

Employee Engagement and Employee Motivation Among Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria

Chinenye Maureen Nuel-Okoli^{1*}, Ifeanyi Nuel Okoli²

¹ Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria

² Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. The study was based on Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and employed a cross-sectional research design. The target population comprised 320 employees from various departments within the organizations. A sample size of 123 workers was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to randomly selected employees from manufacturing firms in Anambra State. The reliability of the measurement instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics were used to present the data, while Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that employee engagement positively and significantly relates to employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. In conclusion, a positive work environment driven by motivated employees can also contribute to lower turnover rates, which is particularly beneficial in an industry where retaining skilled workers is vital for sustained success. To leverage the link between engagement and motivation, the study recommends that firms should focus on creating an engaging workplace culture. This could involve regular feedback sessions, team-building activities, and ensuring that employees feel valued and involved in decision-making processes.

Article Info

Keywords:
Employee Engagement,
Employee Motivation,
Manufacturing Firms

JEL Classification:
D21, J54, L60

Corresponding Author:
Chinenye Maureen Nuel-Okoli
(ie.okoli@unizik.edu.ng)

Received: 28-04-2025
Revised: 11-06-2025
Accepted: 20-06-2025
Published: 28-06-2025



1. Introduction

Employee engagement and motivation are fundamental aspects of organizational success and sustainability in today's business environment. Organizations across various industries strive to enhance productivity, efficiency, and overall performance, and one of the most effective ways to achieve these objectives is through an engaged workforce (Abner & Samuel, 2019). Employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment and involvement an employee has toward their organization and its goals (Presbitero et al., 2025). It goes beyond job satisfaction and encompasses an employee's enthusiasm, dedication, and willingness to go the extra mile in their roles. On the other hand, employee motivation is the intrinsic and extrinsic drive that compels individuals to perform their tasks with energy and focus (Nendi, 2024). In the manufacturing sector, where efficiency and productivity are key performance indicators, understanding how employee engagement influences motivation is particularly crucial. Employees in this sector often perform repetitive and physically demanding tasks, which, if not properly managed, can lead to burnout, reduced morale, and lower productivity levels. By fostering an engaging work environment, organizations can enhance employee motivation, leading to improved job performance, increased retention rates, and overall business success (Ahuchogu et al., 2024).

In today's dynamic and competitive business environment, effective employee engagement has become a necessity rather than an option (Wright, 2018). Organizations that invest in employee engagement initiatives often experience higher levels of productivity, better customer satisfaction, and improved financial performance. Engaged employees are more likely to be committed to their roles, exhibit a proactive work ethic, and contribute positively to the organization's objectives. Moreover, engaged employees often develop a strong sense of loyalty toward their employers, reducing turnover rates and the associated costs of recruitment and training (Presbitero et al., 2025). In contrast, disengaged employees can have a negative impact on workplace culture, leading to decreased morale, increased absenteeism, and lower overall performance. In the manufacturing sector, where operational efficiency directly influences profitability, ensuring that employees remain engaged is critical for sustaining competitive advantage. Organizations that prioritize engagement initiatives such as career development programs, effective communication strategies, and a positive work environment are better positioned to foster a motivated and high-performing workforce (Wright, 2018).

The relationship between employee engagement and motivation is a crucial factor that determines an organization's success (Nendi, 2024). When employees feel engaged, they are more likely to be internally motivated, as they find meaning and fulfillment in their work (Vance, 2012). Engaged employees typically exhibit higher levels of enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to take initiative. This intrinsic motivation often results in increased job satisfaction, creativity, and a strong drive to excel. Conversely, employees who feel disconnected from their work environment or undervalued by their employers tend to lack motivation, leading to reduced effort, lower job performance (Ahuchogu et al., 2024), and higher chances of turnover. In the manufacturing industry, where tasks can be routine and physically demanding, maintaining high levels of motivation is essential to ensuring sustained productivity and efficiency. Employee engagement initiatives such as recognition programs, clear career growth paths, and supportive leadership play a crucial role in fostering motivation. When employees perceive that their contributions are valued and that they have opportunities for professional growth, they are more likely to remain committed and motivated to perform at their best (Presbitero et al., 2025).

