, grow, and develop. In contemporary work environments, several factors have contributed to the growing importance of engagement, such as employee well-being, competitive markets, technological advancement, the information highway, the rise of knowledge-based economies, and the increasing significance of talent management in a progressively competitive market.

The History of Employee Engagement

The literature review summarizes the existing research on Employee Engagement (EE) and disengagement, the benefits linked to organizations, and the need to increase engagement levels, specifically focusing on the chosen independent variables that impact and drive EE. The literature review identifies conflicts in related terms, inconsistencies, varying definitions, gaps in research, and the need for more research on EE in organizations in the 21st Century.

The literature review traces the characteristics of EE back to the earlier management thoughts by examining the historical work of some of the most prominent scholars. From the start of the 19th Century, administrators and scholars constructed a theoretical framework to

explain what they believed to be good management practices. These approaches are based on assumptions about the organization, human behavior, and organizational success. Many scholars focused on the human relations aspect of organizations. The Human Relations theory of management focuses on the attitudes and desires of the workers and their relationship to the shared goals and objectives of organizations. The concepts directly stem from works by Frederick Taylor, Mary Parker Follet, and Elton Mayo. These researchers conducted studies to find ways to increase productivity in the workplace. Their research found that human engagement is essential to a functional work environment.

Frederick Taylor, the pioneer of scientific management, is a critical forerunner of the school of thought to improve business performance and productivity. Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2007 states that Taylor emphasized training employees to perform their duties and contribute to meaningful work and purpose. His work, along with Lillian Gilbreth (a close follower), paved the way for works by Mary Parker Follet, Elton Mayo, and William Kahn.

Mary Parker Follett (1920), the mother of modern management, believed management is the ability to get work done by empowering people (Scarlat, 2020). Follett suggested that the past challenges were not technical but adaptive challenges that best capitalize on people's diversity, talents, and perspectives. She is known for her mediating tendencies and managing tactics; her primary principles include integration, powering with team members, not powering over, allowing each member to feel as valued as the next, and group power. Thus, organizations do not exist for one person's benefit but rather for the organization's benefit. Follett is well known in management theory for her humanistic and socially just viewpoint on management structures and conflict resolution within organizations (Bednarek & Smith, 2023). Follett

advocated the principle of integration or no coercive power but power sharing based on her concept of power with rather than over.

As early as the 1920s, Follett focused on employee morale, work ethic, productivity, motivation, and shared power, stating that the essential work of the leader is to create more leaders. Follet stressed ethics, authority, and leadership to inspire employees to excel. She added a humanistic measure to the study of organizations and proposed that organizations had a social responsibility to their employees' satisfaction and well-being. She offered that the employee was the essential commodity to the success of organizations. She also suggested that employees and employers work together for a common purpose and advocated for mutual care and accountability between management and employees. Follett built on classical management assumptions to lay the foundation for many modern management theory ideas today (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017).

Another researcher, Elton Mayo, is called the father of the human relations movement. This movement lasted from 1920 to 1950 and focused on human behavior, which led researchers to pay attention to the human element in organizations. Scholars of human relations theory believe that if management is concerned with employee satisfaction, performance will increase. This theory was implemented in the 1940s and 1950s.

Elton Mayo conducted the Hawthorne study in 1924 by isolating two groups of workers to explore the influence of incentives on production. The findings exposed how management needs to cultivate interpersonal relationships with employees. Elton Mayo believed that employees are people whose attitudes and social demands determine the workplace's success. One of the study's contributions was that employees could be motivated by psychological and social desires because feelings, emotions, and attitudes influence their behavior. Thus, showing

monetary incentives is just one of many ways to influence employees' behavior. This observation is consistent with Hassan's hypothesis that attitude influences behavior; demeanor instills culture, bolsters execution excellence, and sustains exemplary performance (Thornton, 2019).

William A. Kahn (1990), a professor of organizational behavior at Boston University's Questrom School of Business, was the first to publish revolutionary research in the Academy of Management Journal, Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. In his article, he coined the term engagement. His seminal article claimed that personal engagement or disengagement arises when people bring in or leave out their selves during work-role performances (Kahn, 1990). According to Bailey et al. (2015), a genuine expression of the self-in role is contrasted with disengagement, whereby the individual detaches from their work role and suppresses their involvement (Bailey et al., 2015).

Kahn is acknowledged as the first academic researcher to study engagement. Kahn (1990) describes engagement as harnessing organization members' selves to their work roles in engagement; people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. He took three components from this definition: the Head (cognitive), the Heart (emotional), and the Hand (physical). At that time, leaders of organizations focused on the top-down technique to motivate employees to work harder. The term Employee Engagement (EE) was not used in management theories; the characteristics of the rational and scientific approaches are incorporated into modern concepts.

According to the theory, an engaged employee refers to an individual who is enthusiastic about his or her work and is fully absorbed, thereby being committed to enhancing the organization's reputation and objectives. Kahn (1990) postulated that individuals take on roles at work and occupy the dwellings that the respective roles offer. Through ethnographic research, he

discovered that people continuously bring in and leave out various levels of themselves while undertaking separate work tasks. Consequently, Kahn considered an employee's emotional, physical, and cognitive expression of the authentic self at work. His study revealed that individuals who were more engaged in their work were cognitively alert and emotionally connected to others.

Kahn (1990) theorized psychological meaningfulness, availability, and safety as the three main factors determining an individual's engagement or disengagement level. He defined psychological meaningfulness as being appreciated for the emotional, physical, and cognitive energy demonstrated while accomplishing job responsibilities. Kahn (1990) defined safety as the employees making decisions without fear of negative consequences. He described psychological availability as an engaged employee whose physical and emotional energy and a sense of security allow him or her to be fully invested in job performance. Employees will then demonstrate vigor and dedication and are immersed in their jobs, which causes them and their organizations to thrive.

Kahn (1990) and Kahn and Fellows (2013) hypothesized that physical engagement is crucial for an organization to achieve its goals. Physical engagement is an employee's physical effort in performing their duties. In addition, emotionally, the employees draw a positive job outlook to remain enthusiastic. Employees focus their emotional and physical energy on their roles and responsibilities, increasing their confidence in their work (Kahn, 1990). As employee confidence rises, the employee's performance excels to a higher level, ensuring that the organization's goals and objectives are accomplished (Kahn & Fellows, 2013). The element of physical engagement is how employees use psychological and physical effort to accomplish their

tasks. Singh (2016) sums it up as applying physical and mental energy while performing duties alongside increased confidence levels.

Badrianto and Ekhsan (2020) add that as employee confidence increases, the degree and extent to which the employees show passion for their roles increases, their commitment to their fellow employees, and the organization's visions and goals increase. Employee Engagement (EE) involves employees' passion and efforts to ensure their organizations succeed in their mission.

An engaging organization's benefit extends to employers, employees, businesses, constituents, and customers. Researchers, consultants, and practitioners realize that engagement levels are not changing and continue to decline or hover around the same percentages for decades because organizations have yet to find the root issues (Bond, 2016). The different definitions, concepts, descriptions, models, and measurements make the knowledge of surrounding engagement challenging to understand and evaluate. More research is needed to advance the knowledge and measure and define engagement to bring universal agreement on the construct, how to measure it, and find practical solutions.

Many researchers have labeled EE a complicated concept with many elements, definitions, and descriptions. MacLeod and Clarke (2009) found over fifty definitions of Employee Engagement (EE). Byrne (2015) adds that researchers are currently better at describing what EE looks like than defining its meaning. Schaufeli et al. (2002) suggested that vigor is a high level of energy and mental resilience; dedication is the feeling of significance, enthusiasm, and pride; absorption is concentrated and immersed in work. The root of Schaufeli's measurement of engagement and burnout advanced the perspective in Organizational Psychology and added to the study of the traits employees exhibit when they are thriving (Bakker &

Schaufeli, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). According to Sonnentag et al. (2010), Schaufeli's definition has been modified to suggest that engagement is a transient state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption, which fluctuates within individuals over short time frames.

Sharmila (2013) defines EE as the emotional relationship of employees with the organization, which requires them to be responsible for their actions and to accomplish assigned job duties. An engaged employee knows the organization's environment and collaborates with coworkers to improve execution to benefit the organization. According to Byrne (2015), Employee Engagement (EE) is high-quality and quantity job performance, unrestricted effort, enthusiasm, commitment to the mission, initiative, and collaboration to ensure that the organization is successfully run. Engaged employees believe that their organizations value them, and, in return, they improve business performance, have an awareness of improved business issues, go the extra mile, believe in the organization, and respect others (Robinson et al., 2004).

Kahn's theory can be applied in the organizational context to understand how organizational structure and investment can impact EE role performance in the workplace and the various external factors that enable them to attain their "full self." A study by Witmer and Mellinger (2015) focused on organizational resilience within nonprofit organizations and established a solid commitment to the organization's mission due to engagement. The data gathered showed that a strong commitment to the organizational mission resulted from an employee being engaged and influenced by good leadership. Most organizational members connected personally and professionally through the mission statement because their values aligned with its mission statement.

Kahn's conceptualization is aimed at grasping the idea of employees bringing their complete and authentic selves to the performance of their work role. Sandhya and Sulphey (2019) add that Employee Engagement (EE) is an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues, and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work.

Employees are looking for meaningful work that affords them the flexibility to learn cutting-edge skills that bring innovation and critical thinking to organizations (Thomas, 2009); at the same time, they want work-life balance. According to Sirgy and Lee (2018), work-life balance is the inclination to fully implement every role in one's total role system to approach each role attentively and with care (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Employees want a successful work life and personal life where they can incorporate other important life priorities. According to Kaushik and Guleria (2020), employees want to maintain a better work-life balance by balancing their personal and professional lives.

Employee Engagement (EE) is found to be a continuous process and is highly organization-specific. Gupta and Sharma (2016) state that there is no clear and widely accepted definition of EE; however, it is found to be a combination of different behavioral components, such as commitment, involvement, loyalty, discretionary effort, enthusiasm, positive energy, and psychological presence, which is linked to positive outcomes and results and ultimately to the employee and organizational well-being.

Despite the arguments and discussion regarding Employee Engagement (EE), researchers and practitioners agree that EE is measurable and can benefit organizational outcomes and results when employees invest their total selves in the missions and goals. In recent years, there has been massive evidence that engagement significantly impacts performance, productivity,

organizational advocacy, and employee and organization well-being, deters the intention to quit, and combats quiet quitting, absenteeism, and toxic workplace environments. EE has had unprecedented interest over the last several decades. Although there has been remarkable advancement in practice and scholarship, further clarity regarding the concept and definition of EE is needed from an expert perspective, a theory-based approach, and a thorough debate regarding how to operationalize the concept and its determinants effectively. This study's findings can be used in all work sectors and countries. Engaged employees are a global challenge with universal principles.

Advantages of Engaged Employees

The research reveals the advantages of engaged employees and how higher levels of engagement benefit organizations. In the contemporary world, many organizations have been striving to become more sustainable because sustainability is considered indispensable to compete and obtain a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Di Fabio, 2017). Employee Engagement (EE) is critical to organizational success because it promotes a cohesive work environment that directly impacts performance, productivity, profitability, retention, resource efficiencies, positive work cultures, collaboration, safety, low absenteeism, customer relationships, and employee and organization well-being and growth. Witmer and Mellinger (2015) maintained that the ability to employ a positive cognitive view that promotes optimism, enthusiasm, and transparency are the main characteristics that influence organizational resilience and employee engagement. Research from the University of California found that motivated employees were 31% more productive, had 37% higher profits, and were three times more innovative than employees who were not motivated (Bradberry, 2016). Clack (2021) agreed that EE is the key to successful organizations because it is intimately related to employee retention,

morale, and productivity and adds that when employees are otherwise disengaged, organizations lose absentee cost, lost productivity, and recruitment and replacement costs. Organizations also lose expertise and historical knowledge that is otherwise hard to recapture.

According to a Global Culture Report (2023), employees want more than a high salary, perks, or fringe benefits; they want a sense of fulfillment with meaningful work, belonging, and purpose. Nearly 1 in 3 employees are dissatisfied at work, making them 399% more likely to look for another job, 340% likely to leave the organization within a year, and 71% less likely to recommend the organization to others (Global Culture Report, 2023). The importance of Employee Engagement (EE) has become detrimental in many ways, and leaders of organizations must take heed and investigate the devastating developments of a disengaged workforce in research. Chanana and Sangeeta (2021) agree that EE is an approach that changes business accomplishments and success, leading to higher performance, productivity, morale, and employee and organizational well-being.

Agarwal et al. (2021) add that increased levels of engagement can impact a critical government objective: public trust. Barik and Kochar (2017) posit that the benefits of an engaged workforce can improve the quality of products and services and increase US citizens' steadily declining trust in government. The relationship between public servants and distrust in government is worth examining further as it can open a new vital avenue to explore governance and citizen participation. Trust in our public institutions is critical and is significantly related to improved performance. When trust in the government declines, it becomes harder for the government to execute essential tasks. Increasing trust can connect the government to citizens and inspire compliance with rules and regulations (Agarwal et al. 2021).

Another benefit of engagement in public sector organizations is a public trust. When trust in the government declines, it becomes harder for the government to execute essential tasks. Trust helps the government connect with residents and encourages voluntary compliance with rules and regulations. Engaged public servants can elevate government trust and improve products and services that connect to the common good of society (Agarwal et al., 2021). Dajani (2015) posits that public administrators should welcome increased EE strategies because they affect public sector organizations' sustainability.

In a competitive job market, performance, productivity, and sustainability have more precedence than ever (Byrne, 2022). Organizations must ensure that they remain competitive not only in the job market but also in the talent management arena. This transition to a more competitive market gives employees the latitude to seek employment in organizations that better fit their needs. As noted earlier, the younger generation of employees are looking for different expectations that meet the needs of their core beliefs and work values, which is a concern for the public and private sectors because of millennials' statistics.

Millennials are one of the biggest concerns in organizations, according to a recent Gallup Study (2022a) that predicts that more than 75% of the workforce will include millennials in the next few years. The study concluded that millennials grew up differently than any previous generation; they reject traditional ways, know what they want from work, and are willing to keep looking until they find what they are looking for in the workplace, unlike the older generations who are known as being particularly loyal to its employer and organization (Valickas & Jakštaitė, 2017).

The U.S. Department of Labor reported that 68.9 million workers quit, were laid off, or discharged; out of these separations, 47.4 million were voluntary quits in 2021 (Tappe, 2022).

These quits were due to cash incentives, better pay, better benefits, or to care for their children or elderly family members during the pandemic. With these astounding numbers, organizations must listen and wake up to embracing a culture of listening, cultivating trust, giving employees an open platform to collaborate, encouraging work-life programs and employee well-being, and leading the road to future transformation to keep the best and brightest candidates. Organizations should be competitive in recruiting and attracting the younger generational cohorts. If organizations want to attract the largest population of future workers, they must understand that millennials expect their organizations to adapt to them and their unique values (Crowley, 2022). Public sector organizations must realize that if they do not adjust to these dynamics and follow suit with the private sector, they will have a huge issue retaining and recruiting the talent needed to be sustainable and competitive in the global world market. According to Byrne (2022), performance, productivity, and talent management are critical in this contemporary market.

Tremaine and Neal (2018) posit that millennials remain among the most socially conscious young workers. However, their presence in government-pan institutions at its core designed to promote the general welfare- lags far behind the private sector. According to Agarwal et al. (2021), the federal government had the lowest trust across all work sectors. This statistic alone can be problematic, as seen during the COVID-19 public health crisis (Brenan, 2021). Data from the Pew Research Center (2021) indicated that trust in the government to handle international or domestic issues has steadily declined for decades (Figure 1, p.29). Current data indicates that public trust in the US government has been on a perpetual decline, at 24% (Pew Research Center, 2021). McCarthy (2021) states that leaders and managers should look for ways to improve organizations, and one avenue is to invest in their most valuable commodity, employees. A study conducted by the Partnership for Public Service (2019) found

that employees working in agencies that implement engagement approaches are more engaged, satisfied, and productive, perform at higher levels than their counterparts, and have lower turnover and higher retention rates (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017; Shellow, 2022).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) (2023), as of November 2023, the civilian labor force amounted to 168.2 million people in the United States. How we work affects our social and economic status and how we thrive and live in our communities. As for the Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19) pandemic, a rude awakening shocked the world — a structural change in how and where people chose to work and live (Clifton & Harter, 2023). The Pandemic led employees to reimagine their work and find their voice to tell employers their expectations. The work-from-home restrictions changed the nature of work and many workers' relationships with their employers; work schedules accelerated the evolution of work, the conversation around work schedules, and employee mental health and well-being.

The broad recognition of work-life balance and employee well-being was a considerable concern (Adams, 2019) before the pandemic. According to Adams (2019), workplace conditions can affect employees physically, mentally, or emotionally and enhance or harm their well-being. Lovejoy et al. (2021) suggest that although many challenges outside the workplace may impact employee well-being, there are ways that organizations can function as advocates for healthy workplaces and employee well-being. Developing well-functioning cooperative relations is vital to meeting the dual challenge of many contemporary organizations sustaining efficient production processes while simultaneously focusing on worker health and well-being (Clausen et al., 2019). Now is the time, post-pandemic, that researchers have the opportunity to analyze workforce roles, investigate ways to engage the workforce, and ensure that employees thrive and that organizations are sustainable, competent, and competitive. According to the literature,

Employee Engagement (EE) is the most effective way to achieve these results, address employee concerns, and yield positive organizational outcomes.

Kelleher (2014) notes that for engagement to exist, organizations must have mutual commitment between employer and employee. The employer must invite the engagement culture into the workplace, and the employee, in turn, will assist the employer in meeting and surpassing organizational goals and objectives. Anitha (2014) theorizes that increasing Employee Engagement (EE) is critical to achieving strategic goals, creating favorable conditions, resources, and a working environment that cultivates success, excellence, and a cut above the rest. Fischer (2017) takes it a step further and adds that employers must embrace a culture of non-centralization and spirituality in the workplace that builds covenantal-like relationships in organizations. A study of 120 companies by Kumar and Pansari (2016) found that 70% of managers agree that the benefits of engagement to organizations, whether private or public, are huge and cannot be ignored due to social and economic ramifications. Employers struggle to find advantages that help them flourish, expand, and stay relevant in today's economic environment. Lost productivity, absenteeism, and turnover costs affect the profit and revenue and impact the organization's ability to measure and promote engagement practices.

An organization that retains its best employees promotes a positive, loyal workforce for a long time (Turner, 2020). Lower retention rates lead to low turnover costs, helping organizations earn significant profit margins. Rosser (2021) examined a sample of employees who worked in an automobile factory, finding that employees engaged in the organization and those who participated in the organization's after-work activities were more likely to be employed longer than those who did not. Employee Engagement (EE) is vital to meeting the seismic changes,

technological advances, globalization, and the need to work smarter, work with fewer resources, and sustain a competitive advantage.

Engaged employees care about their work and their contributions to the organization. Engagement is generally seen as an internal state of mind, mentally, emotionally, and physically, shown through the exerted effort through high demonstration of performing and completing tasks, and binds together an employee's work effort, commitment, satisfaction, and dedication to the organization's goals and visions. In today's highly competitive environment, organizations can achieve an unexceptionable performance output when the workforce is highly committed to their tasks. Consistent productivity, reliability, higher self-motivation, confidence to express new ideas, loyalty towards the organization, reduced employee turnover, and lower absenteeism are some attributes of a wholly engaged employee who is an asset to an organization. Another reason EE is critical is its relationship to employee health; engaged employees report positive physical and mental health outcomes and well-being. The need to consider Employee Engagement (EE) as a critical topic of discussion and concern has greatly been influenced by the increasingly recognized value of employees in the success of organizations (Uddin et al., 2019).

Employees are essential contributors to the day-to-day operations of an organization and are the number one factor in whether an organization is successful. In the 21st century, a dynamic and engaged workforce must be prepared to embrace digital technology innovations (Agostino et al., 2021) to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in the government. Employees can make or break the organization with their attitudes, decisions, and how they execute daily tasks. These behaviors and actions affect work environments, stability, and the health and well-being of organizations. How employees interact and care for the goals and objectives can positively impact whether the organization is at risk of sustainable development. Based on decades of

Employee Engagement (EE) research, engaged employees yield better organizational outcomes than others. According to Gallup (2022c), this is true across industries organization size in good economic times and bad. If employees are disengaged, organizations worldwide cannot thrive and cannot compete globally or attract the talent needed to improve economic and social conditions.

Negative Impacts of Disengagement

Although there is little literature on what leads to disengagement, Kahn identifies it as psychologically withdrawing or distancing oneself from job duties. Kahn (1990) suggested disengagement occurs when an employee withdraws from the work role, detaches from identification with the organization, and fulfills tasks in an automated robotic manner. The psychological theory of personal disengagement defines disengaged employees as disconnecting themselves from work duties, withdrawing from co-workers, and safeguarding themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performance (Kahn, 1990). Kahn (1990) suggests that the perception of three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability affect people's decisions on whether to invest themselves in work or take distance and disengage from it (Kahn, 1990). Afrahi et al. (2022) agree that disengagement is separating emotionally, cognitively, and physically from work duties and the work environment. Kahn (1990) suggests that disengaged individuals continue to perform their job duties but will only do the minimum required and distance themselves rather than invest themselves in their performance.

May et al. (2004) aimed to validate Kahn's findings by conducting an ethnographic field study in a US Midwestern insurance company to evaluate the three psychological conditions. The findings verified that the psychological conditions were significant positive factors in

engagement. Thus, disengaged employees take their head (cognitive), heart (emotional), and hand (physical) out of their job duties. They lack motivation and inspiration, and while they may fulfill their job tasks correctly, they do not go beyond their tasks to ensure that the organization is successful.

According to McCarthy (2021), approximately four out of five employees are disengaged globally. Hill and Miller (2017) found that 50% of employees are disengaged, while Harter (2017a) found that 85% of disengaged workers did not perform at their highest level because of indifference in the workplace and did not exert their best effort. Disengagement negatively impacts job performance and productivity, leading to low morale and dissatisfaction in work environments in public and private organizations. Shafritz and Hyde (2017) concurred with Kahn (1990), who stated that when employees are disengaged, they only do the bare minimum, disconnecting and separating themselves from their job roles and the organizational goals and objectives. Popli and Rizvi (2015) add that disengaged employees typically contribute to the mission at a lower rate than engaged employees and have attendance issues, conflicts, distrust, and dissatisfaction, which negatively affect an organization's environment. Disengagement can determine whether an organization is successful or unsuccessful, competitive or noncompetitive, or sustainable or unsustainable.

Disengaged employees follow procedures but do not embrace change and typically resist anyone who suggests a better way of doing tasks. Disengaged employees often cause disruption, dysfunction, and dissatisfaction in the workplace. According to Kelleher (2014), most of the performance issues that occur in the workplace originate with the employee's attitude or behavior or trait that is negative or nonproductive. This attitude spills into the workforce, creating unpleasant work environments counterproductive to an engaged workforce. Disengaged

employees are mentally and emotionally disconnected from their duties, exhibit negative behavior, discontentment, and dissatisfaction with the organization, distance themselves from work, experience negative attitudes towards the work duties, and do not care about the goals and objectives (Afrahi et al., 2022). Disengagement directly impacts profitability for several reasons: a disengaged workforce is more likely to have more absences and turnover and can increase safety-related incidents (Tanwar, 2017).

Disengagement decreases the morale of other employees, causes dissatisfaction and disruptions within an organization, creates hostile work environments, and takes time away from performance goals. In other words, a few actively disengaged employees can hurt the workplace. Research studies by Dixit and Narendran (2019) show that customers notice unhappy workers, which can negatively affect internal and external customers. Unhappy internal customers cause high turnover and dissatisfaction, affecting performance, profitability, and productivity and increasing recruitment, turnover, and replacement costs. Unhappy customers are not returning customers and can harm the business by speaking negatively about the experience.

Disengaged employees withdraw from conversations and activities considered unnecessary or unrelated to work. Additionally, they tend to have higher absentee rates, and other employees must pick up the slack, affecting employee relations and work behaviors. Constant absenteeism affects the execution of the mission and increases the workload of other employees, which can cause harsh feelings and burnout. Taking previous studies at face value would lead us to assume that fostering environments that maximize employees' work engagement will benefit organizations and the health and welfare of employees and organizations (González-Romá, et al., 2006). Mone and London (2018) suggest that a combination of the existing research on engagement shows that the fundamental responsibility

for driving engagement is similar across organizations, and combating disengagement should be one of the main focuses of further investigation. However, according to Osborne and Hammoud (2017), the organization is responsible for meeting the needs of employees by providing proper engagement initiatives and building a meaningful workplace environment. However, employees are responsible for making a meaningful contribution to the organization. The challenge is how applicable the past theoretical frameworks are in the 21st-century workplace.

