

The relationship between employee engagement and work performance of administrative employees at a university of technology



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Orientation: Employee engagement and work performance of administrative employees play a pivotal role in shaping the overall success and reputation of educational institutions.

Research purpose: This study investigates whether there is a significant relationship between employee engagement and the work performance of administrative employees at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

Motivation for the study: This study aims to determine whether employee engagement contributes to improved work performance among administrative employees at TUT, providing context-specific insights within the South African higher education sector.

Research approach/design and method: A quantitative research approach and a cross-sectional survey research design were employed, involving a sample of 215 from the population of 487 administrative employees at TUT campuses. A Google Forms link containing the questionnaire was sent via Outlook email by the Human Resources Department, and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences analysis was used for data analysis.

Main findings: A strong relationship was found between employee engagement and work performance, and regression analysis confirmed that employee engagement is a significant predictor of work performance.

Practical/managerial implications: The TUT should focus on fostering employee engagement, as enhanced work performance is a natural outcome of higher engagement levels. To enhance employee engagement and work performance among administrative staff at TUT, it is recommended that targeted interventions be implemented, focusing on three key areas: performance-related engagement, interpersonal engagement and work environment support.

Contribution/value-add: Through the integration of theory and practice, this research advances understanding of organisational behaviour and provides university administrators with data-driven strategies to foster a more motivated and efficient workforce.

Keywords: employee engagement; work performance; administrative employees; Tshwane University of Technology; employee productivity; higher education institutions; organisational performance.

Introduction

Employee engagement and work performance of administrative employees play a pivotal role in shaping the overall success and reputation of educational institutions (Aboramadan, 2022). Employee engagement, a multifaceted concept, relates to an employee's emotional and psychological connection to their work, organisation and colleagues (Saks, 2022). Engaged employees are known to demonstrate a higher level of commitment, enthusiasm and dedication towards their job, fostering a positive work environment (Lyons & Bandura, 2022). In contrast, disengaged employees may experience a decline in job satisfaction, leading to decreased productivity, lower morale and potential attrition (Afrahi et al., 2022). This study investigates the intricate relationship between employee engagement and work performance among administrative employees at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). By investigating factors that influence engagement levels and their impact on work performance, insights can be obtained into how to create a supportive work environment that encourages administrative employees to excel in their roles (Graham et al., 2023). Employee engagement is defined as employees' enthusiasm, passion and commitment to their work, the willingness to believe that they are capable of more than what they are currently doing for the job and expanding their effort to help the employer succeed (Alola & Alafeshat, 2021). Work

performance is the outcome of an individual's sincere efforts to complete a task that has been allotted to them, using their abilities, experience and sincerity in line with the duties that have been delegated to them (Niati et al., 2021). Administrative employees in universities have the important job of assisting the academic departments to focus on teaching and research (Ngcobo & Mhlanga, 2022).

Administrative employees are the backbone of the organisation, as the organisation cannot function without their support (Kallenberg, 2020). Administrative employees' tasks in higher educational institutions include ensuring the smooth operation of the university, supporting its educational mission and the needs of its community (Camilleri, 2021). According to Mogale et al. (2021), the rank of administrative positions can be classified as secretary, personal assistant, executive secretary, receptionist, filing clerk, typist, administrative officer, data capture, office manager, senior secretary and administrative assistant. This study was conducted at TUT. Tshwane University of Technology is one of South Africa's leading higher education institutions, known for its commitment to academic excellence, research and innovation (Wessels & Jacobsz, 2011). It was established on 01 January 2004, through the merger of several former technikons (technical universities). It has since grown to become one of the largest universities in South Africa (Wannenburger, 2021). Tshwane University of Technology is in Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, with multiple campuses in and around the city (Nelufule et al., 2024). It is dedicated to preparing students for the challenges of the modern world while also contributing to the development of South Africa through education, research and community engagement (Kgasi, 2021). Its commitment to academic excellence, research and inclusivity makes it a key player in South African higher education (Mashaba & Pretorius, 2023).

Problem statement

As reflected in the introduction to this study, employee engagement is a crucial management topic, as it might enhance employee work performance and organisational success. If employees are not engaged, it could result in the organisation not achieving its goals and a decrease in its work performance. The primary research question in this study is as follows: 'What is the relationship between employee engagement and work performance of administrative employees at a university of technology?' This research will, therefore, be conducted at a university of technology on administrative employees to determine whether there is any significant relationship between employee engagement and work performance of administrative employees at the TUT. Such research has not been previously conducted, as confirmed by a search on the Southern African Bibliographic Information Network.