Ideally, organizations should create a work environment where employees are fully engaged, highly motivated, and committed to achieving both personal and organizational goals (Sentoso & Muchsinati, 2024). This ideal situation fosters a culture of productivity, innovation, and continuous improvement, where employees feel valued and empowered to contribute meaningfully to their organization. However, in reality, many organizations struggle to maintain high levels of employee engagement and motivation. In the manufacturing sector, factors such as monotonous job roles, lack of career advancement opportunities, inadequate compensation, and poor working conditions can contribute to disengagement. Employees who feel unappreciated, overworked, or disconnected from their workplace culture often experience low morale, reduced motivation, and decreased productivity.

Consequently, disengaged employees are more likely to exhibit poor performance, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates, leading to significant operational and financial losses for companies. Additionally, a lack of motivation can hinder overall organizational efficiency, limit innovation, and negatively impact product quality and customer satisfaction. Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial for businesses that aim to foster a highly engaged and motivated workforce, ultimately driving long-term growth and success in the manufacturing sector. Thus, this study specifically examines the extent to which employee engagement relates to employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State.

1.1. Employee engagement

Employee engagement has become a hot topic in recent years. Despite this, there remains a paucity of critical academic literature on the subject, and relatively little is known about how employee engagement can be influenced by management. It encompasses the level of passion, loyalty, and dedication an employee has towards their work, their team, and the organisation as a whole (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020). Engaged employees are not simply "present" but actively

involved, deeply committed to their work, and driven to exceed expectations (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2023).

Understanding the diverse factors that influence employee engagement is vital for organisations aiming to cultivate a thriving workforce. Research by Wright and Cropanzano (2023) indicates that employees are more likely to be engaged when they perceive a sense of purpose in their work. This can be achieved by ensuring employees comprehend how their role contributes to the organisation's overarching objectives and mission. Additionally, offering opportunities for growth and development enables employees to acquire new skills, advance their careers, and experience a sense of achievement (Bakker, 2019).

Moreover, a positive and supportive work environment plays a crucial role in nurturing employee engagement. Leaders who are transparent, provide regular feedback, and foster a culture of trust are more likely to have engaged employees (Gilson, Mathieu, & Shalley, 2021). Furthermore, providing opportunities for collaboration, recognition, and work-life balance can further boost employee engagement (Shantz & Elliott, 2020).

The benefits of a highly engaged workforce are indisputable. Studies by Schaufeli and Bakker (2023) have demonstrated that employee engagement is positively associated with increased productivity, enhanced customer satisfaction, and higher levels of innovation. Additionally, engaged employees are less prone to burnout, absenteeism, or turnover, ultimately resulting in lower costs for organisations (Bakker & Leiter, 2020).

Investing in employee engagement is no longer a luxury but a strategic necessity. In today's competitive job market, organisations need to set themselves apart to attract and retain top talent. A positive and engaging work environment can serve as a compelling magnet for high-performing employees seeking more than just a paycheck (Gilson, Mathieu & Shalley, 2021).

It is crucial to acknowledge that employee engagement is not a fixed state; it is an ongoing process that demands continual effort. Organisations need to implement strategies that not only foster initial engagement but also sustain it over time (Shantz & Elliott, 2020). Regular employee surveys, open communication channels, and opportunities for feedback can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that employee needs and expectations are being met.

Additionally, cultivating a culture of recognition and appreciation is essential for sustaining employee engagement. Acknowledging successes, both significant and minor, demonstrates to employees that their contributions are valued. Furthermore, providing opportunities for autonomy and ownership over one's work can further enhance employee engagement by fostering a sense of control and responsibility (Bakker, 2019). Thus, a highly engaged workforce is not only the key to individual employee well-being but also the foundation for sustainable organisational success.

1.2. Employee Motivation

Employee motivation plays a critical role in driving the performance of manufacturing firms. It refers to the internal and external factors that encourage employees to invest effort, achieve higher levels of productivity, and contribute to the overall success of the organization (Dobre, 2013). Motivation is directly linked to employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention, all of which are crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the manufacturing industry. Motivation can be categorized into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation comes from within the employee, driven by factors like personal fulfillment, a sense of achievement, recognition, and opportunities for personal growth. Employees who are intrinsically motivated tend to be more committed to their work and demonstrate greater creativity and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salaries, bonuses, benefits, and promotions. These external rewards are essential in ensuring that employees remain committed to achieving organizational goals, especially in highly competitive sectors like manufacturing.