Traditional Models of Engagement

Demerouti et al. (2001) developed the Job Demand and Resources (JD-R) model that combined stress research tradition and motivation to explain the relationship between work burnout and job demands. The JD-R model explains the relationship between job demands and job resources. Some studies show that JD-R can also explain burnout at work and job demands (Demerouti, 2001; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The JD-R model has more significance than other models because it includes all the job demands and resources and is not restricted to the specific nature of the job characteristics. According to Demerouti et al. (2001), job demands are any physical, mental, social, or organizational aspects that need sustainable cognitive and emotional effort and are associated with specific physiological or psychological costs (high work pressure and a distressing environment) that enhance growth, knowledge, and development (Demerouti et al., 2001). The JD-R model also reveals the consequences, such as performance and absenteeism (Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Bakker & de Vries, 2021).

Years later, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) provided a revised JD-R model. This model includes work engagement, a positive, fulfilling, affective, motivational state of work-related well-being, defined by vigor (high levels of energy and perseverance when faced with difficulties), dedication (experiencing a strong sense of fulfillment, inspiration, pride, and

challenge) and absorption (being entirely focused and immersed in one's work. Work engagement mediates the relationship between job demands, health problems, job resources, and turnover intention. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is often used to analyze how the work environment affects well-being and performance (Bakker and Demerouti, 2017).

Shellow (2022) posits that JDRT is an engagement and job satisfaction theory and supports the idea that internal and external variables induce engagement. Employees are likelier to be engaged when they have high job-related stress or personal resources. According to Bauer et al. (2014), the JDRT model specifies what kind of job and personal characteristics lead to what kind of psychological states and outcomes but does not explain why. Bauer et al. (2014) add that a limitation of the model is that it only provides a limited insight into the psychological approaches.

In addition, Bargagliotti (2012) states that JDRT is transactional and cannot explain behavior and motivation in complex situations. Another shortfall of JDRT is that the distinction between work demands and job resources is not straightforward and causes conceptual ambiguity. Work demands and job resources are typically treated as two distinct factors because demand is negatively valued while resources are positively valued. Saks and Gruman (2014) question whether the model is a theory or a framework for classifying job demands and resources. Lastly, the model cannot determine what resources are essential and which ones are not.

Another widely used framework is the Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to Homans (1958), social behavior by individuals is dictated by the exchange of sentiments that occur during an interaction between people. SET depends on three main factors. The first factor is the comparison level, where an individual expects the outcomes of a relationship to be in terms

of costs and rewards. The second factor is the comparison level for the relationships, where an individual expects a reward and punishment received in a relationship. The last factor is the investment level, which entails a belief that people's commitment to a relationship depends not only on relationship satisfaction in rewards, costs, comparison level, how much they have invested in the relationship, and what they will lose by leaving it.

The theory assumes that human relationships and behavior involve a give-and-take process. In any process, people consider the weight of risks and the compensation they will get in return. According to Homans (1958), employees tend to repeat good actions that are rewarded. A person will weigh the cost of social interaction (negative outcome) against the reward of that social interaction (positive result). The primary purpose of people engaging in an interaction is to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Each person wants to get more from the interaction than they give. When a relationship costs a person more than it rewards them, they end it. However, when a relationship provides enough rewards, they continue it. The three main concepts are "an initiating action, a relationship between parties, and a reciprocating response" (Cropanzano et al., 2017). What is or is not enough depends on various factors, including a person's expectations and comparisons with other possible interactions and relationships.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is the belief that a relationship between two people is created through cost-benefit analysis. In other words, it is a metric designed to determine the effort poured in by an individual in a person-to-person relationship and the benefit of that effort. SET is one of management's most critical conceptual perspectives. The theory measures relationships based on calculation and logic to determine balance within an association. The origin goes back to 1958 when American sociologist George Homans published an article entitled Social Behavior as Exchange (1958). Homans (1958) devised a framework based on

behaviorism and basic economics. In the following years, other studies expanded the parameters of Homans' fundamental concepts.

Scholars applying the theory can explain many social phenomena after the event. However, they cannot make valuable predictions regarding workplace encounters during the interaction. Cropanzano et al. (2017) state that researchers who apply the Social Exchange Theory (SET) can explain some social phenomena occurring after the event but cannot make valuable predictions regarding workplace behavior and need theoretical precision. One of the theory's assumptions is that individuals are innately selfish, ready to terminate relationships where the costs outweigh the benefits, and fail to recognize the complexity involved in human interactions.

Another notable study mentioned and used in this study as part of the theoretical framework is Kahn's (1990) engagement theory, which notes that engagement is influenced by three antecedent psychological conditions: experienced meaningfulness of work, psychological safety, and experienced availability. Kahn (1990) was interested in understanding the specific instances when individuals are engaged or disengaged from certain task behaviors. Through ethnographic research, he discovered that people continuously bring in and leave out various levels of themselves while undertaking work tasks. His study revealed that the more engaged an individual is, the more cognitively alert and emotionally connected to their tasks and coworkers they will become.

The three dimensions of Kahn's theoretical framework are physical, cognitive, and emotional (Kahn, 1990). Physical engagement is how much effort an individual uses while exercising their duties. Cognitive engagement is the connection of workers to their job duties, believing that the more information the employee receives, the higher level of performance,

innovation, and creativity they need to contribute to the organization's success. Kahn (1990) found that employees attach to their employer's core values and mission through emotional engagement. Work engagement indicates the degree to which a person shows self-preference in job duties to encourage relationships between self and job, which increases work performance through cognitive, emotional, and physical self-investments (Kahn, 1990). The study defined cognitive engagement as focus, concentration, and engrossment level.

According to the theory, an engaged employee refers to an individual who is enthusiastic about their work and is fully absorbed, thereby being committed to enhancing the organization's reputation and objectives. Hence, Kahn looked at engagement as someone's emotional, physical, and cognitive expression of the authentic self at work. His study also revealed that individuals who were more engaged in their work were cognitively alert and emotionally connected to others. Kahn's theory can be applied in the organizational context to understand how organizational structure and investment can impact Employee Engagement (EE) and role performance in the workplace and the various external factors that enable them to attain their whole self. The limitation associated with Kahn's theory is that the initial research was qualitative and did not give a quantitative scale for measuring engagement.

Bailey et al. (2017) coded most of the articles as 'unspecified' where no theory was mentioned, and it was unclear what the researchers' intentions were when reading the articles. Saks and Gruman (2014) conclude that there are many definitions and descriptions of the construct and no universal model. There is also controversy on what to call the construct. Rich et al. (2010) state that the construct should be called Employee Engagement (EE), while Schaufeli and Salanova (2011) suggest it should be called job engagement. Saks & Gruman, 2014 add that no generally accepted Employee Engagement (EE) theory or definition has been accepted.

Another challenge is how applicable or relevant the traditional theoretical frameworks are in 21st-century contemporary work situations. Traditional models that measure engagement have been used for years; however, they do not provide modern, actionable measurable components and are not based on theoretical frameworks; if they are, they are hard to detect.

Testing Model: Byrne's Model of Engagement

Byrne (2015) states that engagement started in practice and application in organizations, and researchers have made strides in translating the intuitive ideas from business into theoretical and empirical works of organizational and social sciences. However, the traditional models are lacking in 21st-century organizations. According to Kahn (1990), a primary aim of future studies should be to explore how the three psychological conditions combine to promote employees' job engagement or disengagement. Kahn and Fellows (1992) provided an initial theoretical framework to understand contextual factors and individual characteristics that foster employees' willingness to engage in their jobs through psychological conditions. Byrne's model has similarities in its theoretical framework and provides structure to Kahn's model. It is one of the few studies conducted on a psychological state, and psychological characteristics are essential to consider when trying to understand the reason for behaviors (Sak & Gruman, 2014).

Byrne's model is more advanced and proposes an updated framework related to the dynamics and organizational changes in the 21st century. The model's flexibility allows various factors within the parameters to be tested. Researchers and practitioners can use the broad scope of the model's applicability and usefulness in multiple conditions and create many new approaches for further research. Byrne's (2015, 2022) proposed model suggests that a motivational process results from the interaction of individual characteristics (personality) and situational features (social and job environment), leading to various work outcomes that increase

engagement. The three dimensions of Byrne's model are personal environment, work

environment, and person (self), which can identify and operationalize critical drivers and factors

of Employee Engagement (EE). Lastly, Byrne's Model of Engagement aligns with Turner's

(2020) suggestion that a multi-faceted model adaptable to the revolutionary changes that

contemporary organizations work in can help to find a universal definition and model of

engagement.

Byrne's engagement model is an example of identifying variables that fit the model's

dimensions. The model considers the importance of contextual variables and the development of

psychological meaningfulness and feelings of purpose, which translate into outcomes versus

motivational processes (Byrne, 2015). Byrne (2022) posits that engagement is frequently

described as a physiological internal state associated with several positive and desirable

consequences, such as elevated levels of job performance, positive attitudes, higher levels of

commitment and loyalty, less turnover, and higher work autonomy.

Many researchers are uniting on the theory that significant factors can influence the work

environment. Byrne's engagement model is broad, flexible, adaptable, and all-encompassing and

includes three dimensions: personal environment, work environment, and person (self). The

interaction between personal environment, work environment, and person are combined to

explain engagement (Byrne, 2015, 2022). The researcher chose Byrne's model because of its

flexibility and the broad dimensions that can bring more structure to the theoretical framework

by operationalizing various drivers influencing engagement.

These factors represent a healthy working environment that reflects the social and

economic impact created by the organization (Anitha, 2014). The researcher will operationalize

the Dependent Variable, Employee Engagement (EE), and five Independent Variables (IV),

Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life

Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation that fit within the three dimensions of Byrne's theoretical

framework to evaluate and test the factors influencing engagement from a psychological and

motivational perspective found and supported by recent literature.

The researcher used Byrne's engagement model and operationalized the independent

variables to predict engagement in the workplace according to the three dimensions of the

theoretical framework. Again, the dimensions of Byrne's model are Personal Environment,

Work Environment, and Person (Self) (Byrne, 2015). The researcher used the five independent

variables selected based on the literature to gauge the perspectives of the population sample. The

study used the most relevant questions from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee

Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), aligned them under the dimension of Byrne's model, and measured

them as determinants of EE to add more structure. Responses from the questions/survey items

were identified and evaluated according to the population sample (n=642,800) to answer the

research question and the corresponding hypotheses.

The model's broad scope can appeal to researchers and practitioners to identify controls

and outcomes of engagement, although both conceptualize engagement differently (Byrne et al.,

2017). This appeal can allow science, practitioners, and academia to work jointly on engagement

as a construct. Research collaboration promotes a practical approach to bridging the gap between

research and practice that supports evidence-informed knowledge.

The following section will provide the dependent and independent variables to be

measured using the FY 2020 FEVS responses to operationalize each variable. Assessment of the

FEVS establishes that several survey questions aligned with topics supported by researchers are

crucial to engagement. The FEVS questions/items will be used to measure the variables'

significance and determine their role as influencers and drivers of engagement.

Dependent Variable

Employee Engagement (EE) is employees' enthusiasm when performing their work

duties and commitment to the organizational goals, objectives, and core values. According to

Turner (2019), EE transforms exponentially in a contemporary environment in the face of intense

competition, disruptive innovation, and continuous change in the social and economic context in

which it operates and competes. Engagement is linked directly to employees' attitudes about

their work, how they are treated, whether they feel a sense of purpose, and whether or not the

employee feels connected to the organization's purpose, goals, and objectives. Engagement

grows naturally from employee experiences, which consist of a worker's experience in a job,

including what the worker encounters and observes throughout their employment, starting at

recruitment.

EE plays a critical role in the success of organizations because it provides the highest

employee satisfaction, lowers employee turnover rates, increases employee loyalty, increases

customer service, and increases performance and productivity. Engaged employees also become

advocates of the organization and contribute to bottom-line success. The more motivated

employees are, the more secure they are in their work duties and performance. They strive to do

their best to fulfill their duties with the goals and objectives in mind and for the organization's

benefit. This motivation increases their faith in the organization and loyalty, establishes a

conducive working environment, increases interpersonal relationships and team building, and

raises morale.

Employee Engagement (EE) is a significant factor in determining the success of an organization. Engaged employees are emotionally invested in committing their time, energy, and talent, thus adding value to the organization and advancing its initiatives. EE is central to creating a favorable working atmosphere that helps workers achieve organizational goals. Crowley (2022) suggests that being engaged in one's job means an employee is emotionally devoted and highly committed and will put in discretionary efforts to ensure the organization's mission is fulfilled. Engagement enables employees to invest in their work, with self-efficacy that positively impacts their health and well-being, which evokes increased engagement and support for the organization.

Employees who feel personally accomplished in their work roles produce higher work quality and are more motivated than those who do not. The more engaged employees are, the better the outcome. Nothing is as crucial to an employee as believing their contributions make a difference in the workplace. Personal accomplishment is an individual's feelings of competence and achievement (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). When employees achieve a high level of personal accomplishment and success, it can motivate them to perform their work assignments with passion and increase their self-efficacy and engagement (Bang & Reio, 2017), giving them a sense of pride that connects employees to their duties (Garman et al., 2002).

Taris et al. (2004) state that a positive relationship between personal accomplishment and achievement is vital for creating a productive and healthy work environment. Most employees want to feel like they contribute meaningfully to their workplace. Maslach and Jackson (1984) suggest that employees who feel a sense of personal accomplishment feel more motivated, improve overall performance, and are more engaged than those who do not. According to Crowley (2022), a person's degree of engagement is not just based on what they think about their

job (cognitive); it is also significantly influenced by emotions and how they feel about their job. Employees' emotional connection to work, their feelings about their work role and culture, and whether their work fulfills them are influential determinants of engagement. This study will explore Employee Engagement (EE) from a public sector point of view and use responses from questions/survey items from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) as a proxy to measure each variable.

Independent Variables

Byrne's 1st Theoretical Dimension: Personal Environment

Byrne's model proposes that personal environment refers to the environment around the person outside the job, such as life sustenance and social support. Findings have shown that self-esteem, self-efficacy, and the ability to perceive and regulate emotions positively predict work engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015). Engaged workers are optimistic about satisfying their needs (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs) by participating in high organizational roles (self-actualization). Dik et al. (2017) state that people can view work as a job, focusing on the material benefits of work and career, focusing on the incentives related to promotions, or as a calling, focusing on the fulfillment associated with performing the work. Dik et al. (2017) add that Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, and Tipton (1985) identified three inner work orientations: job, career, and calling.

Extrinsic Motivation (EM) fits within Byrne's 1st theoretical dimension, Personal Environment, and is a critical variable influencing Employee Engagement (EE). Fundamentally, rewards and recognition are essential motivational tools to retain and effectively involve the workforce in their roles. Employee recognition and rewards are crucial in any organization's culture. EM are rewards and recognitions, which, by definition, entail rewarding and acknowledging employees for exceptional achievement in the workplace (Hussain et al., 2019).

Employee recognition and rewards promote specific activities, behaviors, or practices that lead to favorable organizational outcomes and improved performance. These incentives can be money, promotions, or praise and recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2011).

EM is operative when individuals perform to achieve outcomes such as a pat on the back, monetary reward, or salary increases. EM is an indispensable factor influencing Employee Engagement (EE) and motivates employees to focus on work and personal development. It involves both financial and non-financial rewards.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggest that monetary rewards can predict engagement. It becomes essential for leaders to present acceptable standards of compensation and recognition for their employees to ensure they are engaged. Recognition involves leadership rewarding employees for their hard work and achievements or other recognizable actions that benefit the organization's success. It is a fundamental part of the employee experience and influences employee performance; however, agencies often underestimate its importance.

Among the most effective motivating factors for employees is to be treated with honor by their leadership and peers (Rahmdhani et al., 2020). It is crucial to acknowledge employees at essential points in their careers, whether directly after a project is completed, on their work anniversary, or birthday (Rahmdhani et al., 2020). To keep them motivated, managers must identify when employees go above and beyond their basic job tasks and show appreciation, whether coming up with new ideas or expanding their workload.

According to Hussain et al. (2019), mental health is among the many good consequences of employee recognition. In today's world, having good mental health is essential for being productive in competitive organizations amidst stress. Recognizing employees for their accomplishments at work from time to time is also critical to mental and emotional well-being.

One of the advantages of employee recognition in organizations is that it not only ensures that employee performance remains ideal before the reward but also has the potential to increase performance on other assigned duties. Rewards and recognition keep employees engaged and satisfied, knowing their contributions to the organization are valued.

Ali and Ahmed (2009) state that there is a significant relationship between rewards and recognition programs and employee motivation. Jehanzeb et al. (2012) noted in their study of public and private banks that rewards and recognition motivated bank employees and found that they fostered positive relationships. This quantitative research study interviewed 568 employees from both bank sectors. The study's regression analysis was developed to test the relationship between rewards, motivation, and job engagement. The results indicate that rewards correlate positively with motivation and job satisfaction and affect performance, production, and profitability. The study showed that the employees were motivated through financial rewards rather than other rewards or recognition.

Recognizing and honoring the accomplishments of employees contributes to a strong organizational culture. This is reflected in the level of employee satisfaction. According to Rahim et al. (2017) add that employees who are frequently recognized are less likely to quit their jobs than those not recognized or rewarded. Workers who are appreciated and recognized openly are incentivized to stay committed to their work. This is due to the respect they receive from their employers for a job well done or other accomplishments. As a result, workers are motivated to enhance their work performance and give their best services to the organization daily.

A Saks (2006) study explained that organizational performance and employee job engagement depended upon employee happiness and well-being. Anitha (2014) also mentioned that rewards influence employees' happiness and well-being and are originators of engagement.

Extrinsic Motivation (EM) is a basic need and must be sufficient to support a good quality of life. It is associated with motivating Employee Engagement (EE) in the workplace. Extrinsic rewards cannot be discarded as an essential factor in engagement, and they have benefits and the capacity to motivate employees (Cerasoli et al. 2014). Organizations should start recognizing the benefits of extrinsic rewards. Life sustenance is the means of supporting, maintaining, or supplying the necessities of life (Byrne, 2022). Words of affirmation and praise are also essential in raising engagement levels. Rewards and recognition are crucial in organizations to promote motivation and increase engagement. The hypothesis statement is as follows:

- **Ho1**: Extrinsic Motivation Influences Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations.

Byrne's 2d Dimension: Work Environment

The second dimension of Byrne's theoretical framework, Work Environment, refers to anything related to the workplace (e.g., leadership, job characteristics, resources, culture, and fit). A healthy work environment is crucial in engaging employees and is an essential dimension of Byrne's Engagement Model. According to Byrne (2015, 2022), the work environment significantly determines Employee Engagement (EE) in an organization. Therefore, a meaningful workplace environment that aids employees in focused work and interpersonal harmony is crucial to EE (Githinji & Muli, 2018). The researcher will evaluate Byrne's work environment dimension using three chosen independent variables, supported by literature, that fit within the dimension: Senior Leadership, Personal Development and Growth, and Work-life Programs. The researcher selected the independent variables using scholarly journal articles that meet the criteria as a determinant and predictor of EE.

Senior Leadership: Previous literature supports the influence of Senior Leadership on EE. The idea of a leader is to provide transformational guidance and direction to an organization or body of people toward achieving set goals and targets. The best leaders understand that the results and outcomes are positive when employees are engaged. They apply the appropriate leadership theory and adopt a suitable leadership style in guiding the organization to success. The essence of leadership in the public eye is to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in providing quality public service (Kettl, 2015).

According to Zhao and Sheng (2019), leadership is an essential factor in the workplace that considerably influences employees' attitudes, psychology, and behavior. Similarly, Gutermann (2019) postulates that leadership is entrusted with articulating, teaching, and coaching followers to accept and apply the vision and values that support organizations' goals. Investigating the relationship between organizational leadership and employee engagement is essential, as such relationships affect performance and productivity (Marquard, 2010). Gallup's organizational research indicates that at least 70% of the variation in engagement can be explained by the quality of the leader (Harter, 2018).

According to Nikolova et al. (2019), positive leadership styles inspire and motivate employees by allowing flexibility in their ability to have freedom when performing their tasks and making decisions that promote autonomy; decision-making encourages the psychological state of engagement (Nikolova et al. (2019). Two of the most effective leadership styles are Servant Leadership (SL) and Transformational Leadership (TL), where leaders are encouraged to serve, develop, empower, inspire, and support followers (Tuan, 2018). SL leads employees to be more engaged because they are cared for and acknowledged as meaningful contributors to the organization (Ljungholm, 2016). Transformational leadership (TL) provides an inspiring vision,

aligning followers' goals with the organization's (Byrne, 2022). TL transforms organizational norms and stimulates employees to achieve high-performance levels to fulfill the vision. Transformational leaders focus on persuading people to make better decisions by collectively identifying what needs to change, generating a visible roadmap, and carrying out organizational change (Kerdngern & Thanitbenjasith, 2017). Transformational leaders encourage employees to make decisions and empower them to develop as individuals and teams via coaching and mentoring (Anderson, 2017). It can be stated that organizational leaders must have transformational attributes by being well-informed of their employees because transformational leaders can inspire employees to achieve anticipated or significant outcomes (Khan et al. 2020).

From an organizational covenantal perspective, leaders should serve and be accountable to employees. The covenantal approach facilitates the ability of individuals and organizations to continually learn, become innovators, reach new thresholds of excellence, and enhance the quality of life for employees (Caldwell & Hasan, 2016). Fischer and Schultz (2017) posit that decentralization, participative decision-making, active dialog, and big-picture thinking are all encouraged by a covenantal approach, which in turn helps to foster innovation. The essence of leadership in the public eye is to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in providing quality public service. The priorities should be maintaining a balance between the leader and employees and ethically accomplishing the organization's objectives while ensuring the employees' health and welfare.

According to Fischer (2017), research on Servant Leadership (SL) continues to flourish and advises that it is helpful to understand how an interpretation of subservience in organizations contributes to an engaged organization. Fischer's perspective is that leaders inspire followers by creating a sense of shared vision and letting followers contribute to the formation and

implementation of that vision. This encouragement and empowerment fulfill the covenantal ethos of mutual care and accountability (Fischer, 2017). This ideology can work in organizational settings as it will show employees they are cared for and valuable to the organization's success.

Caniëls et al. (2018) examined employee traits and leadership styles to determine how the two worked together to impact work engagement. The study used survey data from 259 employees of internationally operating high-tech organizations. When employees have a growth mindset, they are eager to improve themselves, have positive beliefs about the value of hard work, see setbacks as opportunities for learning, and are dedicated to their work. Employees with growth mindsets will likely enjoy their jobs because of the daily challenges of work opportunities and personal growth.

While not a direct leadership style, a leader's Emotional Intelligence (EI) has also strengthened the employee's perception of positive leadership styles and employee engagement (Milhem et al. (2019). Research supports a positive relationship between leaders with high EI and employees' work engagement (Van Oosten et al., 2019). EI refers to interrelated skills associated with interpersonal relationships and emotional regulation, precisely accurate perception, expression, and emotional understanding (Byrne, 2022). A leader with strong leadership skills and high EI can quickly motivate and influence employees and apply successful organizational changes. EI is a personality trait that refers to the individual ability to effectively understand and even manage their own emotions for constructive gain. Leaders use EI to create a good relationship with their subordinates, making it easy to influence them to act in a specific manner (Lubbadeh, 2020). A leader's attitude and behavior determine whether an organization has an engaged workforce. What leaders think and feel, say and do, profoundly impacts

Employee Engagement (EE); employees are enthusiastic about their work, desire to do their best, and are committed to going beyond their job description.

EI enables leaders to gain the ability to manage their emotions when dealing with employees in the workplace; as a result, it is significant to leaders or managers because it eliminates cases of negativism or overreaction that might affect their interpersonal relations with employees. More research on these types of leadership can add knowledge to the engagement construct.

Senior Leaders communicating clearly and honestly are pivotal to an employee understanding an organization's policies (Rao & Rao, 2021). Vora and Patra (2017) add that employees must know their assigned duties and their relation to organizational objectives to be effective in their roles. Sincere leaders have the opportunity to inspire their workforce; an organization's success depends on its leaders' efforts to motivate its employees. When Leaders show interest in their employees' personal lives, employees tend to be more engaged at work. Employees are more engaged when their leaders know them on a personal level. An organization's success depends on having leaders and leadership styles that can successfully garner the support of its workforce. To be a successful leader, one must learn to think creatively and apply it in the workplace (Hynes & Mickahail, 2019). Building relationships in organizations through a covenantal lens can build work cultures where employees are proud to work.