Objectives of the study

The objective of this study is to investigate if there is any significant relationship between employee engagement

and the work performance of administrative employees at TUT.

Literature review

In this section, the researcher examines the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between employee engagement and work performance, identifying gaps and insights that support the research objective. Several definitions of employee engagement and work performance, as well as the factors that contribute to administrative employees' work performance and employee engagement, will be explored. Thereafter, the section will examine the research conducted by previous authors on the relationship between employee engagement and work performance.

Employee engagement conceptualised

An organisation's achievements, as well as its successful implementation of distinctive changes, depend on employee engagement (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020). Employee engagement is a physical and psychological state of emotional, behavioural and cognitive aspects of individuals in performing their organisational roles to achieve the organisational goals (Satata, 2021). Employee engagement is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working (Vercic, 2021). Albrecht et al. (2021) posit that engagement is the harness of members of the organisation to their work roles; in engagement, people engage and demonstrate themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance.

An engaged employee is an individual who is willing to improve his or her overall quality of job and consequently impatient to execute assigned tasks in ways that make a difference to organisational success (Adisa et al., 2021). Lartey (2021) argues that employee engagement is a cooperative relationship between an employer and employee in such a way that an employer provides an employee with the environment and conditions to be successful through a good environment, good leadership and management, while on the other hand, an employee provides the employer with a positive and self-motivated performance to achieve the organisational mission, vision and goals.

The importance of employee engagement

Employee engagement is a critical driver of institutional success, directly impacting performance, retention and overall effectiveness. Engaged employees perform 20% better than their co-workers, as they fully involve themselves in their work (Wang et al., 2020). This heightened performance is characterised by a consistent willingness to exceed expectations and deliver superior service quality, which creates a definitive competitive advantage (Corbeanu & Iliescu, 2023). Furthermore, engagement is intrinsically linked to talent retention, as employees who align with business strategy and feel connected to the organisation are more likely to stay, ensuring business continuity.

(Budrienė & Diskienė, 2020). This sense of connection fosters a culture where employees take ownership of organisational outcomes, particularly when institutions proactively create positive internal experiences (Albrecht et al., 2021). The strategic importance of engagement extends to tangible financial outcomes, with a direct correlation to superior revenue, growth, profit margins and shareholder returns (Chanana, 2021). Engaged employees support the achievement of organisational mission, strategy execution and generational results (Rabiul et al., 2022b). This contributes significantly to overall organisational effectiveness and innovation (Rameshkumar, 2020). Moreover, engagement is the foundation of a productive and ethical workplace, as it builds team effectiveness, fosters positive manager–employee relationships and creates an environment where individuals are motivated, diligent and accountable (Arifin et al., 2019). An engaged employee increases their level of well-being and performance, resulting in higher job satisfaction, better performance, improved demonstration of personal ideas, enhanced health and safety, and is inspired to learn (Maake et al., 2021). According to Jayaraman et al. (2019), higher employee engagement is associated with reduced absenteeism, fewer accidents and lower turnover. It also improves employee and organisational performance (Ahmed et al., 2020). Engaged employees are supporters of the organisation, promoting its products or services and contributing to its success. The employees consequently perform better and are more motivated (Vincy & Priyadharshini, 2022). The same authors assert that employee engagement increases trust in the organisation, provides an active working environment and builds passion, commitment and alignment with the organisation's strategies and goals. In addition, it was found that there is growing recognition that employee engagement is essential to effective commercial and business performance, with engaged employees serving as the foundation of productive workplaces where individuals are diligent, ethical and accountable (Tekletsadik, 2022).