Emeka et al. (2015) highlight the importance of employee motivation in influencing the overall performance of manufacturing firms. Their study found that motivated employees exhibit higher productivity levels, better-quality output, and a stronger commitment to organizational goals. When employees are motivated, they are more likely to take ownership of their tasks, engage in continuous improvement, and foster a culture of collaboration, all of which

contribute to the success of the organization. Motivated employees also demonstrate a greater willingness to innovate, which is crucial in industries that require constant adaptation to market changes and technological advancements.

The role of motivation in competitive sectors, including manufacturing, cannot be overstated. Abner and Samuel (2019) emphasize that companies in these sectors must adopt effective strategies to maintain employee motivation, especially as these industries often face high turnover rates and labor shortages. To retain top talent and reduce turnover, manufacturing firms need to implement motivational strategies such as performance-based incentives, career development programs, and work-life balance initiatives. Offering competitive compensation packages, coupled with recognition programs, not only motivates employees but also strengthens their loyalty to the organization. Furthermore, creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that values employee input and fosters a sense of belonging can significantly improve employee morale and productivity.

In addition to financial and material incentives, the importance of continuous skill development cannot be ignored. Mehran et al. (2022) discuss the role of skill development in enhancing employee motivation and performance in manufacturing firms. Their study, focusing on firms in Malaysia, revealed that organizations that invest in training programs and provide employees with opportunities to upskill are more likely to experience higher levels of motivation. Employees are motivated by the prospect of personal and professional growth, and when organizations offer opportunities for career advancement and further education, it enhances job satisfaction and commitment. This, in turn, contributes to improved performance, as employees who feel they are growing within the organization are more likely to stay and contribute their best efforts. Moreover, the cultural and regional context plays a significant role in shaping motivational strategies. What motivates employees in one region or culture may not necessarily apply in another. Therefore, manufacturing firms need to adapt their motivational approaches to meet the specific needs and expectations of their workforce. Tailoring motivational strategies to align with local values, work ethics, and preferences ensures that employees remain engaged and motivated to achieve organizational goals.

The effects of employee motivation are not limited to individual performance alone. Motivated employees foster a positive work environment and contribute to a culture of excellence within the organization. They work collaboratively, share knowledge, and inspire their peers to achieve high standards. As a result, manufacturing firms that prioritize employee motivation are more likely to experience improved organizational performance, including higher operational efficiency, better quality products, and stronger customer satisfaction.

1.3. Theoretical Framework: Resource-Based Theory

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT), also referred to as the Resource-Based View (RBV), builds upon the foundational work of Edith Penrose in *The Theory of Growth of the Firm* (1959). This framework examines how an organization's internal resources—particularly human resources—interact with strategic planning to influence overall performance. The theory asserts that an organization can achieve superior performance by fostering its internal capabilities, rather than merely aligning its resources with existing strategic objectives (Alvarez & Barney, 2017).

A firm attains a competitive advantage when it implements a strategy that adds value and is not concurrently adopted by competitors. If this advantage remains difficult for competitors to replicate, the firm secures a sustained competitive advantage. Barney (1991) explored this concept by identifying four key attributes—value, rarity, inimitability, and substitutability—that determine the relationship between a firm's resources and its sustained competitive edge.

According to Barney (1991), for a resource to contribute to competitive advantage, it must possess specific characteristics. Firstly, it should be valuable, meaning it enhances the firm's ability to execute its strategies efficiently. Secondly, it must be rare, ensuring that neither current nor potential competitors have access to it. The third attribute is inimitability, which implies that competitors cannot easily acquire or duplicate the resource (Alvarez & Barney, 2017). Finally, the resource must lack viable substitutes, meaning alternative options do not exist within competing firms.

To illustrate the role of firm resources in sustaining competitive advantage, Barney (1991) developed a resource-based model. This model demonstrates how rare and immobile resources contribute to maintaining a firm's market edge. The theory is particularly relevant to talent management, as human capital plays a critical role in evaluating, developing, and leveraging resources effectively. Employees with the right expertise and competencies are essential for identifying valuable resources and maximizing their potential impact on the firm's long-term success.

1.4. Empirical Review

Kahn (2019) conducted a study on employee engagement within manufacturing sectors across various regions, highlighting that engaged employees are more likely to experience heightened motivation due to their psychological presence in their roles. The findings indicate that employees who are mentally and emotionally invested in their tasks tend to demonstrate greater enthusiasm and commitment to their work.