For an organization's workforce to be engaged, its leaders must understand the value of autonomy and influence (Ahmetoglu et al., 2015). Balwant et al. (2020) add that allowing creativity in the workforce increases employee autonomy, and innovation increases Employee Engagement (EE). In their Engagement (EE) theory, Shen and Jiang (2019) agree that EE is a

product of effective communication in the workforce. Fischer (2017) adds that leadership that offers a covenantal approach has had a tremendous impact on the history of Western countries, perhaps, more importantly, social and cultural thought, and, therefore, might offer a practical approach to effective leadership.

The undeniable conclusion from the literature is that leaders are a crucial driver of EE. The nature of leaders in organizations has considerably changed over the years due to globalization, advanced technology, diversity, and demographic changes. Integrating effective leadership styles and behaviors in work environments fosters increased engagement in the workforce. As cited by Maciariello (2006), Drucker (2006) defined leadership as lifting a man's vision to higher sights, raising a man's performance to a higher standard, and building a man's personality beyond normal limits. According to Walk (2023), leadership is a relationship of influence between leaders and followers who intend fundamental changes reflecting mutual purposes. Therefore, Senior Leadership is crucial in organizations and leads to higher engagement levels. The hypothesis statement is as follows:

Ho2: Senior Leadership Influences Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations.

Professional Development and Growth: Crawshaw et al. (2012) pointed out that studying the relationship between professional development, career growth, and work performance and engagement is necessary. Researchers rarely examine the relationship between professional development, growth, and work engagement. However, according to the Theory of Need for Achievement, there are two psychological philosophies: the motive of people to achieve success and the motive of people to avoid failure (McClelland, 1965). When organizations establish a career path for employees and give them sufficient opportunities, they

stay longer. They are more committed to their positions and the organization. Organizations that open the door for employees to increase their knowledge and skill sets grow and reduce the probability that employees will not spend unnecessary personal hours producing incorrect outcomes.

Studies show that career growth and work engagement are closely linked. Bakker and Schaufeli's (2008) study of employees' psychological characteristics and work engagement showed that self-respect and optimism can predict the degree of work engagement when employees are given avenues to increase their knowledge and to work smarter, not harder. According to Bai and Liu (2018), organizations must fully understand the career growth paths of their employees of all generations. Organizations should understand their employees' career goals and help them achieve their career succession plan if they want their employees to be engaged and perform at their highest level. Career development helps organizations retain employees who are committed and loyal and stay longer.

Organizations should provide different challenging job opportunities and professional training where employees can be promoted to elevated responsibilities, leading to organizational esprit de corps. At the same time, a promotion path and proper compensation increases are indispensable because they affirm employees' self-achievement, personal accomplishment, and sense of value. It also lets employees know they are an asset and valued at work.

Hendrawan and Pogo (2021) posit that career development is an organized learning experience within a specific time to increase task performance growth and is a critical factor in organizational engagement. Hendrawan and Pogo (2021) conducted a survey study collecting data using multiple regression that was analyzed using responses from 71 employees. The study aimed to determine the effect of organizational culture, leadership style, and career development

on the cement industry's Employee Engagement (EE). Their study found that career development and growth significantly influenced EE when organizations offer professional development opportunities; it sets an environment where employees can improve their competencies to succeed personally and professionally.

Career satisfaction is one subjective indicator of subordinates' career success, reflecting their career achievement and satisfaction (Yang et al., 2018). Yang's study indicates that supervisory support is essential to subordinates' career satisfaction and promotability. Supervisory support of employees' personal goals motivates them to work harder and perform to their best abilities and gives them the necessary skill sets to proficiently perform their duties in the face of technical and economic challenges. Therefore, Professional Development and Growth are crucial in organizations and lead to higher engagement levels. The hypothesis statement is as follows:

- **Ho3**: Professional Development and Growth Influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations.

Work-life Programs: Work–life programs can be defined as how the organization intends to allow employees greater flexibility in their working patterns to balance what they do with their responsibilities and interests outside work (Armstrong, 2017). Flexible working arrangements offer flexibility regarding when people work and have become increasingly necessary and in demand by employers and employees alike. COVID-19 and post-pandemic work arrangements in today's workforce offer employees different work expectations, yet many organizational policies and procedures have not been fully adapted to accommodate this change (Ayling, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic work restrictions, companies quickly adopted new measures to facilitate smooth operations as the world shut down and working onsite was restricted due to quarantine lockdowns; employees see the benefit and choose to continue this work method. Work-life Programs allow employees to adjust to a compressed workweek or flexible work schedules outside the standard work hours (Wadsworth & Facer, 2016). Because the public sector does not have the financial incentives to give to employees that private sector organizations have, it relies on non-monetary incentives, like flexible work schedules, hybrid work schedules, and other nonmonetary incentives to motivate and get the most out of employees, making work programs a more important motivational tool than the private sector (Caillier, 2018).

WLPs are a mixture of working arrangements that support flexible schedules to meet the needs of employees. Work flexibility significantly affects how people feel, think, and communicate in a corporate setting (Hayman, 2009). These findings suggest that the psychological availability component of Kahn's (1990) theoretical framework is crucial to engaging in remote work situations. Golden (2012) indicates that workplace flexibility is vital in hiring and retaining the best talent because it allows organizations to recruit people from a broader candidate/application pool. Employees are looking for opportunities to have a work-life balance between managing both their work and personal lives. Organizations and Employees know the typical 40-hour work week is no longer conducive to an engaged workforce. Therefore, employees are actively looking for flexible work opportunities, and organizations must adapt to this new work situation to recruit the best and brightest candidates.

A growing interest in workplace flexibility has been prompted by trends and the 24-7 society (Deery et al., 2016), as well as demographic trends, including higher female workforce

participation, increased caregiver responsibilities, and growth in single-parent and two-income households (Fuller & Raman, 2019). The shift away from a fixed eight-hours-per-day, five-days-a-week schedule also reflects an increased desire for autonomy and job control by younger workers, who often value work-life balance as a goal (Kuron et al., 2015). These changes force organizations to restructure their policies to ensure they remain competitive. Successful organizations are measured by how well they face, cope, and adapt to these challenges (Khalifa & Mewad, 2017).

Work-life programs can include adjusting the employee's location to decrease commute times, Alternate Work Schedules (AWS), or Hybrid Work Schedules that offer employees a choice that fits their needs and personal lives (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Flexibility allows employees to manage family priorities, such as childcare and elder care responsibilities. (Landgraf, 2021). Ramakrishnan and Arokiasamy (2019) add that Work-life Programs (WLPs) are organizations' most frequently used practice to help employees balance time between work and family needs. Flexible work schedules have increasingly been adopted in private and public workplaces to achieve business goals and allow employees to manage challenges between work, family, and other non-work realms (Matos and Galinsky, 2014).

Caillier (2018) suggests that when agencies adopt flexible work schedules, the employees will remain with the organization longer because these programs demonstrate that the organization cares about their well-being. WLP allows individuals to control and manage where they work and their work schedules (Rudolph & Baltes 2017). According to research by Greenwood and Anas (2021), the top two reasons employees leave their place of employment were the policies surrounding in-person versus flexible work (41%) and the lack of WLPs or flexibility based on the policy (37%) created by the pandemic. Flexible working hours motivate

employees and increase satisfaction because of more freedom in the administration of work obligations and the opportunity to balance work and private life (Vlacsekova & Mura, 2017).

Kossek and Thompson (2016) contend that Work-Life Programs (WLP) create the belief that management is committed to employees and their needs. Alternate and hybrid schedules boost the morale of the employees by reducing absenteeism and tardiness. Kossek and Thompson (2016) suggest that most employers have used varied work schedules to minimize employee turnover and absenteeism, attract the best and brightest candidates, and make their organizations more attractive to outside candidates, especially the younger generational cohorts. However, as America transitions into new, modern, diverse work situations, 70% of managers have no training to lead hybrid teams, which could destroy engagement (Harter, 2024).

In the contemporary workplace, Employee WLPs are an innovative solution that offers motivation and well-being benefits, personnel pool enlargement, and cost efficiencies (Kim et al., 2021). Naqshbandi et al. (2023) conducted a quantitative study that collected data from 277 university employees in Nigeria. The findings show that flexible work contributes to increased work engagement of university staff members. Flexibility helps people access the labor market, stay in the workforce, manage family care responsibilities, increase well-being, and increase engagement. Schaufeli et al. (2002) suggest that allowing staff members a degree of choice in work schedules enables them to exhibit high energy levels, feel enthusiastic about their jobs, and be deeply immersed in their work. Therefore, Work-life Programs are crucial in organizations to promote motivation and increase engagement. The hypothesis is as follows:

Ho4: Work-life Programs influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations.

Byrne's 3rd Theoretical Dimension: Person (Self)

Person (self) refers to what an individual brings to the workplace (e.g., personality, identification with the occupation, need for belongingness). As individuals experience engagement, their feelings of personal alignment, fitness, and competence are integrated into the work environment. Byrne (2022) states that engaged employees at their actual state are about investing themselves at work, being authentic in their job, and delivering their work performance with passion, persistence, enthusiasm, and energy. In turn, the employee will commit to performing meaningful activities, boosting morale at work. Intrinsically motivated employees choose the best way of executing challenging duties and ensure that they execute the assigned activities competently without any external motivation, thus achieving individual purposes (Ryan & Deci, 2011).

Intrinsic Motivation (IM): IM is when employees perform activities at their highest levels because they are interested in the task rather than for monetary or recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Byrne (2022) posited that IM refers to motivation derived from internal rewards and satisfaction and contrasts with Extrinsic Motivation (EM) derived from external rewards and recognition. It is based on people's inclination to be proactive, interact and affect the world, and feel a sense of achievement. When employees are intrinsically motivated, they are eager to take on challenges, partial to innovation, engaged with exciting tasks, anxious to be effective, and ready to learn; these are indicators of IM and critical for optimal development (Deci, 2017).

IM is influenced and fueled by an individual's desire directly attached to the task. IM makes it easier for an individual to invest time and energy inherently, as they reflect much more on the meaning and significance of the task and bring a sense of real benefit to the need to accomplish the goal. The components of IM are learning driven by curiosity and interest, striving for competence, and independent mastery (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Intrinsically motivated

employees engage in their duties because they enjoy doing it and get personal satisfaction from it.

Working in public service provides a source of personal fulfillment that intrinsically can motivate employees and give them a feeling of working for a purpose, leading employees to spend many extra hours performing jobs paid on a salary basis, not hourly. When intrinsically motivated, employees experience work activities as an end in itself, such that the activity and its goal collide. The result is increased interest and enjoyment of work activities (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). A specific type of motivation that continues to attract attention from scholars and practitioners worldwide is public service motivation (PSM), which refers to an individual's orientation to delivering services to people to do good for others and society (Ritz et al., 2016). The foundation of PSM ties employees who complete their duties and work for the public sector because they are motivated by the government's mission to serve the public.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposes that IM is an internal feeling of competence and autonomy. The theory suggests that people are engaged, even when tasks are not fundamentally interesting because they know their roles will provide or meet their needs of purpose, competence, autonomy, and relatedness, and anything otherwise will impede their ability to become engaged (Davis & Bowles, 2018). Accordingly, White (1959) suggested that people have biological needs and drives that must be satisfied to remain healthy and specified that the need for purpose and competence is essential. Employees choose to do their work duties because it is internally rewarding, and the outcomes satisfy basic psychosomatic requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Moller, 2017).

Subsequently, Deci (2017) maintained that three fundamental psychological conditions exist for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which are operative for all human beings to

develop and function optimally. Feelings of competence and independence underlie intrinsic motivation, which is motivation propelled by internal interest and spontaneous satisfaction from an activity (Byrne, 2022). Intrinsic motivation aligns with Kahn's theory that work is valuable and meaningful. The hypothesis statement is as follows:

- **Ho5**: Intrinsic Motivation Influences Employee Engagement in Public Sector Organizations.

Control Variables

This study includes two demographic control variables: age and gender. A control variable is anything held constant or limited in a research study (Bhandari, 2022). The variables are held constant to establish if the variables are statistically associated. Bhandari (2022) suggests that aside from the independent and dependent variables, all other variables that impact the results should be controlled. This analysis will examine the engagement level of employees and the extent to which the demographic variables age and gender among the surveyed employees can contribute to the study.

Currently, organizations face workforce diversity challenges, making it imperative to study how demographics influence Employee Engagement (EE) and identify factors that impact overall engagement within different demographic groups. According to Bakker and Albrecht (2018), future researchers should dedicate more time to understanding what influences engagement in demographic groups and across industries and work. By controlling age and gender, it can be determined if the chosen demographics add more knowledge to the study. Controlling age and gender will also increase validity and decrease research bias.

Age

The workforce is aging, with older employees becoming a more significant portion of the organization's population. The news that the early retirement trend has been reversed and current

older workers plan to work past conventional retirement ages has been widely proclaimed. Leaders must understand how age influences employee work engagement and support human capital management strategies (Roberts, 2020). Leaders have been encouraged to adjust to differences in job conditions that are important to older workers and to embrace the new generational cohorts (James et al., 2011).

Today's workplace, however, includes workers of all ages, from young adulthood to retirement-eligible and beyond, all of whom are in different stages of their careers (James et al., 2011). With these diverse age groups come different ideologies about work norms and work expectations. According to Roberts (2020), there are negative stereotypes associated with older workers being poor performers, resistant to change, and overall, less engaged. Despite such perceptions, prior studies have found employees over 50 to be most engaged at work, demonstrating emotional and intellectual involvement that motivates them to perform at higher levels (James et al., 2012; Towers-Perrin, 2005).

James et al. (2012) posit that older employees are more engaged than younger workers when working with supportive leadership in a caring work environment. The categorization of different generations is still under discussion; however, in any case, it is agreed that each generation is distinguished by the dominant personality traits, values, and approach to work norms (Statnickė, 2016). A survey by Alam et al. (2022) was distributed to a mid-sized energy company based in North America. A two-stage hierarchical multiple regression was performed with Employee Engagement (EE) as the dependent variable, and the control variables were age and education. According to the study, older employees show higher levels of engagement. Based on other studies by Kim and Kang (2017) and James et al. (2011), who investigated EE and age, they found a positive relationship between generation and engagement, stating that older

employees are more engaged than younger employees. Therefore, age will be controlled to see if it can add value to this study using the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) as the sample population.

Gender

Demographics such as gender are essential to ensure organizations remain sustainable, productive, and competitive. An empirical research study was conducted by Dhir and Shukla (2019) with a sample size of 90 employees of an Indian Web-based B2C e-commerce company in the National Capital Region (NCR) utilizing the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) in 2014. The study's results indicate significant differences in demographic variables and found that females were more engaged than males.

In contrast, Banihani et al. (2013) suggest that work engagement through a gender lens showed that men could be more physically, cognitively, and emotionally engaged than women in organizations. They posit that organizations' structure, culture, and ideologies disadvantage women and make it harder for them to experience the three psychological conditions of work engagement. Banihai's study suggests that women may have more difficulties and barriers than men in the workforce and more family responsibilities, which can cause them to be less engaged than men. Salas-Vallina and Algre (2017) agree that women who bear the bulk of home responsibilities are more negatively affected by engagement and add that it is possibly because of the demands of an overcharged life.

Since men and women typically behave differently in the workplace due to differences in family and social roles, organizations should consider these differences when developing policies and procedures to increase engagement (Mascarenhas et al., 2022). The survey includes data from employees who identified as transgender in the workplace. According to James et al.

(2015), recent societal and legal shifts have brought transgender issues to the forefront for organizations regarding diversity and inclusion efforts because future surveys will likely observe higher numbers of employees identifying as transgender people. Organizations should capture data from all population segments to research and study all employees' unique needs and perspectives to support the total workforce.

Summary

Research has uncovered many challenges that organizations face in the 21st century. These challenges are due to the revolutionary changes impacted by creative thinking, institutional knowledge, sophisticated partnerships, data-driven decision-making, globalization, technological advancements, internationalism, competition, diversity and inclusion, and remote working cohesiveness and collaboration (Crowley, 2022). Employee Engagement (EE) can be the defining factor between a well-run or stagnant organization. Improving EE levels in organizations is crucial for creating competitive advantages for business organizations' sustainability and competing for the best talent (Susilo, 2018). Globalization defines the growing interconnection of the world's financial system, societies, and people brought about by cross-border commerce in goods and services, technology, and the flow of investment and information that cause economic rivalry (Coulibaly, 2018). While this means better terms of service and multiple opportunities for career development, it also culminates in fierce competition among organizations to attract and retain the best talent.

Research suggests that EE is positively related to good service provision, client satisfaction improvement, and service quality, which are central values in New Personnel Management (NPM) (Parry, 2002). Governments are not exempt from the brutal competition in a free market; they must measure up or remain ahead to produce better programs and products,

provide better services, retain their talent, and safeguard their appeal to customers and job seekers. Engagement is a crucial element to good governance and enhancing performance in organizations. Disengaged employees are costly to public organizations and could negatively influence public service delivery of programs and services (Andrews & Mostafa, 2019). Therefore, identifying the drivers of work engagement in the public sector is essential.

Creating engaging organizations in the workforce has become a crucial component of creating a competitive edge over rivals (Hitt et al., 2017). Engaged workers are cognitively focused, emotionally connected, and physically active. McManus and Mosca (2015) propose an engaged workforce characterized by employees' passion for their jobs, commitment, and ability to exert the appropriate effort in their everyday duties. Today's employees seek employers who will involve them in every aspect of the mission, allow autonomy, promote enthusiasm, and create a good working environment that encourages interpersonal relationships, professional development, and work-life balance (McManus & Mosca, 2015). These are all the components necessary to cultivate an engaged workforce.

According to Thornton (2019), researchers have established a positive correlation between Employee Engagement (EE) and increased performance, productivity, organization sustainability, and competitive advantage. Researchers, practitioners, and academics realize that the most valuable aspect of the organization is the employee. Administrators of organizations must understand that employee wellness is multifaceted and includes not just physical health but emotional, spiritual, financial, and other subdimensions that cause positive relationships in organizations. Understanding that EE is interwoven with effective results-driven strategies ensures organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Delery and Roumpi (2017) state that across industries, some organizations thrive more than others, and the differences result in whether the employees are engaged. Organizations realize that the current environment demands much more efficiency and effectiveness than at any other time in our history (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). As more technological advances are introduced, the human capital aspects of the workforce become more critical. How organizations adapt to this culture will determine whether they thrive or survive and whether U.S. and global output will decrease or increase (Clifton & Harter, 2023).

Given the federal government's effect across the nation, it is crucial to have an engaged workforce to operate efficiently and effectively to maintain economic and social stability (Partnership for Public Service, 2018). While private sector surveys contain material differences from the OPM FEVS survey, similar trends are visible regarding engagement and satisfaction levels. EE has become a massive issue in all work sectors, public, private, and non-governmental businesses. This study will examine the variables that affect EE that employers need to implement in their organizations. Also, there needs to be more research on interventive measures that best reflect the practical values of EE in human resource management (Sun & Bunchapattanasakda, 2019).

This study explores the theories, empirical research studies, and knowledge of Employee Engagement (EE). The literature reflects the critical theories of engagement, disengagement, generational cohorts in the workforce, and advantages, impacts, and experiences, including definitions, measurements, benefits, and challenges. EE is essential to performance, execution, competitiveness, and well-being across industries and costs organizations billions of dollars annually in low productivity, employee turnover, recruitment, and replacement costs. Exploring and measuring engagement in organizations is instrumental to organizational excellence.

Employee Engagement (EE) sets the environment for employees to feel included as an active part of the organization, valued team members, and active contributors and to participate in the organization's decision-making and solutions that keep employees engaged.

Previous studies have focused on work-life balance, employee satisfaction, demographic values, their relationship with employees, and their impact on organizations' success. Researchers have yet to consider the importance of EE determinants and factors in organizations as they relate to organizations' sustainability, competitiveness, diversity, and the health and welfare of employees, as well as how to ensure that the goals and objectives are successfully executed. According to Saks (2006), EE has drawn much interest among consulting companies and businesses but has not been studied extensively, empirically, and theoretically in academic research. As researchers solidify EE as a distinct construct, a universal definition, and model should be found along with identifying approaches to influence engagement across public and private organizations.

Against this backdrop, the present research study evaluates the influences and factors of EE in public sector organizations, including the benefits to the organization and the employee. Researchers and Administrators in the human resource arena agree that EE is critical to organizational success. Nevertheless, a commonly accepted definition is yet to exist. According to Byrne (2022), one primary research focus should be building an organizational culture to improve competitive advantage and increase Employee Engagement (EE). The ability to achieve a unique advantage over competitors in a way that explains why some organizations are more successful than others is essential to the survival of both public and private organizations in today's highly competitive business world (Jahanshahi & Bhattacharjee, 2020). How well an organization meets its employees' needs governs how positive their work experience is and

determines the level of engagement. It can be the difference between a flourishing organization and an organization that fails, and it is conducive across all industries to build stable and significant relationships so organizations can effectively and efficiently do America's business.

The literature review reveals that EE has been conceptualized in many ways. There is no universally agreed-upon definition, and research has shown that however engagement is defined, it is a multi-faceted construct (Kahn, 1990; Turner, 2020). Various definitions and conceptualizations make EE a complicated construct. Despite this issue, EE had similar patterns regardless of the context or work setting in which the research was performed; overall, EE levels are very concerning. The benefits of EE are well worth continued research and have a tremendous effect on social and economic development. This finding reveals that many people are unhappy in their workplace and either leave the organization, disengage, or quietly quit their jobs, negatively affecting organizational outcomes, employee mental health and well-being, and billions of dollars in low production and turnover costs.

This quantitative study examines factors influencing Employee Engagement (EE), evaluating five critical determinants: Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-Life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation. The study will also investigate the predictability of degrees of EE through the five selected variables by testing the hypotheses and operationalizing each variable that fits within the three dimensions of Byrne's engagement model.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employees Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) responses will be used as a proxy to operationalize the variables. The FEVS allows the employees to share their perceptions of whether and to what extent conditions characteristic of an engaged workforce are present in the public sector. The responses to the survey questions/survey items will be measured

to predict the influence each variable has on engagement according to federal government employees. These questions, leveraged correctly, can indicate the strength of each variable's role in substantiating an environment supportive of an engaging workforce. The study will evaluate two control variables, age, and gender, using two demographic survey categories, under 40 and over 40, to see if they can add to the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This research study evaluated factors and drivers of Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. This chapter describes the research method and design, research question, hypotheses, sample participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis plan that were instrumental to this study. The gap in the literature identified the need for further research on factors that drive and predict engagement across specific industry sectors, including the federal workplace (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). The study expanded the theoretical framework using secondary data from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey using Byrne's (2015, 2022) engagement model. This study translates the intuitive ideas from business into theoretical and empirical organizational and social sciences works (Byrne, 2015).

Design

According to De Vaus (2001), the research design refers to the overall strategy that is chosen to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent analogical way, thereby ensuring the investigation will address the research topic and constitute the design for the collection, measurement, and analyses of the data. The research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for a study. An important decision in the research design method is the choice concerning the research approach since it establishes how relevant data for a study will be collected; however, the research design method requires many interrelated decisions (Aaker et al., 2000).

A quantitative analysis of secondary data was chosen for this study. Quantitative research is a type of empirical research into a social phenomenon or human problem, testing a theory

consisting of variables that are measured numerically and analyzed with statistics to determine if the theory predicts the phenomena of interest (Creswell, 1994; Gay & Airasian, 2000). This quantitative approach obtained precise and dependable measurements for a thorough statistical analysis. Mohajan (2020) posits that quantitative methods quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables and generalize results from a sample population by generating numerical data.

Quantitative research focuses on gathering statistical data and generalizing across groups of people or explaining a particular phenomenon. An advantage of the quantitative method is that it allows one to measure the responses of numerous participants to a set of questions, thereby facilitating association and numerical collection of the data (Yilmaz, 2013). It concerns getting clear answers to enable readers and future researchers to move from stipulated assumptions. Ahmad et al. (2019) establish that a quantitative method uses data collected via a structured instrument in research, with the results building from large sample size to produce representative and generalizable findings. Ramlo (2020) concurred with Ahmad et al. (2019) that quantitative studies are reproducible, allowing for their replication, thereby commanding high reliability.