Levels of employee engagement

Several levels of employee engagement determine the employee's commitment to the organisation (Nienaber & Martins, 2020). High levels of employee engagement have been shown to have a favourable and positive impact on work performance (Adrianto & Riyanto, 2020). A high level of employee engagement is desirable because it brings several positive effects, such as higher work performance, more job satisfaction, reduced potential turnover, and many other benefits are the major areas where a high level of engagement may be beneficial (Reissova & Papay, 2021). According to Choudhary and Jain (2025), employee engagement has different levels that assign the employee's level of commitment to the overall organisation. Marin (2021) states that there are three levels of employee engagement, namely engaged employees, not engaged employees and actively disengaged employees. According to Kundar and Pakkeerappa (2021), engaged employees consistently

perform at high levels, utilising their skills and strengths daily. They contribute to their organisation with positive outcomes and innovations by working with passion. Engaged employees are defined as alpha players of the organisation who turn the workplace into a cell of productivity and innovation (Vogel et al., 2022). Engaged employees can accomplish more goals when they work with co-workers who are positive, reliable and predictable (Rabiul et al., 2022a). Similarly, Tran (2020) finds that engaged employees work with passion and a sense of profound connection with their organisation, are innovative and move the organisation forward (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). Not engaged employees do what they are told to do and show up to work and do what is required of them, but they lack the enthusiasm and passion that engaged employees exhibit. Not engaged employees are those who do not invest energy and do not work with passion (Susanto, 2022, p. 96). Not engaged employees are essentially neutral when it comes to their level of engagement and see negatively in all the opportunities at work (Ngwane & Paul-Dachapalli, 2022). Actively disengaged employees, however, are always present and have a specific role, but do not improve it; they are present and absent at the same time (Mughal & Iraqi, 2020). An actively disengaged employee makes up to 50% of most businesses, and this can be because of bad management (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020). Actively disengaged employees undermine the accomplishments of their co-workers, as they feel unhappy and actively spread this (Thanh & Quang, 2022). Actively disengaged employees perform at a minimal level, do the bare minimum required and may even be a source of negativity within the workplace (Adigun et al., 2023). Actively disengaged employees are those who do not invest energy and do not work with passion and are consistently against virtually everything in the organisation (Liu et al., 2022).

Characteristics of employee engagement

Employee engagement is a crucial concept in the realm of human resources and organisational management (Aggarwal et al., 2022). It refers to the emotional, psychological and behavioural commitment that employees have towards their work and their organisation (Boccoli et al., 2023). Engaged employees are not merely satisfied with their jobs; they are enthusiastic, motivated and fully invested in contributing to their organisation's success (Tao et al., 2022).

Work performance

Work performance is a critical aspect of employees' professional lives that directly influences their career trajectory and organisational success (Zaim et al., 2024). Work performance encompasses the quality and efficiency with which individuals execute their tasks and responsibilities, reflecting their dedication, competence and overall contribution to the workplace (Ashiru et al., 2022). Good work performance not only benefits individuals in terms of career growth and job satisfaction but also plays a pivotal role in the attainment of organisational objectives (Danial & Nasir, 2020).

Work performance conceptualised

Work performance represents a stage of an individual's achievement working for an organisation (Ausat et al., 2022). Nguyen et al. (2020) define work performance as an evaluation of an employee's performance at work to improve or rectify it. Work performance is the result of an individual putting forth the necessary effort to complete a task with knowledge, expertise and sincerity (Niati et al., 2021). Sanchez-Gomez and Bresó (2020), on the other hand, define work performance as acts or behaviours pertinent to the organisation's goals. Work performance refers to a person's ability to perform activities that contribute to the organisation's technical core development (Mathende & Karim, 2022). Performance is the overall expected value to an organisation of the discrete behavioural episodes that an individual engages in over a standard period (Obuobisa-Darko, 2020). The value of work performance extends to higher educational institutions, where there have been progressively intense competitions among universities worldwide for students, funding support and reputations, in line with the organisation's goals (Li & Wang, 2021).

The importance of work performance

Work performance is of utmost importance in both individual and organisational contexts. It refers to how effectively and efficiently an individual carries out their job responsibilities, meets targets, achieves goals and contributes to the overall success of the organisation (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). Below are some reasons why work performance is crucial:

Employee engagement and motivation

High work performance is closely related to employee engagement and motivation. When employees feel a sense of accomplishment and recognise that their contributions are valued, they are more likely to be motivated to perform well, which, in turn, leads to increased job satisfaction, higher levels of commitment and reduced turnover rates (Deressa & Zeru, 2025). Motivation is the ability to direct employees to want to work successfully to achieve the organisational goals and the wishes of the employees (Moletsane et al., 2019; Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022, p. 124). Engaged employees are more aware of their responsibilities, exceed their roles and go beyond to motivate their co-workers for the organisation's success (Liu et al., 2022, p. 4633). When employees perform well and see the results of their efforts, it can boost their motivation and engagement. They are more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, which contributes to a positive atmosphere in the workplace (Muhtadi et al., 2021, p. 20413).