Bakker and Albrecht (2018) carried out a meta-analysis that established a robust association between engagement and motivation. Their study revealed that employees exhibiting high levels of engagement often possess elevated intrinsic motivation, which subsequently leads to improved performance outcomes. This supports the notion that personal dedication to work responsibilities can significantly enhance motivation.

Saks (2020) examined the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement, discovering that engagement serves as a strong predictor of motivation, which ultimately influences job performance. By providing a theoretical framework where engagement is conceptualized as a precursor to motivation, this research aligns with findings that emphasize the role of engagement in enhancing motivational levels.

Rich et al. (2019) investigated job engagement and found that it positively influences motivation, resulting in increased job satisfaction and improved performance. Their findings complement previous research by underscoring the pathway through which engagement contributes to motivation and overall job satisfaction.

Christian (2021), however, offers a different perspective by arguing that while engagement may correlate with motivation, other factors such as job design and organizational culture have more substantial effects on motivation. The study emphasizes that engagement alone may not adequately explain motivation levels without considering broader organizational dynamics.

Macey and Schneider (2022) also provide a nuanced perspective, asserting that although engagement is essential, it is the alignment between personal and organizational values that truly drives motivation. They argue that even with high engagement, motivation may not be optimized unless there is coherence between individual goals and organizational objectives.

The consistent evidence of a positive relationship between employee engagement and motivation suggests that manufacturing firms in Anambra State could enhance motivation by implementing engagement strategies. Creating environments where employees feel valued, involved, and recognized for their efforts may yield significant benefits. However, insights from Christian (2021) and Macey and Schneider (2022) caution that engagement should be integrated within a comprehensive approach that includes aligning individual and organizational goals, refining job design, and fostering a supportive organizational culture.

1.5. Research Gap

While extensive research has established a strong link between employee engagement and motivation, gaps remain in understanding how this relationship manifests within specific regional contexts, such as manufacturing firms in Anambra State. Studies by Kahn (2019), Bakker and Albrecht (2018), and Saks (2020) emphasize the role of engagement as a driver of motivation, yet they primarily focus on broader industry trends without considering regional economic and cultural influences. Additionally, research by Rich et al. (2019) highlights the motivational benefits of engagement but does not address how organisational structures in developing economies impact this dynamic. Christian (2021) and Macey and Schneider (2022) introduce the argument that engagement alone may not sufficiently explain motivation, yet limited empirical studies have explored how factors such as job design and alignment of

personal and organisational values interact with engagement to shape motivation in specific industrial settings. Given the unique challenges of the manufacturing sector in Anambra State, such as resource constraints and varying management practices, there is a need for context-specific research to determine whether existing engagement strategies effectively enhance employee motivation in this environment.

2. Methods

This study adopted a survey research design to collect relevant data for examining the influence of employee engagement on employee motivation within selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. The survey research design was considered appropriate for this study as it facilitates the collection of quantitative data suitable for statistical analysis and presentation. By employing this design, the researcher aimed to establish a relationship between employee engagement and motivation in the targeted manufacturing firms.

The population of the study comprised employees from selected manufacturing firms located in Anambra State. A total of three hundred and twenty (320) staff members across various departments, including personnel, sales and marketing, research and development, quality and inventory control, production and operations, and finance and accounting, were targeted. The study focused on employees at different hierarchical levels, including heads of departments, line managers, and junior staff. The population distribution of the study is summarized below.

Table 1. Population Distribution of the Study

Manufacturing Firm	Address	Population
Ezenwa Plastic Industries Nigeria Limited	85 Amobi Street, Onitsha, Anambra State	69
Rexton Industries Limited	No. 1 Castello Avenue, KM 3, NkwelleEzunaka	75
Sylflora Industries Limited	Phase 2, Block 39, Plot 10 Unique Estate, NkwelleOgidiIdemili LGA	60
Hardis and Dromedas Limited	Km 19, Onitsha-Enugu Expressway, Umunya	54
Aquept Ind. Co. Limited	Plot 67 Aquept Rd. Enuko Village, Isiagu, Awka, Anambra State	62
Total		320

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The sample size for this study was determined using Taro Yamane's formula (1967), which is widely recognized for providing a reliable estimate of sample size for a finite population. The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Total population (320)

e = Margin of error (0.05)

Applying the formula: $n = \frac{320}{1 + 320(.05)^2} = 178$

Thus, the calculated sample size for the study is approximately 178 respondents.

A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions designed to elicit relevant information on employee engagement and motivation from the respondents. This approach was chosen to ensure clarity and ease of response while facilitating accurate data analysis.