Quantitative research involves collecting, analyzing, interpreting, writing, and understanding a phenomenon (Creswell, 2002; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). The structures and guidelines indicate what is needed and the types of inferences based on the data collected. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that quantitative research is specific in surveying and experimentation, as it builds upon existing theories. The quantitative analysis creates meaning through objectivity uncovered in the collected data. Quantitative researchers may use survey data to test hypotheses and measure the relations of variables (Halcomb & Peters, 2016; Raheim et al., 2016).

The researcher used a quasi-experimental design to discover answers to the research question. A quasi-experimental design is similar to an experimental one because both require a controlled environment; however, researchers use a quasi-experimental method when intentionally selecting participants (Apuke, 2017). A quasi-experimental research design aims to determine the influence of the predictor variables on a dependent variable within a sample population. Quasi-experimental designs are best suited to answer questions about relationships between variables that the researcher cannot easily manipulate (Rezigalla, 2020).

The research question in this study is regarding the factors and drivers that influence EE, and a quasi-experimental design was considered appropriate. A quasi-experimental design was considered more appropriate than an experimental design because it would not be feasible for the researcher to manipulate the factors that influence EE experimentally. The Quasi-experimental design was also chosen because it enabled the researcher to investigate the concern by utilizing available data gathered by the government.

A quasi-experimental design involves quantitative hypothesis testing through statistical methods. Quantitative hypothesis testing is the most appropriate method for determining if a statistically significant relationship exists between variables under investigation. The deductive approach involves beginning with a theory, developing hypotheses from that theory, and then collecting and analyzing data to test those hypotheses. The study aimed to find whether Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation statistically influence Employee Engagement (EE). A quasi-experimental design is the most appropriate research design to understand these influences. The design will answer whether these variables influenced EE.

Quantitative research relies on observed or measured data that explore questions about the sample population (Allen, 2017). The quantitative research approach determines if the study's independent variables (IV) significantly impact the dependent variable (DV). The quantitative research approach also determines if these relationships are significant after controlling for age and gender. According to Allen (2017), the results of quantitative research specify an explanation of what factors, drivers, and influences are essential to the sample population.

The quantitative methodology was also selected due to its objectiveness when measuring and quantifying data. Christensen et al. (2011) suggest that quantitative methodology would be more suitable than qualitative methodology when the hypotheses exist before data collection instruments such as questionnaires or surveys are used to collect numerical data. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) is available publicly and is the largest annual survey of government employees collecting feedback on their current work environment. Using the FEVS data set allowed the researcher to evaluate Employee Engagement (EE) factors that span multiple agencies among federal employees. According to Wang and Brower (2019), the survey gives good representativeness, presents good generalizability, is readily available to the public, and is compatible with other government data sources. Thompson and Siciliano (2017) add that the federal employees' survey is among the most comprehensive data sources in public sector surveys and gives researchers an excellent platform to investigate issues concerning organizations in the public sector organizations.

It is essential to note that the research design, being non-experimental, does not show or prove causation, even if a relationship between variables is found to be significant. Additionally, the researcher has no control over any variables because measurements are taken in natural settings. As such, the researcher analyzes the data obtained without replicating the situation in a

controlled environment. The approach fits the research topic because one of the main goals will be to understand the employees' perceptions of work experiences, leadership, and work environments. Chapter Two provided a comprehensive literature review to understand how Employee Engagement (EE) has advanced due to its increased importance to public administration, practitioners, and academia and its critical implications in the workforce.

The research used secondary data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) to address the research question and the corresponding hypotheses. One of the main requirements of a research design is that the results obtained should be valid and reliable, such that should the research be repeated under similar conditions, similar results would be obtained. Quasi-experimental research studies are quantitative methodologies designed to examine and understand influences among variables. Random sampling ensures that every subject in the population stands an equal chance of being selected, thereby eliminating subjective bias. This ensures that the model gives reliable and valid results.

The researcher used the multiple linear regression model to evaluate quantitative analysis in the study. The regression analysis revealed the factors' values from the Independent Variables (IV), the predicted Dependent Variable (DV), and the associated assumptions. This study used multiple linear regression with five independent variables listed to measure their influence on the dependent variable, Employee Engagement (EE). Multiple regression analysis provides a significant understanding of how variables being measured in the study influence the primary variable being studied. It clearly outlined the relationship between the analyzed variables in public sector organizations using federal government employees as the sample population.

Many researchers use multiple regression analysis when using quantitative research methods to evaluate the statistical relationship between multiple variables. Simple linear

regression is used to establish if there is a relationship or statistically significant relationship between two variables. In addition, multiple regression models can simultaneously describe the physical principles acting on a data set and provide a powerful tool to predict the impacts of changes described by the data. The regression technique can guide researchers in explaining the dynamics causing a particular construct by revealing which combined variables correlate with it. The model that is developed can also serve a descriptive and predictive purpose. Despite the dependent variable not being continuous, current research posits that multiple linear regression may be used because logistic or profit regression strategies are often neither optimum nor defensible when the objective is to estimate the contributing effects of experimental behaviors on binary outcomes (Gomila, 2021). According to Judkins & Porter (2016), this is true of the sample size and distribution of binary outcome variables in the context of a quasi-experimental design. Gomila (2021) adds that linear regression analysis is the most powerful, flexible, and simple strategy in the presence of binary outcomes. According to Hellevik (2009), the intuitively meaningful interpretation of using linear versus logistic regression makes it easier to communicate research results to broader audiences without statistical training or critical evaluation of a researcher's conclusions.

Two control variables were examined in this study: age and gender. A control variable is held constant or included in this analysis because it could influence the study's outcome (Bhandari, 2022). The goal is to use the control variables to determine whether the dependent variable was influenced by comparing two or more groups of individuals. Statistical tests, such as regression analysis, determine how each variable affects the dependent variable and to what degree. The control variable is not primarily concerned with the research's objectives and is restricted because it could influence the outcomes. The variable is held constant to help establish

an association to determine the extent to which variables are statistically related. In regression

analysis, control and independent variables are predictors.

Control variables may enhance statistical conclusion validity in regression analyses. This

analysis examined the factors that influence the engagement level of employees and the extent to

which the demographic variables age and gender among the surveyed employees contributed to

the study. Currently, organizations face workforce diversity challenges, making it imperative to

study how demographics influence Employee Engagement (EE) and identify factors that impact

overall EE within different demographic groups.

The global labor market is covered by three generations – Baby Boom, X, and the rapidly

growing Y Generation. All of them are in different age groups and have different working styles,

values, and attitudes toward work, communication, and management (Valickas & Jakštaitė,

2017). According to the demographics in the FY 2020 FEVS regarding generation, less than one

percent were Traditionalists (born 1945 or earlier), 31% were Baby Boomers (born 1946 to

1964), 46% were from Generation X (born 1965 to 1980), 22% were from Generation Y (born

1981 to 1996), and less than one percent were from Generation Z (born 1997 or later). As for the

control variable gender, 55% of the survey participants are male, 45% are female, and 1%

percent of the sample participants identified as transgender. Age and gender in the workplace are

critical for organizations facing diverse challenges. It is essential to explore demographic

variables and the possible impact on workers' performance (Ahmad, 2020).

Table 3

Classification of Generations (Strauss & Howe, 1991)

Name of the generation	Birth period
Lost Generation	1883 – 1900
Greatest Generation	1901 – 1924
Silent Generation	1925 – 1942
Baby Boom Generation	1943 – 1960
Generation X	1961 – 1981
Millennial Generation	1982 – 2001

Research Question

This research study established if linear associations exist and measured and evaluated the factors and drivers influencing Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. The dependent variable in this study was EE, and the Independent Variables were Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation. The control variables included in the study are age and gender. Therefore, the research question that this study analyzed is:

RQ1: What factors and drivers influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector organizations?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses can be directional or non-directional, depending on the alternative hypothesis statement. In the current scenario, the hypotheses are non-directional because the relationship expected from the data has yet to be explicitly stated as positive or negative. Therefore, the test results of the correlation coefficient, either positive or negative, will be relevant and acceptable

to the researcher. The alternative hypothesis should remain non-directional since each variable can enhance or inhibit Employee Engagement (EE). The study hypotheses corresponding to RQ1 are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis Number	Hypothesis
Ho1	Extrinsic Motivation influences Employee Engagement.
Ho2	Senior Leadership Influences Employee Engagement.
Ho3	Professional Development and Growth influence Employee Engagement.
Ho4	Work-Life Programs Influence Employee Engagement.
Ho5	Intrinsic Motivation influences Employee Engagement.

Participants and Setting

A research population is a group or collection of individuals with similar characteristics from whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions (Greener, 2011). The population in this study included employees of federal government agencies. Secondary data collected from this population was analyzed in this study. Specifically, the researcher used the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). FY 2020 FEVS is an organizational climate survey administered by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Researchers recognized

administrative reform as a constant feature of American Public Administration (APA), and the initiative has become one of the top initiatives underway to improve effectiveness and efficiency in the federal government (Hameduddin & Fernandez, 2019).

The FEVS was launched in 2002 as the Federal Human Capital Survey (FHCS) and was administered biennially until 2010. It was renamed FEVS and is now an annual climate survey administered to federal government workers. The Web-based survey is sent to employees across 82 agencies via a personalized link in an email, and weekly reminders are sent to nonrespondents over six weeks. Respondents to the survey are from across the federal government and work for small, medium, and large agencies (OPM, 2020a). OPM makes data on its public website (www.opm.gov/fevs).

The OPM FEVS sample design reflects its commitment to providing federal agency leadership with representative information about employees' perceptions of their work environment experiences. The survey population for the 2020 FEVS includes permanently employed, non-political, non-seasonal, full- or part-time, and phase-retire federal employees who were employed as of October 2019. The 2020 FEVS census administration included all eligible employees from 82 Executive Branch agencies.

The sampling frame is a comprehensive list of all people in the Federal employee population eligible for selection in the survey. The total survey population was 1,555,717 employees, but after cleaning procedures, including removing people who were no longer employees of an agency, the final population size was 1,410,610 Federal employees. Six hundred forty-two thousand eight hundred (n=642.800) responded to the survey with a 44.3% response rate. This sample size exceeds the required minimum to detect medium effect sizes in the proposed analyses. Sample size calculations performed in G*Power software (Faul et al., 2020)

revealed that a linear regression with three predictors requires a sample size of 103 to detect a medium effect size at an alpha level of .05 and a power level of .80.

The demographics in the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) show that less than one percent of employees surveyed were Traditionalists (born 1945 or earlier), 31% were Baby Boomers (born 1946 to 1964), 46% were from Generation X (born 1965 to 1980), 22% were from Generation Y (born 1981 to 1996), and less than one percent were from Generation Z (born 1997 or later). Regarding gender, 55% of the survey participants identified as male, 45% identified as female, and less than 1% identified as transgender.

Instrumentation

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) FEVS instrument is designed to assess the climate of Federal agencies. The climate is a multi-dimensional construct, exhibited through workplace intangibles such as behaviors and practices, which employees can perceive and describe in response to survey items developed to describe aspects of climate. Since 2002, federal agencies and public administration researchers have been using the data from FEVS to evaluate the state of federal personnel (McCarthy et al., 2020). Data from the FEVS is used to assess an/organization's strengths and weaknesses. The FEVS is the instrument used to measure Employee Engagement (EE) by having employees answer questions or survey items to determine their perspectives on engagement in the federal government. (OPM, 20190. Given the number of federal employees who completed the study (n = 642,800) in 2020, the survey is an excellent tool to measure the factors that influence EE.

The survey instrument consists predominantly of attitudinal items posed on a five-point Likert-type response scale, for example, ranging from "Completely Disagree" to "Completely Agree," and taps into a diverse range of constructs, such as job satisfaction, engagement, and the

perceptions of senior leadership within the agency. The research operationalized Employee Engagement (EE), Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation using questions/survey items from the FEVS as a proxy to analyze and measure the influences of engagement in public sector organizations.

The selection of the research instrument was largely contingent upon the data collection procedure, the type of data collected, and the research objectives and goals to assess the appropriateness of a research instrument (Bastos et al., 2014). Story and Tait (2019) shared the view of Vaske (2019), adding that online survey responses are used meaningfully in new research since the data collected is subjected to statistical analysis to yield conclusions and inferences. In contemporary research, Story and Tait (2019) asserted that diverse studies had been conducted using surveys because they are most effective and generate trustworthy and generalizable findings.

Moreover, the findings from online survey research are significant in evaluating people in an organization to build an understanding to inform business decisions regarding their customers or employees. Compared to other data collection methods, online surveys, according to Wagner et al. (2020), have been proven to be largely effective in gathering responses to extract information to generate in-depth insights about organizational issues from a large population. Surveys can help study large populations and may assist in the generalization of results. Further, quantitative survey research methods are cost-effective and require little time and resources.

According to Christensen et al. (2011), it is also crucial for the researcher to understand the instrument's construct, including but not limited to the number and nature of variables measured, the reliability of the instrument, and the validity of the results. Reliability is the ability

of the research instrument to be reproducible under a given set of conditions. On the other hand, the instrument's validity is the instrument's ability to address the research questions and the utilization of the appropriate statistical analysis procedure in addressing the hypothesis (Christensen et al., 2011).

The FEVS implements procedures to ensure the reliability and validity of the data (OPM FEVS, Technical Report, 2020b). First, the sample size ensures that estimates calculated from the data will be within one percentage point of the actual population value with a 95% degree of confidence. Second, the data collected are weighted to reflect the population and account for non-response bias accurately. Third, FEVS data reports undergo a quality control process in which each value from the input data is checked against the value in the output data.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study is Employee Engagement (EE). EE was operationalized using Question 3 from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This question asks respondents about the extent to which their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment. Personal accomplishment relates to the conditions supportive of overall EE. Increasing a sense of accomplishment and pride helps employees feel they are succeeding in their duties and making a positive step forward for themselves, their office environment, co-workers, and the organization's goals and objectives.

Turner (2020) posits that engaged employees have a higher sense of accomplishment; therefore, the deeper the sense of accomplishment is, the greater the employee's effort is to invest in the organization. Employees want to feel a sense of accomplishment because they want to feel that their hard work is not in vain. Achieving goals and feeling proud of the work accomplished

gives employees a sense of purpose. People inherently become more engaged in their work when they feel accomplished. Furthermore, it motivates employees to go beyond the call of duty. Employees who feel accomplished produce a higher work quality and are more motivated than those who do not (Sabir, 2017). Harnessing this positive energy benefits the employee and the organization. The more engaged employees are, the better the outcome. Nothing is as crucial as believing you are making a difference in the workplace. Accomplishment confers a sense of competence that reduces stress, anxiety, and self-doubt (Cleveland Clinic, 2022).

As employees advance up the pyramid, their needs become increasingly more social and psychological, where connection, personal esteem, and feelings of achievement take priority (Crowley, 2022). Personal accomplishment strengthens feelings of competence, self-confidence, and success motivations (Karaboga, 2023). Yang et al. (2022) suggest that as personal accomplishment increases, Employee Engagement (EE) increases.

Therefore, Survey Item 3 was used as a proxy and the best question to operationalize Employee Engagement (EE) in this research study. Respondents answered item 3 using a 5-point Likert scale, and the variable had a possible score range of 1 to 5. The Survey Item that was used as a proxy that best measured EE is as follows:

SI 3: My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.

Independent Variables

The Independent Variables (IV) measured in this study will be based on the three dimensions of Byrne's Model of Engagement: Personal Environment, Work Environment, and Person Self (Byrne, 2015). This study used Byrne's theoretical framework to operationalize five independent variables that fit within the parameters of the dimensions. The researcher used Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life

Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation as the independent variables. According to Byrne (2022), a vast opportunity exists for researchers to develop suitable measures of engagement with the concept to be used as proxies for practitioners, to keep measures grounded in science and yet be usable in practice. The study took the most relevant questions, analyzed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) responses, aligned them under the structure of Byrne's model, and measured them as determinants of workforce engagement. The related questions/survey items from the FEVS were used as proxies to evaluate the IV that fit within the three dimensions of Byrne's engagement model (2015. 2022).

Byrne's Dimension-Personal Environment

Byrne's 1st dimension in her theoretical framework is the Personal Environment. According to Byrne (2022), personal environment refers to the environment around the person outside the job. The IV, Extrinsic Motivation, was measured within the personal environment dimension as a predictor of engagement in the workplace. According to Byrne (2022), life substance can predict engagement levels at work. This concept is related to Maslow's hierarchy and the fundamental need to survive, food, clothing, shelter, and physical safety, which can be a predictor of engagement at work, related to the Extrinsic Motivation of work behavior. Extrinsic motivation is the independent variable that fits into Byrne's Personal Environment dimension and is measured in this research study.

Extrinsic Motivation (EM): EM was the independent variable to be measured and evaluated as a predictor of engagement that fits within Byrne's 1st dimension of the engagement model. Rewards and recognition that can be described as extrinsic motivational factors play an essential role in an organization's work culture. By definition, employee reward and recognition involve recognizing staff for exemplary organizational performance (Hussain et al., 2019).

Recognizing an employee's achievements allows employees to realize their progress, adding confidence in their capabilities.

Notably, the main aim of employee recognition and reward is to reinforce particular activities, behaviors, or practices, which result in positive organizational results, lower retention rates, and higher performance levels. Rewarding and recognizing employees has many benefits, including making employees happier, improving retention, boosting morale, establishing a self-improvement culture, and employee and organizational well-being (Hussain et al., 2019).

The Independent Variable (IV), Extrinsic Motivation, was operationalized using Question 35 from secondary data responses from the FY2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Respondents answered each question using a 5-point Likert scale. The responses to the questions were averaged to create a score for Extrinsic Motivation with a possible score range of 1 to 5. The question relates to the federal government employee's perspectives of Extrinsic Motivation in their organizations and how it impacts their level of engagement. The question/survey item used as a proxy from the survey that best measured Extrinsic Motivation is as follows:

Q35: How satisfied are you with your recognition for doing a good job?

Byrne's Dimension-Work Environment

Byrne's 2nd dimension in her theoretical framework is the Work Environment: According to Byrne (2022), Work Environment refers to anything related to the workplace. Supported by previous research, three Independent Variables were chosen as determinants that fit within Byrne's 2nd dimension of the engagement model: Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, and Work-life Programs.

Senior Leadership (SL). Senior Leaders were the first independent variable to be measured and evaluated as a predictor of engagement that fit within Byrne's 2d dimension of the engagement model. SL can either motivate employees or demoralize their actions, making an organization either able or unable to achieve goals and objectives. A prospective leader's leadership style that leads to employee motivation can make or break the health of an organization. Leadership is providing direction from an influential place to guide and direct an individual or group toward achieving an organization's goals and objectives, managing a position of influence to individuals or groups toward achieving goals. Leadership demonstrates a direct relationship with the cause and effect of organizational excellence. This impact leads to the comprehension of the importance of a leader's style and how it can effectively aid in the decline of an organization. Whenever the leadership in an organization demonstrates that it values its employees, they feel connected to the goals and visions of the organization. Therefore, they are likely to stay longer.

Senior Leaders can create a workplace culture where employees recognize honesty and integrity. Leaders must demonstrate high motivation and commitment to the employees and the organization's mission and goals. Senior Leaders and supervisors across all industries can impact worker well-being by setting organizational culture, shaping workers' day-to-day experiences, and ensuring workforce engagement, which is one of the main priorities (Leclerc et al., 2020). The most effective leaders demonstrate empathy and kindness, communicate openly, practice effective leadership behaviors, and affirm individual strengths, growth, organizational change, and work-life balance (Shanafelt et al., 2021).

The survey item chosen to operationalize engagement is directly linked to federal government employees' perspectives on leadership. The Independent Variable, Senior

Leadership, was operationalized using Survey Item 26 from secondary FY2020 Federal

Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data. Respondents answered each item using a 5-point

Likert scale. Senior Leadership was averaged to create a score with a possible score range of 1 to

5. The Survey Item used as a proxy that best measured Senior Leadership is as follows:

SI: In my organization, Senior Leadership generates high levels of motivation and

commitment in the workforce.

Professional Development and Growth (PDG): PDG is the 2d Independent Variable

(IV) to be measured and evaluated as a predictor of engagement that fits within Byrne's 2d

dimension of the engagement model. According to Hussein et al. (2019), there is a positive and

significant relationship between career growth, retention, and the engagement of employees,

which means that career growth opportunities are highly valued, and employees will not leave

organizations prematurely that provide career growth opportunities. Weng (2010) adds that

career growth, career goals, development, and the ability to advance are significant predictors of

Employee Engagement (EE) and retention.

Organizations should offer their employees opportunities for growth by providing quality

training, education, and mentoring. Willis Towers Watson (WTW) (2020), a leading global

advisory, broking, and solutions company, surveyed executives at 129 large and midsize U.S.

companies representing 1.4 million employees across a wide range of industries and found that

only 59% of companies surveyed have prioritized employee development over the past three

years. Investing in employee training to increase knowledge and skills and providing other

opportunities for education outside of work to improve employees' knowledge shows employees

that their organization cares about their health, well-being, and career goals. Employers can

promote growth opportunities by showing genuine interest in workers through mentorship, encouragement, and coaching (MacLennan, 2017).

When organizations provide transparent career pathways and advancement opportunities for all employees, it fosters inclusion and diversity in the workplace. Government and private organizations should care about their employees and focus on proper professional training to develop advancement opportunities for their employees. Keeping employees updated with new technology and other workplace advancements is crucial for sustainability and benefits the employees and organizational development.

Professional Development and Growth include training employees to be successful at what they do and evolve competently with the organizational changes in the 21st century. Training develops employee skills and builds confidence in their ability to produce the expected outcomes and results successfully. In organizations that create Professional Development and Growth opportunities, employees are more confident about their abilities and passionate about contributing to the organization (Shellow, 2022).

Without development, workers can feel stagnant, ineffective, frustrated, and stressed, causing them to feel less valued and overwhelmed (Oltmanns, 2017). In these instances, employees are more likely to leave the organization sooner rather than later, causing retention challenges. Shellow (2022) posits that employees are an organization's most valuable asset as they lead the day-to-day operations to execute its mission. According to Bibi et al. (2017), employees are the most precious assets of any organization, and the ability to retain them is one of the critical aspects of the organization. Introducing employees to development opportunities ensures they are progressing and knowledgeable about their organization's expectations and ensures that they are equipped to perform their job duties successfully.

The Independent Variable (IV), Professional Development and Growth, was operationalized using Survey Item 21 from secondary FY2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) data. Respondents answered each item using a 5-point Likert scale. The responses to the survey item will be averaged to create a score for Professional Development and Growth with a possible score range of 1 to 5. The Survey Item used as a proxy that best measures Professional Development and Growth is as follows:

SI 21: Supervisors in my work unit support employee development.

Work-life Programs (WLPs). Work-life Programs are the third Independent Variable (IV) to be measured and evaluated as a predictor of engagement that fits within Byrne's 2d dimension of engagement. Employees' work and personal responsibilities can affect their ability to perform their duties. One method increasingly used by work sectors to improve performance is to offer programs that help employees balance work and personal obligations. Employee demand for such work-life programs is also increasing due to the growing number of women in the workplace, two-career families, and workers wanting the ability to manage work and life obligations (Caillier, 2013). Organizations must pay attention to the younger generations of employees, who are a growing workforce presence and seek opportunities to balance work and personal responsibilities and want to work in organizations that mirror their values and beliefs (Goessling, 2017).

Varied work schedules are essential in the maximization of employee contribution. Flexible work schedules will allow employees to manage other priorities in their lives that are impossible under fixed work schedules. These flexible work schedules allow employees to set goals and focus on completing them without juggling the demands of personal and work responsibilities. Employees can often produce better outputs and results when they can

concentrate and focus on achieving their job duties with the flexibility to manage their work and other priorities by setting their schedules and choosing their work environments.

Family-friendly policies assist employees in managing their work and family needs. Such policies incorporate formal or informal programs, which include flexible scheduling, alternative work schedules, flexible work locations, childcare or elderly care services, parental absences, job sharing, and sick leave (Landgraf, 2021). Scholars have noted the importance of examining work–family values when studying policies to demonstrate the workforce's ability to use established policies without consequences (Shauman et al., 2018).