Create a positive work environment

Morale improves when employees perform their jobs effectively. Unmotivated employees can bring down an entire department if they fail to perform (Ogunmakin & Sunday, 2023). According to Satata (2021), a positive work environment

often includes recognition and rewards for employees who excel in their performance. Acknowledging and rewarding excellent work not only motivates high-performing individuals but also sets an example for others to strive for excellence (Chenevert et al., 2022). A positive work environment yields good performance results for organisations and individuals.

The relationship between employee engagement and work performance

In this section, researchers investigate studies that focus on the relationship between employee engagement and work performance.

Tekletsadik (2022) notes that there is a correlation between engagement and organisational success, with the most committed employees performing 20% better and 87% less likely to leave the organisation, suggesting that engagement is linked to organisational performance. A study by Satata (2021) on employee engagement, which aims to improve work performance, finds that individuals who feel engaged with their work and have a higher sense of involvement in their organisation tend to produce good performance. According to Motyka (2018), who conducted a systematic literature review of employee engagement and performance, a low level of engagement is a major global economic problem leading to declining performance. Ngwenya and Pelsier (2020); Adrianto and Riyanto (2020) find that individual performance influences individual performance results. According to Kazimoto (2020), research on employee engagement and organisational performance in retail enterprises, there is a link between employee engagement and organisational performance, suggesting that when employees feel engaged and committed, organisational performance also improves. Based on the study conducted by Masharyono et al. (2023) in Indonesia, the influence of work environment and employee engagement on work performance in state-owned enterprises is significantly influenced by both work environment and employee engagement.

The study by Riyanto et al. (2021) analysed the effect of motivation and job satisfaction on performance with employee engagement as a mediating variable at Information Technology (IT) companies located in the cities of Jakarta and Bandung, Indonesia. The study found that motivation has a positive effect on the performance of IT employees, while job satisfaction is independent of this effect. These authors further found that employee engagement does not directly affect employee performance; however, the effect of mediation through motivation and job satisfaction can have a significant impact on employee performance. Gallup's global study found that highly engaged employees were 17% more productive and 21% more profitable than their disengaged counterparts. This study underscores the universal importance of employee engagement on performance (Gallup, 2023).

There is limited specific research focusing on administrative employees within universities of technology, but a few studies have investigated related topics. The relationship between employee engagement and performance is further supported by the findings of Butt et al. (2023), who developed a framework for e-leadership in universities. This framework emphasises the need for leaders to adapt to the digital era, which includes leveraging technology to enhance communication and collaboration among administrative employees. The study suggests that e-leadership can significantly improve engagement levels, as it empowers employees to utilise digital tools effectively in their daily tasks.

This study topic was chosen specifically to address a significant research gap, particularly at the TUT. The reasons for undertaking this study include the limited research in academic settings, the strategic importance of employees, the need to address organisational challenges and the aim to contribute to scholarship, as a study like this has not been conducted at TUT.

Research design and methodology

The research methodology presented here focuses on the research design, the methods and procedures for data collection and the measurement and analysis of data used in the study to address the research objective.

Research approach and research design

A quantitative research approach was adopted for this study. In the quantitative research approach, larger sample sizes are preferred (Mweshi & Sakyi, 2020). This research study adopted a cross-sectional, survey research design.

Target population and sampling design

There are 14 campuses at TUT, and only full- and part-time administrative employees at the Pretoria campuses, namely the Arts campus, Arcadia campus, Pretoria West campus, as well as the Soshanguve and Garankuwa campuses, participated in this study. Regional campuses and other campuses were excluded from participating in this study because of differences in their operational structures and work environments. The Pretoria-based campuses had 547 administrative employees at the time of the study after the exclusion criteria had been considered. For the study, only full- and part-time administrative employees at the Pretoria campuses were targeted. With the inclusion criteria applied, the population for this study was 487. The study used non-probability convenience sampling. With a total population of $N = 487$, the researcher used a sample size of $n = 215$, calculated according to the Raosoft calculator (Raosoft Inc., US, 2004) with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval ($p \geq 0.5$). Of the 215 distributed questionnaires, 200 were returned, which represented a 93% response rate.