The questionnaire was carefully constructed to align with the study's objectives, research questions, and hypotheses. Content and face validity of the instrument were established through reviews by the researcher, the supervisor, and other experts to ensure that all questions were relevant, clear, and unambiguous. The items were designed to capture the key variables under investigation—employee engagement and motivation.

The validity of the instrument was ensured through rigorous content and face validation. Experts reviewed the questionnaire to ascertain that the items adequately reflected the conceptual framework and covered all aspects of the study's objectives.

Reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha technique, which measures internal consistency. The results indicated that the reliability coefficients for all variables exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7, confirming that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The data analysis was conducted using quantitative techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were employed to summarize the respondents' characteristics and present the key findings.

Inferential statistics were applied to test the hypotheses of the study. Specifically, Pearson Correlation Analysis was utilized to determine the relationship between employee engagement and motivation. Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance, with the alternate hypotheses accepted when the p-value was less than 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

Analysis of Questionnaire Response Rate

Table 2. Percentage of Questionnaire Distributed & Returned

Copies of questionnaire administered	178
Copies of questionnaire returned	146
Response rate	82%

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table above presents the distribution and retrieval rate of questionnaires administered for the study on the influence of employee engagement on employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. A total of 178 questionnaires were distributed to respondents across the selected manufacturing firms. Out of this number, 146 questionnaires were successfully retrieved, representing an impressive response rate of 82%.

The high response rate of 82% indicates a strong level of participation and interest from the respondents, which enhances the credibility and reliability of the data collected. This substantial response rate also suggests that the study's subject matter was relevant to the participants, motivating them to complete and return the questionnaires. Moreover, the high rate of retrieval reduces the likelihood of non-response bias, ensuring that the sample is adequately representative of the target population.

Table 3. Analysis of Demographic Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	47	32.2
Female	99	67.8
Age		
18 - 30 Years	40	27.4
31 - 40 years	64	43.8
41 - 50 years	27	18.5
51 - 60 years	15	10.3
Marital Status		
Single	87	59.6
Married	59	40.4
Work Experience		
Below 2 years	81	55.5
2 - 4 years	29	19.9
5 - 7 years	22	15.1

Above 7 years	14	9.6
Educational Qualification		
SSCE/NECO/GCE	74	50.7
ND/NCE	44	30.1
HND/B.Sc.	25	17.1
M.Sc.	3	2.1

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Table above presents the demographic distribution of the respondents involved in the study on the influence of employee engagement on employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. The demographic variables considered include gender, age, marital status, work experience, and educational qualification.

In terms of gender distribution, the table reveals that the majority of the respondents are female, with 99 participants representing 67.8% of the total sample. Male respondents constitute a smaller proportion, with 47 participants making up 32.2%. This notable gender imbalance suggests that the manufacturing firms surveyed may have a higher female workforce or that females were more responsive to the questionnaire.

Regarding age distribution, the largest group of respondents falls within the 31–40 years age bracket, comprising 64 individuals or 43.8% of the sample. This is followed by those aged between 18–30 years, accounting for 40 respondents or 27.4%. Participants within the age range of 41–50 years make up 18.5%, with 27 individuals, while the smallest group consists of respondents aged 51–60 years, representing 10.3% or 15 participants. The predominance of younger and middle-aged employees (18–40 years) indicates that the workforce in these manufacturing firms is relatively youthful, which may have implications for employee engagement and motivation.

Marital status analysis indicates that the majority of the respondents are single, with 87 participants representing 59.6% of the total sample. Married respondents account for 40.4% or 59 individuals. This suggests that a considerable proportion of the workforce is unmarried, which could influence their engagement and motivation levels differently compared to their married counterparts.

Work experience is another critical demographic factor analyzed. The table shows that most respondents have below two years of work experience, accounting for 81 participants or 55.5%. Those with 2–4 years of experience make up 19.9% or 29 respondents, while 22 individuals (15.1%) have been working for 5–7 years. The least experienced group consists of participants with over seven years of work experience, comprising only 14 respondents or 9.6%. The dominance of respondents with relatively low work experience (below two years) may reflect high turnover rates or a growing workforce within the manufacturing sector.