Employees benefit from alternate and hybrid work arrangements in many ways. For one, the alternate work arrangement is also for flexible schedules. Alternate and hybrid work arrangements can reduce family challenges by increasing the employees' ability to control their schedules to include other priorities. Employees benefit because they have choices. These choices increase the employees' satisfaction levels, which improves their performance and results. In turn, it benefits the organization. Employees are more productive and motivated to accomplish company goals with flexible schedules. Berkery et al. (2017) studied work schedules from various countries and industries. According to Berkery, organizations that use flexible work schedules have lower employee turnover, lower absenteeism, and higher productivity than organizations that do not offer flexible work schedules. As organizations demonstrate their commitment to WLPs to support employees' needs, employees will reciprocate that commitment (Oyewobietal et al., 2022).

The Independent Variable (IV) Work-Life Programs (WLPS) were operationalized using Survey Item 32 using secondary data from the FY2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Respondents answer each question using a 5-point Likert scale. The survey item relates

to federal government employees' perspectives of WLPs in their organization. The responses to the survey items will be averaged to create a score for WLPs with a possible score range of 1 to 5. The survey item that will be used as a proxy that best measures Work-Life Programs is as follows:

SI 32: Senior Leaders demonstrate support for Work-life Programs.

Byrne's Dimension-Person (Self): According to Byrne (2015, 2022), personal (self) refers to what the person brings to the workplace. Intrinsic Motivation is the Independent Variable (IV) to be operationalized within Byrne's dimension of person (self).

Intrinsic Motivation (IM). IM is the Independent Variable (IV) to be measured and evaluated as a predictor that fits within Byrne's 3rd dimension of the engagement model. Workers who understand how their job is connected to a larger mission or purpose are more motivated than those who feel no connection (Wright, 2007). Public sector employees have repeatedly been found to place a lower value on financial rewards and a higher value on helping others (public service) than their private sector counterparts (Boyne 2002; Wright 2007). When public servants are motivated by their identification with shared values, such as fairness, social equity, social justice, and social responsibility, they tend to be more engaged in doing their best. Research has shown that public servants find purpose in their work by making a positive difference in the lives of the citizens they serve (Lavigna, 2014a).

Believing their work contributions matter can unlock and channel the innate drive for purpose, leading to higher motivation levels (Crowley, 2022). Performing this work and knowing how job duties relate to outcomes that help promote the common good for citizens and the country give public servants a higher sense of purpose. Recently published meta-analyses prove that Public Service Motivation (PSM) is associated with work-related outcomes, such as public

sector attraction and engagement (Asseburg & Homberg, 2020; Homberg et al., 2015).

According to Asseburg and Homberg (2020), studies since the 1970s find that public sector

employees prefer to engage in activities to help others. They feel that their public sector jobs

benefit society because they have compassion, identify with those in need, and report a sense of

duty and self-sacrifice. This statement provides an overview of PSM research: people's drive to

contribute to society (Vandenabeele & Schott, 2020).

IM is vital in developing an employee's competence since it involves striving for internal

rewards. Employees who know how their duties relate to federal government goals and missions

tend to be more intrinsically motivated. Meaningful and purposeful refers to the notion that

people seek meaning in their work and an alignment between their work and a higher purpose

with overall value (Chawla & Guda 2013). Chawla and Guda (2013) suggest it creates a sense of

joy by fully engaging one's potential and connecting with things one sees as truly important.

Wright (2007) adds that the intrinsic value that employees see in their organization's mission

influences their work motivation by increasing the importance they place on their work.

The Independent Variable (IV), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), was operationalized using

Survey Item 7 from secondary data from the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

(FEVS). Respondents answered each item using a 5-point Likert scale. The responses to the

items were averaged to create a score for Intrinsic Motivation with a possible score range of 1 to

5. The Survey Item used as a proxy that best measures Intrinsic Motivation from the survey is as

follows:

SI 7: I know how my work relates to the agency's goals.

Control Variables

Two control variables were used to study the concept of Employee Engagement (EE) by determining the employees' level of engagement and understanding if there exists a significant difference in the level of engagement based on demographic variables among the employees under study. This study included two demographic categories of control variables, age and gender that may relate to engagement. The FY 2020 FEVS includes demographic questions regarding respondent age and gender from the dataset that will be used as control variables in this study.

Age: Employee Engagement (EE) studies are prevalent in contemporary research because of organizations' complexity in nurturing the performance and productivity of multi-generational workers (Douglas & Roberts, 2020). Organizations are becoming increasingly aware of how the current workforces are distinct due to the diversity of generations represented in the workforce. According to research, the different ages represented in today's workforce present new problems for those tasked with managing, recruiting, inspiring, and retaining exceptional workers who contribute to increased workplace efficiency (Boatman, 2022). For these current workforces, there are four generational groups: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials (Gen Y), and Generation Z (King et al., 2019). Measuring age in this study will add to the discussion of the aging workforce, with older employees becoming a vast presence in organizations mixed with several generational cohorts. Understanding how age influences employee work engagement is also critical to this study. It is vital to handle a growingly diverse workforce with varying worldviews and beliefs and to test this demographic for significance to the study. Therefore, the Personal Demographics question for age (DAGEGRP) asks, "What is your age group?" The question is multiple-choice, and respondents answer by selecting the age

group to which they belong. Age is recorded in the dataset using two categories: under 40 and 40 or older.

Gender: Gutermann et al. (2017) surveyed 511 employees nested in 88 teams and their team leaders in a large service organization. Employees and supervisors provided data in this multi-source design. Their multilevel path model controlled the potential influence of gender and work hours (working full-time or part-time). Their findings showed a significant effect of gender in that women reported higher work engagement levels than men. Mascarenhas et al. (2022) studied gender roles in their research designed to contribute to a better understanding of genders, enabling organizations to manage their resources, either through the support provided to employees or by changing the policies and actions that may impair the proper functioning of organizations.

In a study conducted by Mascarenhas et al. (2022), data was collected in a public higher education institution with a questionnaire applied to professors and support staff. The main objective of this study was to analyze the effects of work engagement, identification with an organization, and perceived organizational support on job satisfaction and how these issues vary with gender. The data collected from the 171 employees allowed the development of a structural equation model. The results suggest that work engagement constructs have a more significant effect on the performance of female employees, but in contrast, the impact of perceived organizational support on performance is more substantial for male workers. The findings contributed to the body of empirical knowledge on the influence of factors on job satisfaction, such as engagement at work, perceived organizational support, and identification with the organization, which varied by gender.

Some studies show that females are more concerned than males with the emotional aspects of their positions and put more importance on intrinsic motivators, interpersonal relationships, assignments, and, subsequently, work engagement (González-Romá et al. 2006; Salas-Vallina & Alegre 2017). Topchyan & Woehler, 2021 conducted a causal-comparative study to identify whether teacher status and its interaction with teacher gender and work experience would affect the linear combination of job satisfaction and work engagement. The study's results suggested that male teachers' scores on cognitive engagement, social engagement with students, and total engagement are significantly lower than those of female teachers. With this in mind, gender was controlled to see if it added to this research study. The question comes from the Personal Demographics question for gender (DSEX): "Are you:" Gender is recorded in the dataset with three categories: male, female, and transgender.

Procedures

The university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the study in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations (approval number IRB-FY23-14-246). It was determined that the study was not considered human subjects research because it did not involve collecting identifiable, private information from or about living individuals (45 CFR 46.102). This study obtained and analyzed publicly available secondary data from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This study used secondary data, so procedures for soliciting participants and informed consent are not required. The study received approval from the IRB on August 4, 2023.

Additionally, the OPM makes the FEVS data available as a public release data file that researchers may download for free without permission from the OPM website

(https://www.opm.gov/fevs/public-data-file/). Masking procedures were applied to the FEVS

public release data file to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents (OPM FEVS Technical

Report, 2020b). The researcher downloaded the public release data file for the 2020 FEVS from

the OPM website (https://www.opm.gov/fevs/public-data-file/) for analysis and evaluation to

answer the research question and associated hypotheses.

Data Analysis

The use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software is the most

commonly used software in social science research (Mut et al., 2019). The public release data

file was imported into SPSS software (version 29) to analyze and process the data. Scores for

each variable (Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth,

Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation) were computed by taking the average of the items

corresponding to each variable. Missing data was handled using pairwise exclusion, meaning that

each analysis included all respondents with complete data for that analysis. Descriptive statistics

were computed and reported for each variable. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and

reported for age and gender.

Linear regression was performed to address RQ1 and its corresponding hypotheses.

Linear regression allows researchers to determine relationships between continuous variables

while controlling for other variables (Field, 2017). In this analysis, the dependent variable was

Employee Engagement (EE). An F-test, R^2 value and tests of regression coefficients were

reported for the regression. Statistical significance was determined using an alpha level of .05.

The effect size was measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2). Multiple linear regression

assumes that the residuals are normally distributed, the data are homoscedastic, and there is no

severe multicollinearity among the predictors. Normality was tested using typical P-P plots, and

Homoscedasticity was tested using scatterplots. Multicollinearity was tested using variance inflation factors.

Summary

This study investigated the factors and drivers of Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. A quantitative quasi-experimental secondary data analysis was used to determine the influence of Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation on Employee Engagement (EE). Publicly available data from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) was analyzed using linear regression to answer the research question and address the corresponding hypotheses. According to Vogt (2007), linear regression is the most widely employed method for studying quantitative evidence in social sciences. Among multiple linear regression types (standard, sequential, and stepwise), standard multiple linear regression was used in this study to evaluate how a set of independent variables influences a dependent variable (Vogt, 2007). The next chapter contains the results of the data analysis and findings that address the hypotheses and answer the research question.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Overview

This quantitative quasi-experimental study evaluated and measured the factors and drivers influencing Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. The Independent Variables (IV) were operationalized to determine if each variable positively influenced EE according to the respondents' answers to the questions/survey items from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

The secondary data responses from the FEVS were used to measure the statistical significance of each independent variable to the construct. This study controlled demographic variables, age, and gender to determine if they added value to the study.

Research Question

RQ1: What factors and drivers influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector organizations?

Data Preparation

The sample population comprised six hundred forty-two thousand eight hundred (n=642,800) respondents to the FY 2020 FEVS. To obtain accurate population estimates, all descriptive and inferential analyses were weighted using the survey weight variable (POSTWT) provided in a public-use data file. In order to clean the data, first, all variables that were not included in the planned analyses were removed from the dataset. Next, the variables were numerically coded, with any non-numerical values in the data receiving a numerical code. Age was coded such that participants under 40 were assigned a value of 0, and participants 40 or older were assigned a value of 1. Gender was coded such that male participants were given a value of 0 and female participants were given a value of 1. Values of X presented in the data

corresponding to responses of "do not know" were assigned values of -99 and treated as missing values in SPSS (version 29). Missing data was handled using pairwise exclusion, meaning that each analysis included all respondents with complete data for that analysis. Finally, frequencies were computed for all variables and checked to ensure that all values for each variable were within the appropriate range.

Discussion of Data Collection

After data collection was completed, all data was organized and exported in an Excel sheet as preparation for the analysis process. Multiple descriptive analyses were conducted prior to starting the statistical tests. The results from the descriptive analysis showed that all of the variables met the assumption of normality and were normally distributed.

Discussion of Data Cleansing

Upon the conclusion of the descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to measure predictive relationships among variables. Pearson's correlation coefficients were also utilized to determine whether a relationship between variables existed. No multicollinearity was found between the independent variables.

<div align="center">

Null Hypotheses

</div>

The hypotheses used data from the FY 2020 FEVS sample population to evaluate whether there is no statistical significance or some statistical significance to Employee Engagement (EE) in this research study. The null hypothesis finds that two variables have no statistical significance, finding no observed effect between the two measured variables. The alternative hypothesis finds statistical significance and some observed effect between two measured variables. Null hypotheses play a crucial part in research as accepting the null hypothesis suggests researchers should rethink their ideas, which helps researchers examine

approaches toward other possible answers. However, rejecting the null hypothesis, on the other hand, can support the reasoning, which can be strengthened by replication and new research. The hypotheses statements used in this research study are below.

Ho1: Extrinsic Motivation does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha1: Extrinsic Motivation influences Employee Engagement.

Ho2: Senior Leadership does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha2: Senior Leadership Influence Employee Engagement.

Ho3: Professional Development and Growth do not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha3: Professional Development and Growth influence Employee Engagement.

Ho4: Work-life Programs do not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha4: Work-life Programs influence Employee Engagement.

Ho5: Intrinsic Motivation does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha5: Intrinsic Motivation influences Employee Engagement.

This Chapter describes the dataset analyzed and discusses the results to answer the research question and the hypotheses. First, the model is tested, and the statistical approach is described. Next, the data preparation procedures are explained. The descriptive statistics of the sample will follow. Finally, the results of the multiple linear regression and tests of the hypotheses are presented, followed by the summary of the chapter.

The statistical approach used to answer the research question and test the hypotheses was multiple linear regression. The multiple linear regression was performed with Employee Engagement (EE) as the Dependent Variable (DV). The Independent Variables (IV) measured were Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation. Control variables included in the regression were age and gender. The multiple linear regression equation model is stated as follows:

Employee Engagement = B0 + B1*(Extrinsic Motivation) + B2*(Senior Leadership)

B3*(Professional Development and Growth) + B4*(Work-life Programs) + B5*(Intrinsic

Motivation) + B6*(Age) + B7*(Gender)

Hypotheses

According to the population sample, each predictor variable was found to have a positively statistically significant influence on engagement in federal government organizations by varying degrees. This indicates that the dependent variable's mean increases as the independent variable's value increases. For every estimated change in a variable, when all other variables are held constant, there is a one-unit change to the dependent variable (Karpen, 2017). Employee Engagement (EE) tends to increase as each predictor variable increases. This can be summed up by saying that all the independent variables influence Employee Engagement (EE) in Public Sector organizations according to the data set. The multiple regression analyses rejected the study's null hypotheses, and the alternative hypotheses were accepted for each Independent Variable. A discussion of each of the hypotheses is forthcoming.

Regression Coefficient -Hypothesis 1

Ho1: Extrinsic Motivation does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha1: Extrinsic Motivation influences Employee Engagement.

To test Hypothesis 1, the regression coefficient for extrinsic Motivation was tested for statistical significance (see Table 13). The regression coefficient for Extrinsic Motivation was significant, $B = 0.15, p < .001$, indicating that extrinsic motivation positively influenced Employee Engagement after controlling for age and gender. With every one-unit increase in Extrinsic Motivation, Employee Engagement increased by approximately 0.15 points. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Regression Coefficient - Hypothesis 2

Ho2: Senior Leadership does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha2: Senior Leadership Influences Employee Engagement.

To test Hypothesis 2, the regression coefficient for Senior Leadership was tested for statistical significance (see Table 13). The regression coefficient for Senior Leadership was significant, $B = 0.13, p < .001$, indicating that senior leadership positively influenced Employee Engagement after controlling for age and gender. With every one-unit increase in Senior Leadership, Employee Engagement increased by approximately 0.13 points. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Regression Coefficient - Hypothesis 3

Ho3: Professional Development and growth do not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha3: Professional Development and growth influence Employee Engagement.

To test Hypothesis 3, the Professional Development and Growth regression coefficient was tested for statistical significance (see Table 13). The regression coefficient for Professional Development and Growth was significant, $B = 0.17, p < .001$, indicating that Professional Development and Growth influenced Employee Engagement after controlling for age and gender. With every one-unit increase in Professional Development and Growth, Employee

Engagement increased by approximately 0.17 points. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Regression Coefficient - Hypothesis 4

      Ho4: Work-Life Programs do not influence Employee Engagement.

      Ha4: Work-Life Programs Influence Employee Engagement.

To test Hypothesis 4, the regression coefficient for Work-life Programs was tested for statistical significance (see Table 13). The regression coefficient for Work-life Programs was statistically significant, B = 0.04, p < .001, indicating that Work-life Programs influenced Employee Engagement after controlling for age and gender. Thus, a positive relationship, although minimal significance, was found. Employee Engagement increased by approximately 0.04 points with every one-unit increase in Work-life Programs. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Regression Coefficient - Hypothesis 5

      Ho5: Intrinsic Motivation does not influence Employee Engagement.

      Ha5: Intrinsic Motivation Influences Employee Engagement

      To test Hypothesis 5, the regression coefficient for Intrinsic Motivation was tested for statistical significance (see Table 13). The regression coefficient for Intrinsic Motivation was significant, $B = 0.42$, $p < .001$, indicating that Intrinsic Motivation statistically influenced Employee Engagement after controlling for age and gender. With every one-unit increase in Intrinsic Motivation, Employee Engagement increased by approximately 0.42 points. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Regression Coefficient - Age and Gender

The regression coefficients for age and gender were tested for statistical significance (see Table 13) to determine if age and gender contributed significantly to the research study. The regression coefficient for age was positive, $B = 0.10$, $p < .001$, indicating that respondents 40 or older tended to be more engaged than those under 40. The regression coefficient for gender was positive, $B = 0.02$, $p < .001$, indicating that females tended to be engaged slightly more than males.

<div align="center">

Descriptive Statistics

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Descriptive statistics are specific methods used to calculate, describe, and summarize collected research data logically, meaningfully, and efficiently. The research data collected for each variable is reported in Table 5 below. Each variable is discussed individually, and results are provided.

Descriptive Statistics – Dependent and Independent Variables

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Dependent and Independent Variables

Variable	N	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Employee Engagement	618334	3.94	1.04	1	5	3.90
Extrinsic Motivation	612519	3.57	1.15	1	5	3.52
Senior Leadership	610089	3.34	1.21	1	5	3.30
Professional Development and Growth	616623	4.10	1.04	1	5	4.05
Work-life programs	574976	3.77	1.10	1	5	3.70
Intrinsic Motivation	618591	4.18	0.83	1	5	4.16

Descriptive Statistics – Dependent Variable

Descriptive Statistics – Employee Engagement.

The dependent variable in this study is Employee Engagement (EE). EE was operationalized using Question 3 of the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), which asks respondents to rate the level of their agreement with the statement, "My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment." Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 6 displays the complete descriptive statistics for EE. The sample mean for EE was 3.94 (*SD* = 1.04), indicating that, on average, respondents were neutral or agreed that their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment. The significance is that the mean reflects 3.94 on a 5-point scale, suggesting the respondents' average level of agreement or satisfaction is that personal accomplishment significantly impacts or influences engagement. Employees in this population sample add to the research that EE is instrumental in public organizations. EE goes beyond work activities and events. EE impacts organizational excellence. Engaged employees look at the entire organization and understand their purpose, where, and how it fits in.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Employee Engagement

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Employee engagement	618334	3.94	1.04	1	5	3.90

Descriptive Statistics - Independent Variables

Descriptive Statistics - Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic Motivation (EM) was an Independent Variable (IV) in this study. EM was operationalized using Question 35 of the FY 2020 FEVS, which asks respondents to rate the

extent of their satisfaction with the statement, "How satisfied are you with your recognition for doing a good job?" Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 7 displays the complete descriptive statistics for EM. The sample mean for EM was 3.57 (SD = 1.15), indicating that, on average, respondents were neutral or satisfied with their recognition for doing a good job. The Mean for EM is 3.57 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, the IV impacted the respondents' engagement level. This is significant because employees in this population sample add to the research that EM is instrumental in engaging employees in public organizations. EM determines the level of effort and persistence employees exert in the workplace, adding to organizational success and sustainability.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Extrinsic Motivation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Extrinsic Motivation	612519	3.57	1.15	1	5	3.52

Descriptive Statistic - Senior Leadership

Senior leadership (SL) was an Independent Variable (IV) in this study. SL was operationalized using Question 26 of the FY 2020 FEVS, which asks respondents to rate the extent of their agreement with the statement, "In my organization, SL generates high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce." Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 8 displays the complete descriptive statistics for SL. The sample mean for SL was 3.34 (SD = 1.21), indicating that, on average, respondents were neutral or agreed that SL generates high levels of engagement in the workforce. The mean for SL is 3.34 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, the IV impacted the respondents' engagement level. This is

significant because employees in this population sample add to the research that SL is instrumental in engaging employees in public organizations.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for Senior Leadership

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Senior leadership	610089	3.34	1.21	1	5	3.30

Descriptive Statistics - Professional Development and Growth

Professional Development and Growth (PDG) were Independent Variables in this study. PDG was operationalized using Question 21 of the FY 2020 FEVS, which asks respondents to rate the extent of their agreement with the statement, "Supervisors in my work unit support employee development." Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 9 displays the complete descriptive statistics for PDG. The sample mean for PDG was 4.10 ($SD = $ 1.04), indicating that respondents agreed or strongly agreed that supervisors in their work unit support employee development on average. The mean for PDG is 4.10 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, the IV impacted the respondents' engagement level. This is significant because employees in this population sample add to the research that PDG is instrumental in engaging employees in public organizations. PDG is integral to developing individuals' capacity to become effective and efficient in their work duties and bringing innovation and creativity to public organizations.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for Professional Development and Growth

Variable	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Professional development and growth	616623	4.10	1.04	1	5	4.05

Descriptive Statistics - Work-life Programs

Work-life Programs (WLPs) was an Independent Variable (IV) in this study. WLPs were operationalized using Question 32 of the 2020 FEVS, which asks respondents to rate the extent of their agreement with the statement, "Senior leaders demonstrate support for WLPs." Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 10 displays the complete descriptive statistics for work-life programs. The sample mean for WLPs was 3.77 (*SD* = 1.10), indicating that, on average, respondents were neutral or agreed that senior leaders demonstrate support for work/life programs. The mean for WLPs is 3.77 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, the independent variable impacted the respondents' engagement level. This is significant because employees in this population sample add to the research that WLPs are instrumental in engaging employees in public organizations. WLPs are an effective way to increase employee motivation and provide a compatible and effective workplace environment.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for Work-life Programs

Variable	*N*	Mean	*SD*	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Work-life programs	574976	3.77	1.10	1	5	3.70

Descriptive Statistics - Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation (IM) was an Independent Variable (IM) in this study. IM was operationalized using Question 7 of the FY 2020 FEVS, which asks respondents to rate the extent of their agreement with the statement, "I know how my work relates to the agency's goals." Participants responded to the question using a 5-point Likert scale. Table 11 displays the complete descriptive statistics for IM. The sample mean for IM is 4.18 ($SD = 0.83$), indicating that respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they recognize how their work relates to the organization's goals. The mean for IM is 4.18 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that, on average, the IV impacted the respondents' engagement levels. This is significant because employees in this population sample add to the research that IM is instrumental in engaging employees. IM is significant in an employee's capacity to find tasks interesting, fulfilling, and valuable and increase their engagement in their work.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for Intrinsic Motivation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Weighted Mean
Intrinsic Motivation	618591	4.18	0.83	1	5	4.16

Descriptive Statistics - Control Variables

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Age and Gender

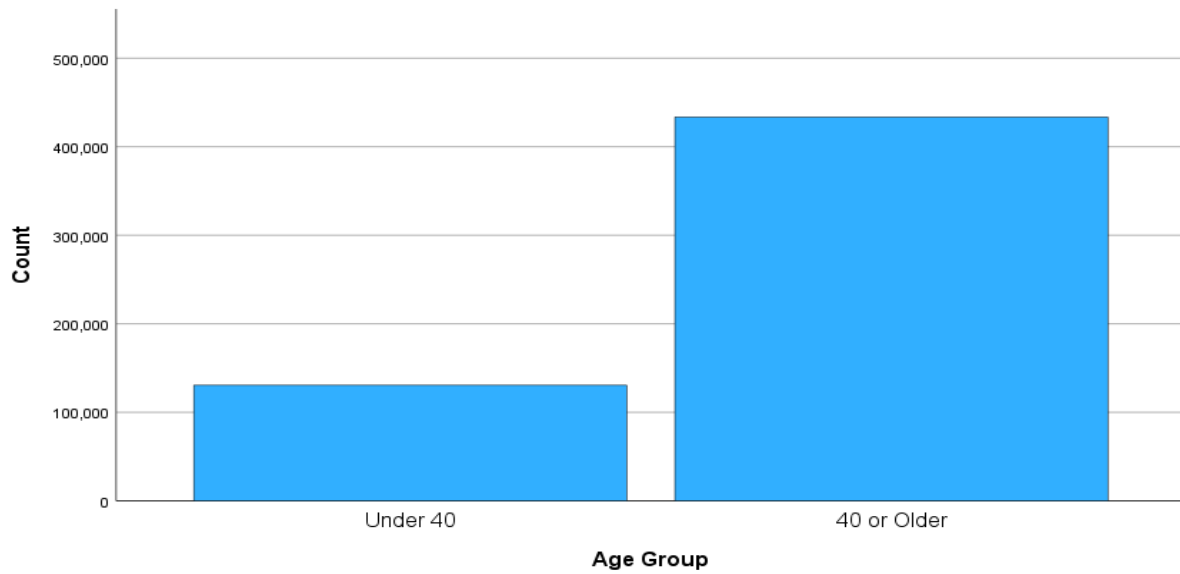| Variable	Frequency	Percent	Weighted Frequency	Weighted Percent
Age				
Under 40	130620	21	345003	24
40 or older	433555	69	959781	66
Missing/NA	60625	10	148117	10
Gender				
Male	308988	49	792080	55
Female	254663	41	510456	35
Missing/NA	61149	10	150365	10