Measuring instrument

The structured questionnaire used in this study was adopted after a thorough literature review. The questionnaire used consisted of 51 closed-ended Likert-scale questions and was divided into three sections. It was decided that the questionnaires designed by Koopmans et al. (2014) and Mmako & Schultz (2016) were suitable for this research study to address the objectives and research questions. Prior to data collection, a pilot study was conducted with 10 administrative employees from TUT Pretoria West, Soshanguve, and Garankuwa campuses to determine whether questionnaire questions were clear and understandable to the respondents. These 10 respondents were selected through convenience sampling.

Data collection

After obtaining a permission letter from the TUT research site and ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee to conduct this research, the Human Resource (HR) department sent emails containing a link to the Google Forms questionnaire to all administrative employees at TUT Pretoria West campuses, Soshanguve campuses and Garankuwa campus.

Data analysis

The captured data were coded and subsequently checked for possible errors. The latest version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to calculate descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation coefficient was employed to determine whether relationships existed between employee engagement and work performance. The multiple regression analysis was used to measure the extent to which employee engagement influences work performance.

Validity and reliability of the measuring instrument

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, the research instrument was presented to the study supervisor. Professionals in the field of statistics scrutinised the questionnaire to ensure that it would answer the research question and achieve the research objective. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for the various subscales, specifically employee engagement and work performance.

A high Cronbach's alpha value indicates a strong correlation between items on a scale (Stadler et al., 2021). Izah et al. (2023) state that Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 and above are used as a rule of thumb to denote a high level of internal reliability. The Cronbach's alpha scores for employee engagement and work performance were 0.95 and 0.96, respectively. Both constructs demonstrate excellent internal consistency.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the TUT Faculty Research Ethics Committee with reference number: REC2024-03-020. The researcher obtained permission from TUT to conduct the study on its premises. Before commencing with data collection, online informed consent was obtained from the respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not requesting any identifiable information from the respondents. A strong emphasis was placed on ethical principles and the protection of the dignity of all stakeholders during this study. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer for a period of 5 years.

Results

Descriptive statistics

A descriptive analysis of the 4-point Likert-scale responses from 200 administrative employees revealed high levels of agreement across most items. Employee engagement: participants reported strong alignment with the TUT's mission (92.5%), goals (92.0%) and high job satisfaction (84.0%). The area requiring most improvement was recognition for accomplishments (74.5%). Work performance: self-reported performance was exceptionally high, with items related to time management (95.5% agreement), prioritisation (92.0%) and proactive improvement (93.0%) scoring strongly.

The relationship between employee engagement and work performance

In this study, the purpose of regression analysis was to identify the factors contributing to the work performance of administrative employees at a TUT. The model consists of variables such as performance, engagement and years of employment, while excluding those with a qualification level of 2.

Table 1 presents the results of a quantile regression analysis examining the relationship between work performance and employee engagement, while controlling for employment duration and qualification status (excluding qualification = 2). The table illustrates the optimisation process by reporting the sum of absolute weighted deviations at each iteration, which progressively decreases from 37.9232 (Iteration 1) to 36.7826 (Iteration 16), indicating convergence towards a stable solution.

The median regression analysis was performed on a sample of 193 observations. The final sample consists of 197 observations instead of the initial 200 because of data cleaning: one respondent did not meet the qualification criteria and two others had missing age data. These three cases were excluded from the analysis. The initial raw sum of deviations was 67.4794, calculated around the median value of 0.3044. Through the modelling process, this was reduced to a minimised sum of deviations of 36.7826, resulting in a pseudo-*R*-squared value of 0.4549. This indicates that the

TABLE 1: Quantile regression iteration log.

Iteration	Sum of absolute weighted deviations	Notes
1	37.92320	-
2	37.38950	-
3	37.04540	-
4	36.99540	-
5	36.96700	-
6	36.93960	-
7	36.92480	Alternate solutions exist
8	36.87900	-
9	36.87411	-
10	36.86960	-
11	36.86160	-
12	36.80250	-
13	36.80250	-
14	36.79250	-
15	36.78280	-
16	36.78260	Final iteration

model accounts for approximately 45.5% of the variability in the conditional median of the dependent variable, demonstrating a reasonably strong fit to the data. The substantial reduction in deviations from 67.48 to 36.78 reflects the model's effectiveness in accounting for the observed relationships between the variables.