The educational qualification of respondents reveals that the majority possess SSCE/NECO/GCE qualifications, with 74 participants representing 50.7% of the sample. This is followed by ND/NCE holders, accounting for 30.1% or 44 individuals. Those with higher educational qualifications, such as HND/B.Sc., represent 17.1% (25 respondents), while only 2.1% (3 respondents) possess a master's degree (M.Sc.). The prevalence of lower educational qualifications suggests that the workforce is predominantly comprised of individuals with secondary and post-secondary education, which may influence their engagement and motivation in the workplace. Thus, the demographic characteristics presented provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' profiles. These characteristics are essential for examining how various factors such as gender, age, marital status, work experience, and educational qualification influence employee engagement and motivation in the selected manufacturing firms.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State

Table 5. Test of Hypothesis

Correlations	Employee Motivation
Employee Engagement	
- Pearson Correlation	0.725**
- Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
- N	146

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

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The Pearson Correlation table reveals a strong positive relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation in the manufacturing firms of Anambra State, with a correlation coefficient of .725. This falls within the range of 0.6 to 0.8, indicating a strong correlation. This suggests that as employee engagement increases, there is a corresponding significant increase in employee motivation. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of .000, which is less than 0.01, confirms that this relationship is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between employee engagement and motivation.

This strong correlation underscores the importance of fostering high levels of engagement within the workforce to enhance motivation. It implies that strategies aimed at improving employee engagement, such as better communication, recognition, and involvement in decision-making processes, could significantly boost motivation levels. This finding is crucial for management in these firms, suggesting that investing in engagement initiatives could yield substantial motivational benefits, potentially leading to improved performance and productivity. However, while the correlation is strong, it's also important for organizations to consider other factors influencing motivation, as engagement alone, though highly influential, might not cover all aspects of what drives employees to perform at their best.

3.2. Discussion

The research findings indicated a significant positive relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation in selected manufacturing firms in Anambra State. This aligns with contemporary management theories that emphasise the importance of engagement in fostering motivation (Kahn, 2019). Kahn's (2019) study on employee engagement in manufacturing sectors across different regions supports this, suggesting that engaged employees are more likely to be motivated due to their psychological presence in their roles.

Bakker and Albrecht (2018) conducted a meta-analysis that confirmed a strong link between engagement and motivation, where engaged employees exhibited higher levels of intrinsic motivation, leading to better performance outcomes. This supports our findings by illustrating how engagement can drive motivation through personal investment in work tasks. Saks (2020) explored the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement, finding that engagement significantly predicts motivation, which in turn influences job performance. This study reinforces our results by providing a theoretical framework where engagement acts as a precursor to motivation. Rich, Lepine, and Crawford (2019), in their research on job engagement, also found that engagement positively affects motivation, leading to increased job satisfaction and performance. Their work complements our findings by highlighting the motivational pathway through engagement.

However, Christian et al. (2021) argue that while engagement might correlate with motivation, other factors like job design and organisational culture play more significant roles in motivation. Their study suggests that engagement alone might not sufficiently explain motivation levels without considering broader organisational dynamics. Macey and Schneider (2022) propose that while engagement is crucial, it's the alignment of personal and organisational values that truly drives motivation. They contend that without this alignment, high engagement might not necessarily translate into high motivation, presenting a nuanced

perspective on our findings. The strong positive relationship between employee engagement and motivation suggests that manufacturing firms in Anambra State could benefit from focusing on engagement strategies to boost motivation. This could involve creating environments where employees feel valued, involved, and recognised for their contributions. However, the insights from Christian et al. (2021) and Macey and Schneider (2022) remind us that while engagement is vital, it should be part of a holistic approach that includes aligning individual and organisational goals, enhancing job design, and fostering a supportive organisational culture.

4. Conclusion

The findings underscore the critical role of employee engagement in fostering motivation within manufacturing firms. When employees are actively engaged in their work, they develop a stronger sense of commitment and enthusiasm, which directly influences their motivation levels. This connection suggests that organizations that prioritize engagement may experience higher levels of employee drive, leading to improved job performance, reduced absenteeism, and greater overall workplace productivity. Given the manufacturing sector's reliance on efficiency and consistency, a motivated workforce is essential for maintaining operational effectiveness and meeting production targets.

Furthermore, the study highlights the broader organizational benefits of a highly engaged workforce. Employees who feel connected to their roles are more likely to exhibit loyalty, creativity, and a willingness to contribute beyond their basic job requirements. This, in turn, enhances teamwork, communication, and overall workplace morale. A positive work environment driven by motivated employees can also contribute to lower turnover rates, which is particularly beneficial in an industry where retaining skilled workers is vital for sustained success. Firms that understand and harness this relationship can cultivate a stable and high-performing workforce.