Descriptive Statistics - Age and Gender

Table 12 displays descriptive statistics for the sample demographic characteristics of age and gender. The majority of the respondents in the sample were 40 years of age or older ($n = 433555$, 69%), with the weighted estimate showing that 66% of the population is in this age group. The unweighted frequencies for age are displayed visually in Figure 2. The sample's most significant proportion of respondents were men ($n = 308988$, 49%), with the weighted estimate showing that 55% of the population are men. The unweighted frequencies for gender are displayed visually in Figure 3. This is significant because employees in this population sample are men over 40. The findings confirm that in this study, there is no difference in age and gender

engagement factors in public sector organizations. Further research is recommended due to the changing dynamics of the demographics in the workforce over the next several years.
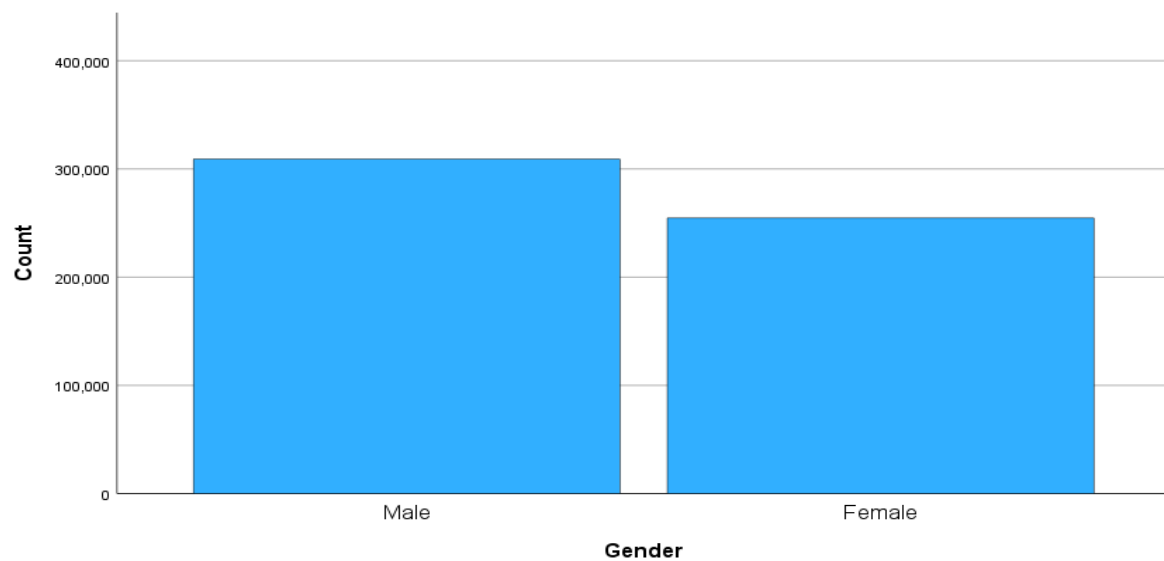
Figure 2

Bar Chart of Unweighted Frequencies for Age

Figure 3

Bar Chart of Unweighted Frequencies for Gender

Assumption Testing

Multiple linear regression is used in predictive analysis to explain relationships between one Dependent Variable (DV) and two or more Independent Variables (IV) that could be categorical or continuous (Quirk et al., 2016). There are several assumptions to be taken into consideration when conducting a multiple linear regression, which includes the residuals that need to be distributed normally, there is an assumed linear relationship between the IV and DV, there is no multicollinearity among the predictors, and the residuals are homoscedastic (Keith, 2014).
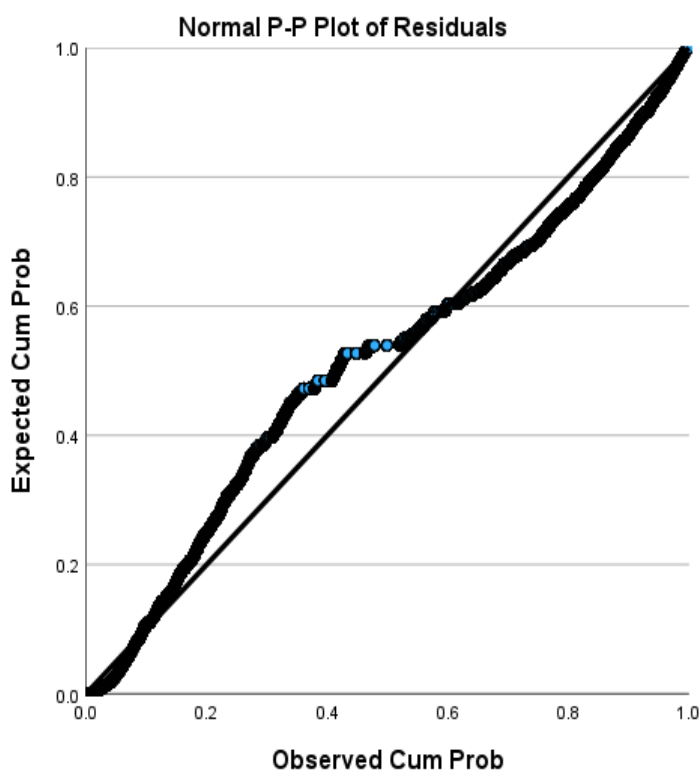
Multiple Linear Regression was selected for analysis in this paper because the research seeks to test for a statistically significant relationship between one DV, which is Employee Engagement (EE), and five IVs: Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Senior Leadership (SL), Professional Development and Growth (PDG), Work-life Programs (WPs), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM). This research established whether the identified independent variables influenced EE in federal government organizations.

Multicollinearity is evaluated by viewing the correlation coefficients of all the predictor variables. Given the collinearity statistics results, all Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) were below 10 (Max = 2.28), indicating no violation of the multicollinearity among the variables. The IVs are not correlated with each other. There is no multicollinearity between the IVs (Table 5). Outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals: These are evaluated by examining the normal probability plot generated by the regression standardized residuals (Figure 4) and the scatterplot of the standardized residuals (Figure 5). It can be observed that the residuals tend to lie on a straight diagonal line, which means the normality assumption has not been violated (Quirk et al., 2016). There is also no clear pattern of the

standardized residual plots on the scatter plot, as seen in Figure 5. Therefore, all the assumptions of multiple linear regression were met.

This study confirms that there is indeed a statistically significant relationship between Employee Engagement (EE) and the IVs: Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Senior Leadership (SL), Professional Development and Growth (PDG), Work-life Programs (WPs), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM). The five IVs have been established to predict the DV. For this reason, it can be concluded that organizations should ensure that employees are invested in and implement initiatives to increase engagement, as this will positively impact motivation, which will ultimately be reflected in employee performance and the overall organizational achievement of the goals and objectives.

Figure 4 *Normal P-P Plot of Multiple Linear Regression Residuals*

Normal P-P Plot of Residuals

Figure 5 *Scatterplot of Predicted Values and Residuals*

Scatter Plot of Residuals by Predicted Values for Population
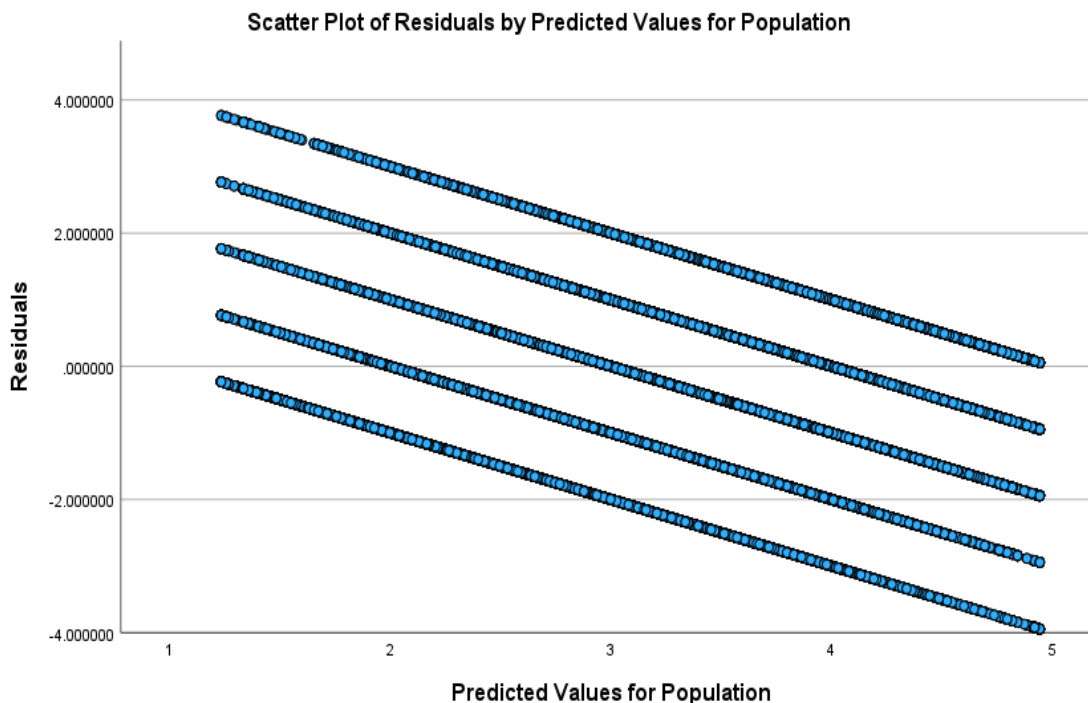
Results

Multiple linear regression was performed to address RQ1 and its corresponding

hypotheses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 29 was used to

analyze empirical data from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) administered in

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. This analysis's dependent variable (DV) is employee engagement (EE).

According to the population sample responses, each predictive variable was positive and

statistically significant, influencing EE in public sector organizations. The researcher used the

IVs Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Senior Leadership (SL), Professional Development and Growth

(PDG), Work-life Programs (WPs), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM) to explain Employee

Engagement (EE) variance and the relationship between the DV and IVs.

The IVs were measured to determine if they influenced the DV. The DV is what happens

as a result of the IV. The results show a positive relationship between the dependent and

independent variables but at varying degrees. As each of the predictor variables increases, EE increases. It is safe to conclude that as a result of the research, each IV influenced the sample population's engagement, and the alternative hypotheses for the IVs were accepted. The hypotheses will be discussed in detail in the order of the most influential to the least influential impact on the dependent Variable. The coefficient square value explains the variance in EE discovered in the dataset.

Overall Regression Model Results

The Coefficients for Multiple Linear regression collectively are shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Coefficients for Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Employee Engagement

Variable	B	Std. Error	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Sig.	VIF
(Intercept)	0.34	0.01	0.32	0.36	$< .001$	
Extrinsic Motivation	0.15	0.00	0.15	0.15	$< .001$	1.20
Senior Leadership	0.13	0.00	0.12	0.13	$< .001$	2.28
Professional Development and Growth	0.17	0.00	0.16	0.17	$< .001$	1.73
Work-life Programs	0.04	0.00	0.03	0.04	$< .001$	2.12
Intrinsic Motivation	0.42	0.00	0.42	0.43	$< .001$	1.39
Age [40 or older]	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.11	$< .001$	1.01
Gender [Female]	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.03	$< .001$	1.00

The F-test for the overall regression model was significant, $F(7, 497575) = 29802.50$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .46$, indicating that the collective set of variables explained a significant proportion of variance in influencing Employee Engagement (EE). The R^2 value indicates that the predictor variables collectively explain approximately 46% of the variance in EE. Table 13 displays the results for the individual regression coefficients of the model. The final model equation is expressed as follows:

Employee Engagement = 0.34 + 0.15*(Extrinsic Motivation) + 0.13*(Senior Leadership) + 0.17*(Professional Development and Growth) + 0.04*(Work-life Programs) + 0.42*(Intrinsic Motivation) + 0.10*(Age) + 0.02*(Gender)

The final model equation shows that Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-Life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation influence Employee Engagement (EE) according to the sample population by varying degrees. The coefficients for each Independent Variable (IV) are positive and statistically significant; therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The linear regression coefficient tells whether there is a positive or negative correlation between each predictor variable and the outcome variable. The R-square value is the proportion of variance of the DV that the IVs can explain. Below are the IV results by the most positive significant explainable variance or the IV that had the most influence on EE to the most negligible influence according to the sample population dataset used in this study.

Results of Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation (IM) was identified as a positive statistically significant predictor of EE after controlling age and gender. According to this study, IM had the highest R square value, and it can be concluded that IM had the most significant influence on Employee Engagement.

With every one-unit increase in IM (B = 0.42, p < .001), EE increased by approximately 0.42 points. IM encourages and develops proficiency and inspires self-sufficiency, which allows employees sovereignty when making decisions and performing their roles. Motivation is vital to organizations, and when employees are intrinsically motivated, they perform better, stay longer, and are tied to the organization's purpose and goals. In short, being intrinsically motivated allows employees to perform at their very best. IM engages in behaviors that arise within the individual because they are naturally satisfying.

According to Asseburg and Homberg (2020), studies since the 1970s have found that public sector employees prefer engaging in activities to help others, which is personally rewarding. Mubeen and Alam (2022) suggest that intangible rewards have a stronger relationship with employee engagement than tangible rewards. The literature review highlights findings from various sectors and shows that IM is critical in enhancing EE and job satisfaction, irrespective of the field or work environment (Asseburg & Homberg, 2020; Byrne, 2022; Crowley, 2022; Homberg et al., 2015; Vandenabeele & Schott, 2020).

Results of Professional Development and Growth

Professional Development and Growth (PDG) was identified as a positive statistically significant predictor of Employee Engagement (EE) after controlling for age and gender. According to this study, PDG had the second-highest R coefficient value, indicating the 2nd most significant impact on EE. With every one-unit increase in PDG (B = 0.17, p < .001), EE increased by approximately 0.17 points. Research shows that PDG enhances EE in innovation and that training enhances employee performance (Bingham & Conner, 2011; Jain & Khurana, 2017; Shellow, 2022). Growth in the workforce enhances employee enthusiasm to work and facilitates motivation for work performance. According to Elnaga and Imran (2013),

organizations provide PDG to optimize their employees' potential to increase job satisfaction and engagement in a demanding, complex, and ever-changing work environment. Professional Development and Growth are integral to developing individuals' capacity to effectively and efficiently perform their job duties.

Results of Extrinsic Motivation

Extrinsic Motivation (EM) was identified as a positive statistically significant predictor of Employee Engagement (EE) after controlling for age and gender. According to this study, EM had the third highest R square coefficient value that impacted EE. With every one-unit increase in EM ($B = 0.15$, $p < .001$), EE increased by approximately 0.15 points. EM relates to behaviors done for reasons other than their inherent satisfaction but for rewards, recognition, or compensation. According to Haung (2019), it has been commonly accepted that the government should learn from the private sector and that the provision of extrinsic rewards, which have worked well in the private sector, will also be able to promote work performance in public organizations. According to Aldabbas et al. (2023), when an organization recognizes employee contributions, it positively impacts work engagement because individuals who believe the organization values their contribution are more involved in their jobs.

Results of Senior Leadership

Senior leadership (SL) was identified as a positive statistically significant predictor of Employee Engagement (EE) after controlling for age and gender. SL had the fourth-highest R square coefficient value that impacted EE. With every one-unit increase in SL ($B = 0.13$, $p < .001$), EE increased by approximately 0.13 points. Research shows that when leaders are engaged, the employees reporting to them are more prone to be engaged. According to Ruban (2018), research has shown that if SLs actively engage the organization and build an engagement

culture, their efforts trickle down to their middle managers. Meanwhile, according to research, middle managers have a more direct effect on engaging the workforce because they directly work with employees daily and are likelier to cultivate a more effective strategy to engage their direct reports (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). In short, engagement starts at the top, and without engaging SL in organizations, it is tough to engage the hearts and minds of lower-level employees (Antony, 2018).

Results of Work-life Programs

Work-life programs were identified as positive statistically significant predictors of Employee Engagement (EE) after controlling for age and gender. According to the study, Work-life Programs had the least impact on EE. With every one-unit increase in Work-life Programs (B = 0.04, p < .001), EE increased by approximately 0.04 points. According to Weideman et al. (2020), Work-life Programs are becoming increasingly popular in management practices within the business landscape. Significant research has been conducted to understand the influence of various work-life programs and their impact on the construct.

Hammer et al. (2005) and Leslie et al. (2012) studies argue that Work-life Programs may have unintended effects, such as increased work–life conflict and potential career penalties. Boamah et al. (2022) state that the interactions between work and personal life are essential for ensuring well-being, especially during the Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19), where the lines between work and home are blurred. Boamah added that Work-life Program interference/imbalance could result in work-related burnout, adversely affecting employees' physical and psychological health. Akter et al. (2022) state that this can result in positive, negative, or no impact on organizational outcomes, which depends on the study design of organizations, industries, or countries.

However, according to Weideman et al. (2020), these conclusions show significant inconsistencies.

Results of Age and Gender

The demographic variables of age and gender were included in the regression as control variables. For age, the reference category was under 40. For gender, the reference category was male. Using under 40 as the reference category for age means that the regression coefficient for age will reflect the predicted difference between those 40 or older and those under 40. Using male as the reference category for gender means that the regression coefficient for gender will reflect the predicted difference between females and males. Age and gender were insignificant factors influencing Employee Engagement (EE). The difference by age and gender shows insignificant differences in engagement levels. Age and gender differences were noted as being affected by only .10 for age and .02 for gender in public sector organizations, according to the secondary data set used in this research.

Therefore, regression coefficients were low, and there was an insignificant difference in the demographics of age and gender according to the respondents' engagement levels. The study's findings suggest no age or gender differences in federal government employees in public sector organizations. However, as the workforce demographic changes in the next several years, future research should be conducted in the demographic category of age. As the dynamics of the generational cohorts increase and is a current hot-button topic for researchers, there could be a considerable shift in the differences in age and gender in studies in the workforce that could add to future studies. Acknowledging the generational differences in work values and attitudes can facilitate administrators to tailor strategies to improve individual and organizational performance while creating an engaged work environment that enhances intergenerational harmony and

teamwork. This dynamic should be carefully monitored as the future mix of gender and age infiltrates into organizations.

Summary

Secondary data from the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) was analyzed to evaluate the factors and drivers of employee engagement in public sector organizations. The collected data was scored and tabulated in an SPSS (version 29) spreadsheet for analysis through descriptive, regression, and correlational statistics. Multiple linear regression was conducted to determine if Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation influenced employee engagement after controlling for age and gender.

The analysis showed that the independent variables collectively explained 46% of Employee Engagement (EE) variance. This can be explained by the fact that for every one-unit increase, Employee Engagement (EE) increased by .046 points according to the predictor variables. The regression coefficients for Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs, and Intrinsic Motivation were positively significant, indicating that each variable positively influences EE at varying degrees. The regression table (Table 13) shows the impact of each predictor variable.

In some fields of study, there is an inherently more significant amount of unexplainable variation. In this study, 46% of the variation was explained. According to researchers in empirical modeling for social science research, the R-square values are inevitably low in studies that explain human behavior (Frost, 2019; Itaoka, 2012; Ozili, 2022). Researchers have found that studies that try to explain behavior generally have low R-square values of less than .50 because human behavior is more complex to predict. There is no one-size-fits-all best answer for

how high R-squares should be. Statistically significant coefficients represent the mean change in the dependent variable, given a one-unit shift in the independent variable (Abdelkader, 2022). According to Cohen (1992), an R-square value of .12 or below indicates low, values between .13 to .25 indicate medium, and values of .26 or above indicate high effect sizes dealing with behavior research studies.

Ozili (2022) states that an R-square shows how much variance in the outcome is explained by all of the items in the regression and that a small R-square is perfectly valid as long as the assumptions of linear regression are met. As stated above, all assumptions for this research were met. According to Ozili, 2022, an R-square value between 0.10 and 0.50 is acceptable in social science research when most explanatory variables are statistically significant. Itaoka (2012) adds that if the list of variables for the regression input is defendable and there is no multicollinearity, the model is considered acceptable even with a low R-square score for social science research.

A proposed explanation that could be drawn for the .54 unexplainable variance can be attributed to the time the survey was taken and the use of secondary data. There are risks when using secondary datasets, such as a biased sample or manipulation for political reasons. The other issue with secondary data is that it may not contain exactly what is needed. Therefore, more current and primary data could yield different results than secondary data.

Ozili (2022) adds that some of the included explanatory variables may have a weak relationship with the dependent variable, weakening the model's R-squared goodness-of-fit. Ozili (2022) states that an R-squared between .0 and .09 is too low for an empirical model in social science research. This range of R-squared is not acceptable and should be rejected. Therefore, regarding Work-life Programs, the regression coefficient was .04. Thus, the regression

coefficients of the other independent variables were above .09 and found to be statistically significant. Therefore, a regression model in social science research should not be rejected because of low R-squared (Ozili, 2022). Ozili (2022), Frost (2019), and Itaoka (2012) explain that most social science research modeling aims not to predict human behavior but to evaluate whether specific predictors or explanatory variables significantly affect the dependent variable. Therefore, a low R-square of at least 0.1 (or 10 percent) is acceptable because some or most predictors or explanatory variables are statistically significant, and all other assumptions are met.

To conclude this chapter, the study controlled for age and gender using survey items from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) responses. Age was a positive predictor of employee engagement in the regression, such that respondents 40 or older tended to have a slightly higher engagement level than those under 40. Gender was a positive predictor of Employee Engagement (EE) in the regression, such that females tended to have a slightly higher level of engagement than males. However, age and gender had low regression scores, and due to the differences in the literature, the researcher finds that there is no significant difference in engagement between age and gender among federal government employees in public sector organizations. Chapter 5 will discuss in detail the results of the findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Employee Engagement (EE) has emerged as one of the most significant challenges in today's workplace (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). One of Public Administration's key initiatives is ensuring an effective, equitable, and accountable government that meets the needs of its people. Public Administration's goal involves a deep commitment to providing quality products and services to communities and contributing to their overall social and economic development. Public sector organizations cannot succeed without an engaged workforce entrusted to this mission and equipped with the knowledge to achieve it. EE has strongly influenced organizational performance, productivity, profitability, customer loyalty, safety, employee retention, and employee and organizational well-being (Saarinen, 2018). Organizations lose $450 – $550 billion in the U.S. (Saarinen, 2018; Wrenn, 2022) and $7.8 trillion annually due to low performance, productivity, and employee turnover (Clifton & Harter, 2023; Pendell, 2023). There are economic and social ramifications to disengagement in public sector organizations. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

The key to creating a vibrant and sustainable organization is to find ways to get employees, from top executives to assembly line workers, personally engaged in day-to-day corporate sustainability efforts (Polman & Bhattacharya, 2016). Researchers agree that the benefits of EE include increased performance, productivity, discretionary effort, rapid innovation, higher customer satisfaction, lower retention rates, more resilience to change, and a thriving workforce (Barik & Kochar, 2017; Kang, 2014; Ruban, 2018; Sun &

Bunchapattanasakda, 2019; Turner, 2020). However, with the many complexities and stringent regulations in organizations, EE will continue to challenge the health of employees and organizations in the future (Mishra et al., 2014; Osborne & Hammoud, 2017).

William Kahn (1990) was the first academic researcher to discover the engagement theory, which revealed that psychological conditions determine engagement or disengagement, affecting work outcomes. Allowing for autonomy and flexibility in the workplace increases EE. Autonomy implies that employees are allowed to make any necessary changes to suit their needs as well as the needs of the organization. Autonomy and flexibility among employees bring about a trusting relationship, which is reflected by the increased performance of employees (Byrne, 2015). Engagement is when employees complete the assigned tasks with enthusiasm, commitment, and positive energy. As a result, they are readily available in their workplace and strive to bring their full potential to work to ensure that the goals and visions of the organization are achieved.

All employers want their employees to be committed to the organization's success. Moreover, having disengaged employees in an organization can lead to unsuccessful organizations plagued with many issues that prohibit its ability to thrive and grow. Employee Engagement (EE) is an essential indicator of a thriving workplace environment and employee satisfaction. However, in this contemporary workforce, employees demand independence in their responsibilities, want a sense of belonging in their organizations, and are enthusiastic about their contributions. The dynamics of the workforce have changed, and organizations are no longer squeezing the most out of employees and employees just wanting compensation. Employees want more than just compensation. They want positive, long-term, and fulfilling work experiences.