Employee engagement was defined as the only statistically significant predictor of work performance (Coefficient = 0.9184, $p < 0.001$). The model explained a substantial portion of the variance in performance (Pseudo $R^2 = 0.4549$), indicating that employee engagement accounts for approximately 45.5% of the variability in work performance scores. None of the demographic or employment variables had a statistically significant effect on performance ($p > 0.05$ for all). A strong, positive and independent relationship exists between employee engagement and work performance.

Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between employee engagement and work performance at TUT. The findings confirmed a significantly strong relationship between employee engagement and work performance. The coefficient for engagement was 0.918 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that higher employee engagement levels are associated with improved work performance. This confirms that engagement is a strong predictor of work performance among administrative employees at TUT. The finding added to the literature review that was previously highlighted. High levels of employee engagement have been shown to have a favourable and positive impact on work performance (Adrianto & Riyanto, 2020).

The regression analysis confirmed that engagement is the predictor, accounting for a substantial 45.5% of the variance in performance scores. This finding is aligned with the study by Mazzetti et al. (2023) that confirms that engagement serves as a primary motivational mechanism through which job resources are transformed into enhanced performance.

The descriptive results of this study illustrate that administrative employees' factors, such as age, qualification and work experience, do not significantly affect performance. This suggests that engagement matters more than background or experience.

Implications

The study holds significant importance for understanding the relationship between employee engagement and work performance. Employee engagement is a key driver of productivity and job satisfaction; thus, uncovering its impact on work performance can provide valuable insights into how to foster a more motivated and efficient workforce, which is important for achieving overall organisational effectiveness. For TUT, specifically, this research can inform the development of targeted strategies to enhance administrative functions, resulting in a more streamlined and responsive administrative support system. In addition, the benefits of this study extend to employee well-being and retention. By identifying factors that enhance engagement, the university can implement practices that not only boost performance but also enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates among administrative employees. In the broader context, the findings of this study contribute to the academic discourse on HR management and organisational behaviour, providing empirical evidence that can inform policies and best practices in similar educational institutions and beyond.

Limitations and recommendations

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between employee engagement and work performance among administrative employees at TUT, it has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research relied on self-reported survey data, which may be subject to response bias, such as social desirability or recall inaccuracies. The study was conducted within a single institution (TUT), which limits the generalisability of the findings to other universities or sectors. Because the study is cross-sectional, it is not possible to establish causality between engagement and performance because longitudinal data are necessary for long-term analysis. The sample size, although adequate, may not fully represent the diversity of administrative roles across different departments. As the study focused on quantitative measures, it may have overlooked qualitative nuances (e.g. personal experiences or leadership dynamics) that could have contributed to a deeper understanding of the data. Future research could address these gaps by incorporating mixed methods, multi-institutional samples and longitudinal designs. The findings, despite these limitations, provide guidance for improving engagement strategies in higher education institutions.

The following recommendations are put forward based on the study results:

- The TUT should focus on fostering employee engagement, as work performance will come naturally, as higher

employee engagement results in higher work performance.

- To enhance employee engagement and work performance among administrative employees at TUT, it is recommended that targeted interventions be implemented, focusing on three key areas: performance-related engagement, interpersonal engagement and work environment support.
- Introducing recognition programmes, career development opportunities and clear performance metrics might enhance employee engagement and work performance.
- Longitudinal studies could investigate how changes in engagement affect performance over time, providing causal inferences and insights into long-term trends.
- Lastly, multi-institutional comparisons can be conducted by including multiple universities or higher education institutions in South Africa.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was successfully achieved, namely, to investigate whether there was any significant relationship between employee engagement and work performance among administrative employees at TUT. A comprehensive literature review revealed several research studies on employee engagement and work performance and interesting insights were gained. This study revealed a strong relationship between employee engagement and work performance. The findings of this study should motivate TUT management to focus more on employee engagement by ensuring that employees are recognised and the work environment is pleasant, as work performance will come naturally.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

CRedit authorship contribution

Thobeka P. Mtshali: Conceptualisation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Project administration, Writing – original draft. Cornelia Harmse: Conceptualisation, Supervision,

Writing – review & editing. All authors reviewed the article, contributed to the discussion of results, approved the final version for submission and publication, and take responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Thobeka P. Mtshali, upon reasonable request.

Disclaimer

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