To leverage the link between engagement and motivation, the study recommends that firms should focus on creating an engaging workplace culture. This could involve regular feedback sessions, team-building activities, and ensuring that employees feel valued and involved in decision-making processes.

References

- Abner, I. P., & Samuel, U. E. (2019). Employee's motivation in a competitive service and manufacturing sectors performance. *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Kuwait Chapter)*, 8(2), 30-39.
- Ahuchogu, M. C., Sanyaolu, T. O., & Adeleke, A. G. (2024). Enhancing employee engagement in long-haul transport: Review of best practices and innovative approaches. *Global Journal of Research in Science and Technology*, 2(1), 046-060.
- Alvarez, S. A., & Barney, J. B. (2017). Resource-based theory and the entrepreneurial firm. *Strategic entrepreneurship: Creating a new mindset*, 87-105.
- Bakker, A. B. (2019). Engagement and job performance: A closer look at the measurement of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 34(2), 111-124.
- Bakker, A. B., & Albrecht, S. L. (2018). Work engagement: Current trends. *Career Development International*, 23(1), 4-11.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2020). Job demands-resources theory: Taking stock and looking ahead. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 25(1), 3-14.
- Bakker, A. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2020). Work engagement: A quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 105(1), 31-49.
- Barney, J.B. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99-120.

- Christian, M. S., Garza, A. S., & Slaughter, J. E. (2021). Work engagement: A quantitative review and test of its relations with task and contextual performance. *Personnel Psychology*, 74(1), 41-60.
- Dobre, O. I. (2013). Employee motivation and organizational performance. *Review of applied socio-economic research*, 5(1).
- Emeka, N., Amaka, O., & Ejim, E. P. (2015). The effect of employee motivation on organizational performance of selected manufacturing firms in Enugu state. *World Journal of Management and Behavioral Studies*, 3(1), 1-8.
- Gilson, L. L., Mathieu, J. E., & Shalley, C. E. (2021). The role of leadership in fostering employee engagement and performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 106(1), 74-95.
- Ihionkhan, P.A. & Aigbomian, E.E. (2014). The Influence of Human Resource Management Practices on Organizational Commitment: A Study of Manufacturing Organizations in Nigeria. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies, Educational Research Multimedia & Publications*, 5(1), 18-28.
- Judge, T.A., Zhang, S.C. & Glerum, D.R. (2020). Job satisfaction: *Essentials of Job Attitudes and Other Workplace Psychological Constructs*, 1st ed., Routledge, New York.
- Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2022). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 15(1), 3-30.
- Macey, W.H. & Schneider, B. (2008b). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. 1(1), 3-30.
- Mehran, A. M., Mohamad, I. T., & Mohd, M. H. (2022). Employee motivation and performance of manufacturing firms in Malaysia. *African Journal of Emerging Issues*, 4(6), 14-23.
- Nendi, I. (2024). Strategies to improve employee motivation and performance through the employee engagement program. *Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi Kesatuan*, 12(4), 505-512.
- Presbitero, A., Fujimoto, Y., & Lim, W. M. (2025). Employee engagement and retention in multicultural work groups: The interplay of employee and supervisory cultural intelligence. *Journal of Business Research*, 186, 115012.
- Rich, B. L., Lepine, J. A., & Crawford, E. R. (2019). Job engagement: Antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(3), 617-635.
- Saks, A. M. (2020). Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31(1), 100-114.
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2023). Work engagement: A multifaceted construct and its impact on performance and well-being. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 307-333.
- Sentoso, A., & Muchsinati, E. S. (2024). Determining employee engagement and its influence on employee performance at holding state-owned enterprises insurance and guarantees Riau Islands region. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pemasaran Jasa*, 17(1), 39-58.
- Shantz, A., & Elliott, M. N. (2020). The role of work-life balance in employee engagement and performance: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 25(2), 147-160.
- Vance, R.J. (2012). *Employee engagement and commitment*. SHRM Foundation.
- Wright, H. (2018). Why managing talent effectively improves business performance and reduces costs? : Retrieved from: <https://www.rencaigroup.com/why-effective-talent-management-improves-business-performance-and-reduces-costs/> on 14th February 2023.
- Wright, T. A., & Cropanzano, R. (2023). The importance of meaningfulness of work: A review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 108(1), 1-29.