Because employees are the number one highest commodity in organizations, Employers must understand how to measure and implement change to raise engagement levels in the 21st-century workforce. Most organizations administer EE surveys to gauge employees' perceptions of their work experiences. Surveys have become very common and are vital to assessing employee perspectives on their work environment. An organization with an effective EE strategy and a highly engaged workforce will likely retain top performers, attract new talent, and gain a competitive advantage. Successful organizations are value-driven with employee-centric cultures. Understanding how to balance employee relations, innovation, and maximizing performance and profitability is crucial to organizations that want to ensure a sustainable future.

When measuring and tracking Employee Engagement (EE), most organizations use traditional survey techniques to gauge engagement. While these practices have provided a wealth of insight into the dimensions and impact of engagement, it is time to rethink how engagement is defined and measured and, more importantly, how to apply the practical applications to improve the workforce's quality of products, performance, retention, and overall well-being of the employee and the organization. The traditional models are antiquated and do not incorporate current working goals, technological advancements, internationalism, diverse generational cohorts, employees, and the needs of society to carry out America's business effectively. This study evaluates and measures the factors and drivers influencing EE in public sector organizations using secondary data from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS).

The 2014 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, administered by the Office of Personnel Management, revealed that engagement among the nation's largest employers has declined. Many current public sector employees are looking for jobs outside of the public sector, and a

recent survey of new college graduates showed that only 6% plan to work in government (Partnership for Public Service, 2018). Because engagement is critical to retention (Nowack, 2008), it remains a vital issue for public sector leaders who try to keep employees committed to their jobs and the organization's goals while attracting top talent to backfill attrition rates. While some attrition is natural and can help infuse the federal workforce with new talent and ideas, turnover can also cause a loss of institutional knowledge and cost hiring officials time and resources (Partnership for Public Service, n.d.). High levels of turnover within government agencies undermine the quality of services that citizens receive (An, 2019; Lee, 2018). Hur and Abner (2023) add that high turnover is expensive for governments due to the need to recruit, select, and train new personnel. Employees voluntarily left the federal workforce in 2021 at an average rate of 6.1%, often for reasons like retiring or finding a new job (Friedman, 2022).

Advances in recent years have created an unprecedented case for change in how public services work. Public Administration (PA) has a greater focus on effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability, and far more demanding citizens who expect an increasingly high level of service delivery comparable to what they get from the private sector (Box, 2014). In this new social and economic economy emphasized by revolutionary shifts in science and technology, information and knowledge have become critical factors in economic competitiveness. Developing countries must pursue a more active role in formulating national policies and strategies to advance the economy to reap considerable benefits in terms of economic and social growth/development (Ndou, 2004). At the same time, in a climate of budgetary pressures and the drive for greater efficiency, politicians and regulatory bodies expect government organizations to do more with less. Government organizations increasingly consider how their workforces are constructed to respond to these complex and changing demands and deliver public service value.

When measuring and tracking Employee Engagement (EE), most organizations use traditional annual survey techniques to evaluate engagement. While these practices have provided a wealth of insight into the dimensions and impact of engagement, rethinking how to measure the engagement and applying the results toward practical principles to increase work engagement is vital to organizational success. It has been argued that governments are presently teetering at the height of significant transformation. Such wide-scale and radical reform is necessary so that the future of public services will be fit for purpose in an ever-changing world (Glennon et al., 2018).

While the literature notes significant changes in the public service workforce, there is often little detail about what changes should be made and how to go about implementing these changes. Alongside government changes and how it conducts its business, there is a change in employees' perceptions of work and the nature of the work. Because many future public servants will not be interested in a thirty-year career in the same agency or at the same organization but will instead seek careers spanning several agencies and organizations and work in different job fields (Dickinson & Sullivan, 2014), therefore, if the public sector is to attract the best and the brightest candidates, it must offer career paths and entryways that fit these philosophies.

Engagement focuses on the heart of the workplace relationships between employee and employer. Work relationships cause employees to want to do their best and be loyal to the organization. Commitment and loyalty are the keys to unlocking performance and productivity and transforming the lives of many employees for whom Monday morning is the beginning of a dreadful start to the work week. Researchers have begun to build work environments based on relationships, mutual respect and accountability, and reciprocal obligations and commitments that define work relationships (Polman & Bhattacharya, 2016).

According to Fischer (2017), the covenant culture is self-sustaining and is supported by empowerment and autonomy. Building covenantal relationships in organizations encourages leaders to foster an atmosphere where followers can see the link between their contributions to work and their personal fulfillment and sense of meaning in life (Batcheller et al., 2013). This sense of fulfillment is, in turn, aided by a sense of teamwork, collaboration, and empowerment (Gatling et al., 2016). Building covenantal cultures has been linked to increased performance, productivity, sustainability, profitability, and long-term success for 21st-century organizations (Khasawneh, 2011).

Allowing flatter organizations, mutual care, participatory decision-making, and mutual accountability, where employees are accountable to leaders and, in turn, leaders are accountable to employees, will promote healthy work environments. A healthy work environment is crucial in current work environments, where employees are asked to fill many roles without much supervision and make costly decisions at the drop of a hat. Fischer (2017) states that organizations that apply a covenantal perspective will have greater integrity, teamwork, and decision-making because everyone is committed to serving and caring for each other and the goals and objectives of the organization. Leaders, as a general rule, cannot act arbitrarily and in a manner that mistreats employees.

Today, more than ever, organizations need a road map to help them raise Employee Engagement (EE) levels. More knowledge and research on the construct of EE helps employers implement the necessary practices to create and sustain an engaging culture. This construct furthers an organization's interests by ensuring employees remain involved in, committed to, and fulfilled by their work. It covers practical steps to boost EE within organizations and teams, how to engage different generations of employees, the keys to reducing voluntary employee turnover,

and practical tools to help retain employees. These processes will raise employee retention rates and performance, increasing profitability and giving organizations a competitive advantage in an ever-changing global market.

How the workforce performs determines, to a large extent, whether organizations succeed amid revolutionary changes in how they thrive and grow in the 21st century. Some changes that set a new precedence in the workforce include COVID-19, digital transformation, advanced technologies, and the mixture of generational cohorts. Engaging the workforce is a massive factor in implementing these changes effectively and efficiently. As mentioned above, a robust and healthy culture has many benefits in ensuring an organization is successful. Culture can do much to encourage productivity and performance. Covenantal behavior encourages self-sustainability, where people genuinely take ownership of organizational goals and processes and can set positive, productive cultures. Using rules, regulations, and punishments can only provide short-term and limited influence.

Furthermore, rules and regulations can become so numerous in a dysfunctional culture that ultimately, they become, at best, stifling and, at worst, disregarded (Fischer, 2017). Organizations should be reminded of these limitations and focus on building a covenantal culture, remembering that employees' motivation drives their performance. Employees must be motivated and willing to make extra efforts and exceed expectations to facilitate creativity and innovation and contribute their best for organizations to flourish. In the same regard, organizations must ensure that they support employee so they can flourish in their work lives. These efforts should be considered a two-way street; together, employees and the organizations should exercise mutual accountability and care for each other.

Although there is much interest in engagement, there is also much confusion about the construct and how to define a model and definition universally. To improve EE and increase organizational performance, competitiveness, talent management, and well-being, organizations need a better understanding of the contributing factors and drivers influencing engagement (Kahn & Heaphy, 2013). This study will add to the knowledge by using a large sample of federal government workers' perspectives of their work experiences, translating practical ideas to academically measure the variables in increasing organizational engagement.

According to the survey responses from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), the variables were all found to have positive and statistically significant effects on engagement but at varying degrees. Intrinsic Motivation had the most influence on EE (beta 0.42), and Work-Life Programs (beta 0.04) had the most negligible impact. The overall variance that can explain engagement in the survey was .046 collectively, according to the R-square value. Researchers state that the variance for social science research studies is lower than other studies because human behavior is more challenging to predict (Ozili, 2022; Itaoka, 2012; Frost, 2023) state that a regression coefficient score between 0.10 and 0.50 is acceptable in social science research when most explanatory variables are statistically significant. Itaoka (2012) adds that if the list of variables for the regression input is defendable and there is no multicollinearity, the model is considered acceptable even with a low R-square score for social science research.

This quantitative research study evaluated and measured the drivers and factors influencing Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. The researcher chose a quantitative research approach with a quasi-experimental design to answer the research question and address the hypotheses statements. The study used responses from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) questionnaire for statistical analysis. The FY 2020 FEVS provides unique insights into the perspectives of federal employees on employee satisfaction, engagement, and workforce management. The survey questions were emailed to 1.5M federal employees across 82 agencies. Approximately 642,800k (44.3%) employees responded to 38 questions/Survey Items on their perspective of their work experiences. Response questions/survey items were selected as proxies to address the research question and the corresponding hypotheses. The research question is as follows:

RQ1: What factors and drivers influence Employee Engagement in Public Sector organizations?

Discussion of Null Hypotheses

When using statistical methods, research hypotheses can never be proven; they can only be disproved (rejected). A null hypothesis is a precise statement about a population researchers test using a population sample or a controlled group. This study rejected the null hypotheses, and the alternative hypotheses were accepted for each Independent Variable (IV). Work-life Programs' R square value was .04. Due to inconsistencies in research, it was determined that WLPs were inconclusive. According to Ozili (2022), a regression coefficient score between 0.10 and 0.50 is acceptable in social science research when most explanatory variables are statistically significant, and no multicollinearity was found between the independent variables under study.

Discussion of Alternative Hypotheses

This research study shows that the relationships between EE and the independent variables were all positive and statistically significant. The alternative hypotheses were accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected for Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, Work-life Programs (WLPs), and Intrinsic Motivation.

Discussion of Key Finding 1 - Extrinsic Motivation

Ho1: Extrinsic Motivation (EM) does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha1: Extrinsic Motivation (EM) influences Employee Engagement

The findings for Extrinsic Motivation (EM) were positively statistically significant, B = 0.15, p < .001, indicating that EM positively influenced Employee Engagement (EE). With every one-unit increase in Extrinsic Motivation, Employee Engagement increased by approximately 0.15 points. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

EM refers to the work individuals pursue to receive a separable outcome (Hashiguchi et al., 2021). According to Singh (2016), individuals are Extrinsically Motivated if they are driven by rewards and recognition for completing a task. Extrinsic Motivators could include money, raises, bonuses, rewards, recognition for accomplishing a particular task, positive affirmation, feedback, or a certificate of achievement. Hashiguchi et al. (2021) suggest that Extrinsic Motivators have a more significant effect on bringing about employee motivation than intrinsic motivators. However, Bawa (2017) and Hashiguchi et al. (2021) asserted that extrinsic motivation might negatively affect intrinsic motivation. However, it was suggested by Hashiguchi et al. (2021) that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation could be experienced simultaneously, independently, or dependently. Ryan and Deci (2000) also posited that employees might exhibit externally motivated behavior to achieve an external reward.

Many organizations try various ways of motivating employees to ensure they fully engage in the organization's activities. Some organizations give financial rewards, while others give recognition to the employees to motivate them. According to Barik and Kochar (2017), the reward system of an organization requires efficiency and effectiveness if it is used to achieve the goals set by the organization and to retain and recruit employees. Anderfuhren et al. (2010)

researched job performance in the public sector, and their study confirmed that employees are not rewarded as highly as private sector employees due to budgetary restraints for high performance in the public sector. Therefore, the incentive to come on board or stay is much more appealing in the private sector. However, as a result of the findings of this study, Extrinsic Motivation (EM) positively and significantly influences Employee Engagement (EE).

Discussion of Key Findings 2 - Senior Leadership

Ho2: Senior Leadership (SL) does not influence Employee Engagement

Ha2: Senior Leadership (SL) Influences Employee Engagement

The findings for Senior Leaders showed a positive statistically significant, $B = 0.13$, $p < .001$, indicating that senior leadership positively influenced Employee Engagement (EE). With every one-unit increase in SL, EE increased by approximately 0.13 points. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

Improved performance and enthusiasm in the workplace are typically listed among the most sought-after characteristics of workplace performance. As a rule, the specified effects are achieved by increasing the levels of engagement (Graffigna, 2017). Organizations need influential leaders who can lead and motivate employees to achieve higher goals. Organizations need leaders who can provide a positive work environment that facilitates employees' innovative work behavior. Although several leadership styles were found beneficial for employee innovation and positive organizational outcomes, it is critical to understand that effective leadership styles may vary based on the industry in which they are applied (Fant, 2019). In other words, existing research shows inconsistent results, as some are statistically significant and positive while others are statistically significant and negative.

Transformational Leadership style is one of the best-known and widely applied leadership strategies. Transformational strategy suggests that staff members become motivated and, therefore, engaged as soon as their vision is transformed to align with that of the organization. Therefore, the Transformational Leadership approach can be considered the cornerstone of boosting employee enthusiasm. Indeed, research points out that applying the Transformational Leadership framework entails a drastic change in attitudes and perceptions of one's workplace duties, hence the rise in engagement (Besieux et al., 2018). In contrast, Gocen and Sen (2021 suggest that Servant Leadership, in this respect, focuses on leaders who serve their followers, producing a shared spirit of purpose, trust, commitment, desire for wisdom, and effort in the organization.

According to Milhem et al. (2019), while not a direct leadership style, emotional intelligence can strengthen the employee's perception of positive leadership styles and encourage employee engagement. Emotional intelligence plays a vital role for employees in the organization and will help to increase organizational commitment, improve performance efficiency, retain the best talent, and motivate employees to give their best (Desti & Shanthi, 2015).

The role of leadership in influencing employee motivation depends upon a correctly chosen leadership style. Although the levels of engagement depend on various other factors, such as incentives, workplace benefits, and relationships in the workplace, the choice of leadership approach significantly contributes to the level of engagement. Zhou and Miao (2014) posit that public sector organizations must improve their administrative and management abilities as servants and leaders to obtain organizational success. This study's findings support research that shows that senior leadership impacts engagement. However, it is concluded that whether Senior

Leadership influences EE depends upon the type of senior leadership traits used in organizations. Further research is recommended.

Discussion of Key Finding 3 – Professional Development and Growth

Ho3: Professional Development and Growth (PDG) do not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha3: Professional Development and Growth (PDG) Influences Employee Engagement

Findings for Professional Development and Growth were statistically significant, B = 0.17, p < .001, indicating that Professional Development and Growth positively significantly influenced Employee Engagement (EE). With every one-unit increase in PDG, EE increased by approximately 0.13 points. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

PDG practices help organizations retain talented employees and allow them opportunities for career development. Employees tend to invest in them and are interested in their career growth. Adequate employee development via training and increasing knowledge base can increase employee engagement and benefit both the employee and the organization. According to Mone et al. (2018), EE and training help ascertain and work on the strengths and weaknesses of employees, leading to improved performance. They also suggest that EE and training improve job satisfaction, leading to high performance and productivity.

Developing employee's skills, knowledge, and abilities reduces employee turnover, leading to fewer recruitment expenditures and better long-term relationships in the organizations' interests, ultimately improving the overall performance of employees. Employees working in an organization for an extended period are better accustomed to the organization's needs and can work at high proficiency levels. Employees are familiar with the business rules and have

historical knowledge of the organization's background, making them more efficient and effective when carrying out their duties. EE and retention help the company privatize the employee relationship, leading to personal rapport working for the company's betterment (Siddiqui and Sahar, 2019). As a result of the findings of this study, Professional Development and Growth (PDG) positively and significantly influences Employee Engagement (EE). As Employees increase their Professional Development and Growth in organizations, their performance and contributions increase along with their engagement. This study's findings support research that shows that PDG positively statistically influences engagement in this study.

Discussion of Key Finding 4 – Work-Life Programs

Ho4: Work-life Programs do not influence Employee Engagement

Ha4: Work-life Programs influences Employee Engagement

The findings for Work-Life Programs showed a statistically significant, B = 0.04, p < .001, indicating that Work-Life Programs positively influenced Employee Engagement (EE). With every one-unit increase in Work-life Programs, EE was impacted by approximately 0.04 points.

Literature suggests a relationship between Work-Life Programs and various Employee Engagement (EE) constructs (Chen & Fulmer, 2018). Yu (2019) found that organizations that offer family-friendly policies to their employees find that they perform at higher rates and have higher commitment levels. However, Caillier (2016) and Chen et al. (2020) found that one aspect of Work-life Programs, alternative work schedules, had a significant relationship to employer turnover intention. Landgraf (2021) states that balancing time and energy between work and family needs can be difficult for specific industries with heavy, intense workloads. Jones and Iyer (2020) found that employers benefit from offering work-life programs, and it is a practical tool

for retaining and recruiting staff. Rasheed et al. (2018) found that if managers caused friction between employees' abilities to balance their work and family needs, it strained work relationships and influenced high-employee turnover intentions.

The engagement was enhanced when flexible work practices, schedules, and employee contracts accommodated the employee's specific needs (Harris, 2023). One of the most significant benefits discussed was how flexible schedules and setting work boundaries improved work-life balance. Organizations working in different time zones help decrease remote employees' stress and improve work-life balance. Once institutional leaders understood that one size does not fit all, schedules like hybrid options were considered, which helped avoid turnover. According to Harris (2023), flexible work schedules that considered the employees' needs helped improve retention, accommodated all time zones, and enabled employees to travel and meet their work needs. These Work-life Programs increase the organization's attractiveness for highly qualified candidates who look for work-life balance.

Harris (2023) posits that flexible work practices accommodate employees' specific needs, such as taking children to school, attending school-related priorities, or caring for elderly parents. Flexible schedules support family life management and work productivity, making employees' life priorities doable and letting them know they are valued in the organization. According to Yang et al. (2022), remote work is essential for organizations of all types because it allows for increased flexibility and mobility of workers, promoting several key advantages. Those advantages include retaining talent by offering more flexible working hours, which increases the ability to attract talent and increases performance, productivity, and motivation (Haddad et al. (2023).

The business landscape is changing, and employee needs have become crucial for businesses to remain competitive (Chabowski & Mena, 2017). Other benefits of Work-life Programs can be summarized as work arrangements that positively impact employee well-being, a condition for EE (Agarwal & Gupta, 2018; Bailey et al., 2017; Weideman et al., 2020). Furthermore, Work-life Programs can promote employee performance and productivity, a recognized outcome of EE (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014).

According to this study, Work-life Programs were positively linked to employee engagement (EE). However, it had minimal impact on engagement according to the sample population of federal government employees in the public sector in this research study. A study by Weideman et al. (2020) on Work-life Programs found that poor management of such programs can have critical adverse effects on organizations, including a breakdown in communication and policy abuse by employees, a lack of fairness, and various adverse outcomes. Caillier (2013) adds that analyzing how these benefits affect the workforce individually is missing and should be further researched.

The sample population was taken from the FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) before the mandatory work changes due to the pandemic were implemented. More research is critical in this area because of the benefits of Work-life Programs suggested by academia and the positive effect on employee retention, recruitment, and engagement post-COVID. Current primary data could be analyzed and measured to see if the results are similar now that the workforce is slowly returning to normal with WLPs underway in the current workplace. As a result of the findings, a positive and significant relationship between Work-life Programs (WLP) and Employee Engagement (EE) was found. The Work-life Program consists of

many employee well-being programs, some beneficial and others not. Previous research shows inconclusive results and more research is recommended.

Discussion of Key Finding 5 – Intrinsic Motivation

Ho5: Intrinsic Motivation (IM) does not influence Employee Engagement.

Ha5: Intrinsic Motivation (IM) influences Employee Engagement

The findings for Intrinsic Motivation (IM) showed a positive statistically significant, B = 0.42, p < .001, indicating that IM positively influenced Employee Engagement (EE). With every one-unit increase in IM, EE increased by approximately 0.42 points. IM was this study's most influential factor that engaged public sector employees. The alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected.

IM is an employee's interest in completing an assigned task without regard to a tangible or intangible benefit. According to Fant (2019), Employee Engagement (EE) is the physical, mental, and emotional involvement in completing work roles. Employees' psychological needs can also impact EE (Kahn, 1990). Fant (2019) stated that the psychological need for meaningfulness is satisfied when employees feel their efforts are valued and appreciated. Employees' psychological need for safety is achieved, and they feel safe to bring their actual selves into the workplace without any fears (Fant, 2019).

According to Kahn (1990), the psychological need for availability is present when employees have the physical, emotional, and resources needed to be engaged (Kahn, 1990 & Fant, 2019). Kahn (1990) described psychological availability as an engaged employee whose physical and emotional energy and a sense of security allow them to be fully involved in job performance. Locke and Schattke (2019) postulate that IM is innate and can highly impact employees due to their interest in a task. Employee Engagement (EE) and motivation are

correlated and demonstrate that when employees are intrinsically motivated, they perform their duties because of their interest in the task, and the internal satisfaction they get from performing the tasks brings them fulfillment (Salamah, 2021).

Control Variables: Age and Gender

Age and gender were measured using survey data from the FEVS as control variables to see if they could add value to the study. The majority of the respondents in the sample were 40 years of age or older (69%), with the weighted estimate showing that 66% of the population is in this age group. This aligns with the federal workforce being an older population of public sector employees. The sample's most significant proportion of respondents were men (49%), with the weighted estimate showing that 55% of the population are men. As a result of the findings, the control variables, age, and gender demonstrate no difference between young and older or male and female engagement levels in this study. Because the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey only had two categories, over 40 and under 40, age and gender, the findings were inconclusive since there are several generational cohorts within these categories. Further research using primary data or a current survey is recommended to measure each generational category separately.

The workforce demographic will change in the next several years, and future research should be conducted in the demographic category of age and gender. In contrast to the findings in this study, a Gallup Study conducted in 2023 suggests that *w*omen experienced a more significant decline in engagement than men in 2022, with women reporting feeling less cared about at work and less likely to have someone to encourage their development (Gonzales, 2023). A study by Rothbard, 2001 and Avery et al. (2007) found that women had higher levels of engagement than men. However, Yildirim (2008) found in his study of Turkish counselors that

there was no significant difference between male and female engagement levels. Shukla et al. (2015) research reported that women are more engaged than men. The findings of James et al. (2007) suggest that the older workforce was more engaged than, the younger workforce when they worked with supportive leadership. According to Shukla et al. (2015), their study found no difference in engagement levels by age group.

According to a Gallup study (2018b), 75% of the workforce will be millennials by 2025, bringing a new perspective to workplace values and beliefs. As the dynamics of the generational cohorts increase and continue to be a grave concern for organizations, there could be a considerable shift in the differences in age in future studies. Recognizing the generational differences in work values and attitudes can create engaged work environments that enhance intergenerational harmony and teamwork. Researchers found mixed findings on the correlation between age and gender and employee engagement. According to Shukla (2015), findings regarding the relationship between gender and employee engagement are still inconsistent.

Implications

This research study provides practical, evidence-based knowledge and measured variables using Byrne's theoretical framework. The sample population was from the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). This study adds structure to a new modern theoretical approach by operationalizing variables that fit within the three dimensions of Byrne's model. Each variable was operationalized to measure the factors and drivers that influence public sector organizations. The study showed that the regression coefficient value explained .46 of the Employee Engagement (EE) variances. According to researchers in empirical modeling for social science research, the R-square values are inevitably low in studies that explain human behavior (Ozili, 2022; Frost, 2023; Itaoka, 2012).

The findings in this study add to the knowledge that Intrinsic Motivation had the most significant motivational impact on public sector employees. Each variable can contribute to a universal engagement model and be tested using other models to help find a universal definition of engagement. However, this study recommends further research on the Independent Variable (IV) Work-life Programs before contributing to a universal engagement model or a universal definition of Employee Engagement (EE). Further studies on Senior Leadership styles versus Senior Leadership are recommended.

The FY 2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) provides insight into U.S. government employees across 86 agencies' perceptions of identified factors and drivers that statistically significantly influence EE. The study helps fill the gap in a rarely studied population, U.S. federal employees, by using a climate study focused on the perceptions of government workers, where they can share their insights on whether engagement characteristics are present in their workforce. The results from this study can be used to design studies in other private sector and public sector organizations challenged with a disengaged workforce. The findings can help guide individuals leading organizations to incorporate specific behaviors into their daily interactions and increase their organizational strategies to combat disengagement's adverse outcomes.

Measuring engagement levels and analyzing the results and outcomes of this study is significant because employees are the greatest commodity in organizations, and investing in them can contribute significantly to whether an organization thrives or not. The fact that employees are the number one asset to any organization is enough to indicate that the returns from employees can contribute substantially to the growth of an organization. This study evaluates the influences and drivers of Employee Engagement (EE). It gives the impact of the

variables to provide empirical data that supports the determinates that impact engagement in the public sector. The findings can be used to understand how organizations can engage their employees. As stated before, EE is paramount in the performance, productivity, well-being, retention, recruitment, output, outcomes, and development of 21st-century organizations. It is imperative to state that EE is vital in the daily operations and execution of any organization's goals and objectives to complete the mission successfully.

EE refers to employees and their connections to their work, coworkers, management, and mission (Mittal et al., 2018). An employee engaged in his work is more dedicated and willing to put extra effort beyond the typical day at work for the organization to achieve its objectives. It is worth noting that engaged employees are characterized by their enthusiasm for their duties and dedication to the organization's visions and goals. Engaged employees do all they can to help the organization be successful and obtain a competitive advantage. They carry out their duties with the organization's survivability in mind. Aktar and Pangil (2017) add that engagement is performing work duties with total energy, enthusiasm, and dedication.

Employee Engagement (EE) increases employees' loyalty in an organization, reduces the probability of staff turnover, and combats job-hopping and quiet quitting. Organizations in the U. S. lose over $450-500 billion annually due to low productivity and employee turnover (Hellebuyck et al., 2017; Saarinen, 2018), and according to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace (2023), cost $7.8 trillion worldwide (Clifton & Harter, 2023; Pendell, 2023). Employees unsatisfied in their places of work are more likely to look for other job opportunities or be disengaged and not perform up to their highest ability, causing organizations to lose billions of manhours and production.

Employees who feel accomplished at work feel they contribute to the overall business and recognize how their duties relate to the organization's success. In the public sector, it is challenging because of the red tape and bureaucracy in the government. According to Vogel et al. (2022), the interaction between organizations and red tape is worth studying in the public sector because authenticity and bureaucracy can be considered fundamentally contradictory. Therefore, it is necessary for public employees to feel they are personally contributing to an organization that performs a valuable service without unnecessary restrictions or controls on their efforts (Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Their research suggests the importance of communicating to public employees the significance of their role in the organization and the real benefits of their contribution to society. Public organizations are responsible for creating an environment that acknowledges employees' contributions to the public good.

This study provides a new understanding of variables and drivers that influence Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations and adds structure to Byrne's theoretical framework that tests variables that fit the model's dimensions. The study also adds to the relationship between EE and Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Senior Leadership (SL), Professional Development and Growth (PDG), Work-life Programs (WLPs), and Intrinsic Motivation (IM), using a theoretical quasi-experimental approach using U. S. Federal Government employees. This study fills gaps by measuring five independent variables significantly influencing engagement in an academic research model to bring structure, reliability, and validity to the theoretical framework. Therefore, these variables can be tested and replicated using other engagement models and theoretical frameworks. The implications for each of the Independent Variables are as follows:

Implications of Intrinsic Motivation

In this study, Intrinsic Motivation had the most significant impact on Employee Engagement (EE). When employees are invested in their work, they give everything to contribute successfully to the organization. People find their drive to work comes from inside themselves rather than externally. A wide variety of intrinsic rewards increase employee satisfaction and overall job-related performance. These rewards come from job involvement, job development, decision-making participation, job autonomy, task significance, and recognition (Ali & Anwar, 2021). These rewards create an engaged workforce that feels valued and will be intrinsically motivated to do their best, stay in organizations longer, and go far beyond the call of duty.

Intrinsic Motivation encourages workers to put in more effort for the organization's and the mission's benefit. When workers care about the organization's success, they work harder to achieve its goals. Engaged workers are likelier to get along with their coworkers, which helps keep cohesiveness in the work environment and sets a culture of partnership and collaboration. When workers are enthusiastic about their jobs, they have better overall attitudes and are appreciated, recognized, and given encouragement by their leaders. When leaders recognize their employees, they experience contentment and satisfaction in their abilities to perform their duties. Employees with a strong sense of pride in their work and the organization will likely stay longer, recommend their place of employment to others, contribute to a positive office environment, put in extra effort, and care about their jobs.

Meaningfulness is one of the intrinsic rewards that employees experience. Individuals can feel the importance of the task they are fulfilling in their organizations by completing something that is valued and also something that matters. It gives employees a sense of purpose and

direction, a crucial motivator in performing at high levels in the workplace. Individuals' freedom regarding finishing a particular task allows them to feel the ownership of that work (Lin, 2007), giving employees the feeling of responsibility and ownership of specific tasks, which creates the desire to do their best. Ownership of tasks is a crucial motivating factor in enhancing performance. This allows employees to feel valuable to the organization and contribute to sustainable development. Allowing autonomy in the workforce releases intrinsic motivating attitudes and behaviors.

Employee Engagement (EE) needs to be the top concern for any organization. Engaged and motivated employees work with energy, enthusiasm, and initiative. However, when employees are disengaged, valuable time and energy are lost. Public servants are motivated by their willingness to serve the public and the underlying desire to improve the world through their actions (Thompson & Christensen, 2018). To keep employees motivated, public organizations need to remember the ideals of Maslow's theory and understand how these principles can bolster EE and motivation (Lussier, 2019). Finding intrinsically motivated employees is crucial in the hiring and onboarding process.

Implications of Professional Development and Growth

According to this study, Professional Development and Growth had the 2nd most significant impact on engagement in the public sector. Employee Engagement (EE), professional development, and organizational growth affect performance, productivity, motivation, turnover, and retention. Professional Development is the process of investing in people so that they are equipped to perform well. It is attributed to the excellent performance of engaged and trained employees who feel valued. Organizations must develop and implement EE strategies that align with their business objectives to achieve high levels of engagement. These strategies should be

inclusive, transparent, and focused on creating an optimistic labor atmosphere where staff feels appreciated and valued.

Employees' self-esteem increases with training, and their confidence levels rise when they can develop and grow through training opportunities. Professional Development and Growth help determine and enhance the strengths and weaknesses of employees, leading to improved performance. EE and training often help the company retain talent in a highly competitive job market (Praida & Sundaray, 2020). Employee Engagement (EE) and retention help the company privatize the employee relationship, leading to personal rapport and longevity within the organization, yielding long-term benefits for years to come (Siddiqui & Sahar, 2019).

Professional Development and Growth are imperative in organizations to ensure employees can fulfill their roles effectively and bring creativity and innovation to the workforce. Employee development refers to training and opportunities to gain new skills and abilities or to keep up with changing technology in the workforce. While many employers view development as a shared responsibility with employees, it is recognized as a strategic tool for an organization's increase in and ability to attract and replace those leaving the workforce and retain employees. Developing and sustaining high-performance teams of employees is crucial to the success of organizations. Organizations that are successful in the modern economy create work environments that allow employees to learn, develop, grow, be innovative, and learn new skills to keep up with the ever-changing advancements in the workforce.

Armstrong (2009) clearly stated in his book that organizations could benefit from training and development by winning the "hearts and minds of" their employees to get them to identify with the organization, exert themselves more on its behalf, and remain with the organization. If employees are to experience flexibility and effectiveness on the job, they need to acquire and

develop knowledge and skills, and if they are valued in the organization they work for, they need to see visible signs of management's commitment to their training and career needs. According to this study, this adds to the knowledge that Professional Development and Growth had the second most significant motivational impact on public sector employees. Each variable can contribute to a universal engagement model and be tested using other models to formulate a universal definition of engagement.

Implications of Extrinsic Motivation

According to this study, Extrinsic Motivation had a positive influence on engagement. Compensation, rewards, incentives, and recognition are better motivators that influence employees who are not intrinsically motivated. Extrinsic Motivation was the 3d highest influencer in this study. One of the underlying motivations of any employee is the chance to obtain a monetary reward in addition to the employee's salary (Neely, 2007). In this case, extrinsic motivation allows employees to earn more than they are employed for and is likely to increase their performance temporarily. An extrinsically incentivized employee will only be temporarily driven to complete their tasks; however, their interests and motivators must be considered to create long-term effects (Rinaldi, 2020). Considering employees' interests and motivators creates a win-win situation for the employer and the employee, increasing the opportunity for the organization and employee to grow and thrive. Extrinsic motivation has been helpful for most organizations. However, organizations should evaluate and encourage other permanent methods to motivate employees. Motivated employees are productive, allowing the organization to achieve higher output levels (Saks & Gruman, 2017).

Labor economics show that workers in the public sector have comparatively low wages compared to private sector workers. According to this study, intrinsic motivation had a

considerably higher impact on engagement. It is important to remember that employees have more intrinsic motivators than extrinsic ones since extrinsic motivators are usually short-term, while intrinsic ones are long-term. Extrinsic motivation affects retention in organizations. Employees want to be compensated for their contributions and hard work by being rewarded, promoted, and recognized. Incentives and rewards drive Employee Engagement (EE), and organizations approach the issue differently. Extrinsic motivation gives an individual the drive to engage in a task because of its reward only and not a permanent solution for disengagement.

The work sector has changed, and there has been increased competition and the need to be creative in production. Extrinsic rewards cannot guarantee creativity and a competitive edge in business. Issues around offering these rewards, such as unfair distribution, have made them less prevalent in the workplace. However, these rewards should not be ignored as individuals consider the pay offered before accepting a task. The desire for a meaningful job can offset financial concerns across various job categories, industries, and income levels (Fairlie, 2011; Overell, 2008); Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). Despite the tendency to focus on financial rewards, according to research, employees are generally willing to forgo larger salaries in pursuit of a more meaningful job (Hu & Hirsh, 2017). Extrinsic rewards, including bonuses, pay raises, and other monetary benefits, are usually financial and tangible. In duties involving mechanical skills, it has been suggested that rewards and recognition improve individuals' performance; however, according to Cerasoli et al. (2014), it does not work well in cases where cognitive skills are required.

Extrinsic motivation is compensation, rewards, and recognition, and can provoke an employee's will to work and achieve better results. Rewards that constitute an extrinsic type of motivation include bonuses and workplace perks. An example of extrinsic motivation will be

when that particular employee finishes a task or a project, performing the job because of the potential praise they will get from their managers or even the bonuses and salary raises waiting on the horizon (Cherry, 2022). However, performing the job at its best can be contingent upon receiving recognition or affirmation. Therefore, extrinsic motivators could be a temporary measure or solution to engagement. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation impact engagement as employees responds differently to these motivation types. According to this study, this adds to the knowledge that Extrinsic Motivation had the third most significant motivational impact on public sector employees. Each variable can contribute to a universal engagement model and be tested using other models to help find a universal definition of engagement.

Implications of Senior Leadership

Senior Leadership was the four[th] positive influence on employees in this study. Senior leaders' attitudes and behaviors can influence whether the organization has an engaged workforce. In other words, what leaders think, feel, say, and do profoundly impacts employee satisfaction, enthusiasm for their work, desire to do their best, and commitment to go beyond their job descriptions daily. Employees perform well when leaders are transparent about the goals and objectives they expect in the organization. Leaders must also help employees develop personal accountability for the goals and give them full autonomy to achieve them. Setting performance expectations and instilling personal accountability among employees is critical for getting results.

According to this study, this adds to the knowledge that Senior Leaders had the fourth most significant motivational impact on public sector employees. Each variable can contribute to a universal engagement model and be tested using other models to help find a universal definition of engagement.

Implications of Work-life Programs

Work-life Programs had the most negligible influence on engagement in this study. According to Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020), significant research has been conducted to understand the influence of Work-life Programs and their effect on engagement. The literature shows inconsistencies in the findings. Finally, researchers should examine why some work-life programs benefit employees more than others.

Some academics believe that work flexibility and autonomy related to communication and work–life balance contribute to work well-being (Heiden et al., 2021). Moe and Shandy (2010) state that remote working negatively influences employees and creates stress. Charalampous (2019) states that there is insufficient empirical evidence for organizations, management, and human resources to conclude that remote working benefits employees' psychosocial well-being. Therefore, more research is critical in this area because of the benefits of work-life programs suggested by academia and their positive effect on employee retention, recruitment, and engagement. Post-COVID research has elevated the importance of work-life programs in the workforce and the need to investigate flexible work.

According to Marino and Capone's study (2021), there has been an increase from 23% in 2019 to 67% of Public Administrators embracing work-life Programs post-COVID. Similar to the private sector, there is also a transition to hybrid work models in the public sector, with 39% of public administrators allowing their employees to perform their work duties 2 or 3 days per week while the remaining days are spent working remotely (Fallica, 2022). Flexible working conditions have been developing for some time. Studies in the literature qualitatively address the impact of smart working on social and economic environmental sustainability, such as air and noise pollution, energy consumption and associated costs, work-life balance, psychological

stress, physical health, and commuting (Fallica, 2022). With this trend increasing, further research is recommended. Work-life Programs added to the knowledge that they positively and statistically significantly influenced engagement. However, the R square was very low at .04. Research states that a low coefficient score is acceptable if there is no multicollinearity or the variable is defendable. Work-life programs were not defendable; therefore, they were found to be inconclusive.

Implications of Age and Gender

Age and gender demonstrated no difference between young and older or male and female engagement levels in this study. For the academic community, primary data could best evaluate the differences between age and gender because the data collection process and the questions can be specifically designed to evaluate each generation via a survey or focus group. The study was taken from an archival survey taken in 2020. The data file broke down the age of public sector employees into two categories. The two categories were 40 and younger or 40 and over; however, each generational cohort should be measured separately because of the different work values and beliefs. This resulted in a limitation of the study that will be addressed in that section. However, addressing and breaking down each generational cohort separately could yield valuable findings for the study. The academic community's use of a more current version of the survey instrument could also achieve different results that could add value to the research study. Age and gender added to the study, and there were no significant differences in age and gender in this research study.

Limitations

Researchers define limitations as anything beyond their control that might influence how they interpret a research study (Ross & Zaidi, 2019). There are limitations to every research

study that may cast doubt on the conclusions and outcomes. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), research can have limitations and constraints. According to Ross and Zaidi (2019), researchers are obligated to the academic community to present complete and honest limitations of a presented study. This helps ensure that readers can interpret and generalize findings appropriately.

The study added structure to Byrne's model for academic researchers to evaluate and measure, allowing research replication to expand its credibility and validity. The researcher suggests that primary data be used in future studies. An advantage of using primary data is that researchers collect information for their study. The researchers' questions are designed to produce the data to help them with their study. Researchers collect the data using surveys, interviews, and direct observations and can clean or correct any challenges during the process. These are the limitations of this research study.

1. The first limitation of this study is that the researcher used secondary data and did not conduct the research. The survey instrument was designed to shape Human Resources (HR) policies and programs by assessing the personnel framework, which differs from the researcher's intent. The research study's intent was more for academic than practical purposes based upon the model rather than current personnel actions. The research instrument was not precisely designed to measure Employee Engagement (EE). Hameduddin and Fernandez (2019) state that the Office of Personnel Management acknowledged that the survey instrument could lead to EE but was not designed to measure engagement directly.

2. Using secondary data limited the researcher in formulating direct questions, measures, or procedures based on feedback and directly relating to the research topic. Therefore, secondary data did not allow the researcher to engage in the process because the data had

already been collected. Using archival data limited the researcher in directly tailoring

questions to address each independent variable and instead used already devised responses.

However, the researcher chose questions from the survey that authentically and accurately

represented each variable to receive the best analysis. Using a proxy, the researcher selected

a specific survey question or item that best gauged the variables to be operationalized.

3. Anonymous data may not be anonymous, although the survey was given anonymously to

   government employees, and they were told that. There was no way to determine if employees

   believed their employers would not have access to their responses. Therefore, it is unknown

   if employees answered the questions truthfully without thinking about the ramifications of

   their responses. Techniques to make data anonymous are not foolproof. Using primary data

   could eliminate this limitation in research.

4. Another limitation is that the researcher had no control over the data collection process.

   Therefore, there is no opportunity to correct for errors or if there were any errors in the

   collection process. However, if the researcher had devised the survey, there would have been

   opportunities to correct erroneous data. However, missing data was handled, and the

   collection processes used by the source of data collection were evaluated. A technical guide

   on data collection procedures was available.

5. The population sample is a limitation because it was taken from a United States federal

   government agency, predominantly U. S. public servants; therefore, it could

   disproportionality portray a Western viewpoint and limit generalizability across other

   organizations. This limitation could control the generalization of outcomes across more

   global societies and organizations (Notgrass, 2015). The study is also conducted in a

   particular geographical location, which may not represent other regions.

6. The next limitation of this study is that the researcher trusted self-reported data, which may be subject to prejudices and imprecisions. Self-reported data is subject to participant bias. Because the researcher did not conduct the research, whether sound methods were used to collect the data is unknown.

7. The last limitation is the role the researcher plays in the study. A researcher's bias can be crucial in analyzing the data used in the survey. The researcher worked in the federal government for 34+ years and participated in the FEVS surveys for many years. According to Creswell (2013), researchers should clarify their bias to promote validity, which helps to ensure that the reader understands the researcher's position. The researcher provides clarity by making known their past experiences, biases, and prejudices that initiated the research topic. The researcher maintains no biases or prejudices and clarifies that the study is solely for edifying employee relationships and improving EE to meet future organizational success.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research must continue incrementally improving the understanding of the Employee Engagement (EE) construct. Researchers suggest that the accumulated knowledge regarding engagement is implemented into practical applications in organizations to increase performance, profitability, retention, absenteeism, employee health, and well-being (Ahmed et al., 2020; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018; Pandita & Ray, 2018; Turner, 2020), however, despite the growing importance of Employee Engagement (EE) in the work sector disengagement persist. The following are recommendations for future research.

1. The first recommendation for future research is to use Byrne's model of engagement and the model's three dimensions, personal environment, work environment, and self, to operationalize the five independent variables using primary data. This study used

secondary archival data from the FEVS administered in 2020. Using secondary data limited the study by not allowing the researcher to conduct a comprehensive analysis by tailoring questions specifically to each independent variable. Also, the archival data was taken from 2020, when using a more current version of the survey to conduct the analysis could yield different results, precisely due to post-pandemic conditions. Primary data is more accurate and reliable because the researcher can obtain more profound insights and personalized results tailored to the researcher's topic. Primary data is more relevant, reliable, and accurate because the research questions or items can give direct and thorough perceptions of the population sample regarding their work experiences. The researcher controls the data collection methods and can ensure sound methods are used.

2. Further research is necessary to clarify how to measure engagement in organizations and to effectively implement practical solutions to combat disengagement utilizing an academic and practitioner approach. Theory-driven thinking is essential when selecting a topic, developing research questions, designing the approach, and preparing the analysis plan. Thus, it has the potential to stimulate new types of scholarly inquiries into a topic that has been discussed, argued, and debated for more than 50 years, but often in ways that are much more based on normative opinions than on academic research. A collaborative effort has the potential to stimulate new types of scholarly inquiries into a topic that has been discussed, argued, and debated for many years, but often in ways that are much more based on opinions than on empirical questioning or theory-driven. Further research is needed to understand the impact of Employee Engagement in organizations and identify strategies that can help organizations engage their employees effectively.

3. Academia and practitioners working together can resolve many issues in human behavioral science with the validity and reliability of future surveys using primary data. Most surveys are practitioner-based and have no academic base or theoretical framework. There is limited research on the impact of Employee Engagement on the performance of different industries. The nature of work and the type of industry can influence the level of engagement and its impact on performance and employee well-being. For instance, the impact of employee engagement on business performance may be more significant in service-based industries than in manufacturing industries. Further research is needed to examine the relationship between Employee Engagement (EE) and organizational performance in different industries and how these relationships may vary.

4. Future research on the individual Work-life program constructs should be studied individually to measure those programs that impact engagement and enhance work-life balance separately. This study's sample population was taken from the FY2 020 FEVS secondary data, and post-COVID-19 data using primary data could answer significant questions on research concerning the inconsistent reviews of Work-life Programs. The pandemic workforce guidelines were introduced during the survey collection period, and factors surrounding working-from-home policies were just being implemented. The expectations of employees going forward after the pandemic could yield valuable information and different outcomes. The pandemic workforce guidelines were just being introduced to the workplace in FY 2020 when the survey was conducted, and factors surrounding how organizations worked and continue to work post-pandemic and the expectations of employees going forward could change the findings. Therefore, more recent or primary data could change the study's results. Further research into Work-life

Programs concentrating individually on workplace flexibility, alternative work schedules, remote work, and hybrid work schedules as separate variables using primary data is highly recommended.

5. Many researchers believe leadership types are a huge factor in EE (Bailey et al., 2017; Gutermann, 2019; Leclerc et al., 2020; Iloekewe, 2022; Zhao & Sheng, 2019). According to Ugaddan and Park (2017), more research is needed to examine how Senior Leaders impact engagement. The most direct impact on employees is their direct supervisors or middle management, with whom employees come in day-to-day contact, determining an employee's engagement level. Therefore, the responses from the secondary data used as a proxy to operationalize Senior Leadership as a predictor of EE do not align with most researchers' findings. In this case, more research using primary data would provide more information on Senior Leadership styles and their influence on Employee Engagement (EE) in organizations. The findings are inconclusive, and further research is recommended.

6. Lastly, understanding how age and gender influence employee work engagement is also critical, as a mixture of generations is rapidly infiltrating organizations. It is vital to handle a growingly diverse workforce with varying worldviews and beliefs and to test this demographic by measuring each generation separately to see the effects of engagement for age and gender. Addressing and breaking down each generational cohort separately could yield valuable findings in future studies.

These recommendations can lead to a better understanding of the factors and drivers that influence Employee Engagement (EE) and the plans that the work sectors can use to increase engagement levels, ultimately leading to improved business practices, programs, and services to

increase citizen trust in public sector organizations and the private sectors. This research added to the knowledge by providing a comprehensive overview of EE research using federal government employees. It can help organizations improve their engagement strategies, justify their investment in engagement initiatives, and combat high annual costs affected by low production and high employee retention.

Summary

The study was conducted to determine the factors and drivers influencing Employee Engagement (EE) in public sector organizations. EE has many benefits, whereas disengagement costs the United States over $450-$550 billion and $7.8 trillion worldwide in low productivity and retention costs. Many available factors could have been chosen for this research study. However, five factors that previous researchers supported were chosen to be measured. Each independent variable was positive and statistically significant and impacted federal government employees' engagement levels according to their survey responses.

As a result of the study, according to the findings, it is suggested that organizations that incorporate initiatives that increase Intrinsic Motivation, the most significant influencer that impacted government employees in this study, Professional Development and Growth, Extrinsic Motivation, and Senior Leadership directives, will have implemented something that will give them an advantage in the job market. These initiatives can assist in building positive, high-performing, more engaged environments where organizations can thrive, grow, and be sustainable.

According to this study, these variables impact public sector organizations. They can assist in building positive, high-performing, more engaged administrations that can increase the health and welfare of the employees and public sector organizations, increase public trust, and provide

quality products and services for the common good of society. The public sector will then reap the benefits of an engaging workforce that will catapult them above the rest. Leaders should realize that employees are crucial and valuable assets that can shape developmental goals in the 21st century, whether public or private. According to Macey and Schneider (2008), it is easy to change price and product; it is another thing to create an effective, efficient, and behaviorally engaged workforce.

The results showed significant relationships between the dependent variable, Employee Engagement, and the independent variables, Extrinsic Motivation, Senior Leadership, Professional Development and Growth, and Intrinsic Motivation. Each had a positive and significant relationship to EE, meaning that employees would perform at higher levels if engagement programs were introduced and practiced in organizations. The independent variable, Work-life Programs, was recommended for future research and found inconclusive due to inconsistencies in previous literature.

The study supports the findings that Intrinsic Motivation is the key independent variable associated with the psychological state of engagement in public organizations. The study advances the knowledge by collecting, operationalizing, analyzing, and correlating the findings to an academically supported theoretical framework using Byrne's Model of Engagement to test for replication, reliability, and validity. This could be a starting point where practitioners and academics can collaborate to find a universal definition and engagement model. This study adds to the limited academic studies that have empirically researched a comprehensive theoretical framework of Employee Engagement (EE) drivers and conclusions. This study may also be one of the few studies examining a practitioner-type measurement to gauge and measure a survey instrument designed to predict engagement and examine it to see if theoretical structures in the

academic community can support the findings. According to Byrne (2022), there is a huge opportunity for further research to develop measures of engagement with the collaboration of practitioners to keep measures grounded in science that can be used in practice. These findings are applicable and generalizable to other organizations and industries worldwide. Whether public or private, an engaged workforce is a foundation for thriving organizations and healthy employees that support America's interests at home and abroad.

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