

A CONCEPTUAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Krishna K GOVENDER*

Ndivhoniswani NEMATSWERANI¹

Received: January 2025 | Accepted: May 2025 | Published: June 2025

Please cite this paper as: Govender, K.K. and Nematswerani, N. (2025) A conceptual model of organisational culture and organisational performance in the public sector in South Africa, *Holistica Journal of Business and Public Administration*, Vol. 16, Iss. 1, pp.103-118

Abstract

The South African public sector remains the largest employer with millions of employees, and public sector employees are the critical resource for the sector to deliver on the priorities and objectives of the government successfully. Exploring the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement, and organisational performance in the public sector is highly relevant for employees and employers to instil a culture of engagement that delivers superior performance and service to citizens. Although much research has been conducted in this field, little research is evident on the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance within the South African Public Sector context. The study will draw on various theories of organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance and conceptually map these through proposed relationships among main and sub-constructs and variables.

Keywords: Organisational Culture, Employee Engagement, Organisational Performance, Public Sector

1. Introduction

The South African government is generally recognised as the largest employer, with millions of employees tasked with building a capable, ethical, and developmental state (Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017). Furthermore, Statistics South Africa's (STATSSA's) 2022 Quarterly Labour Force Survey recorded increased employment in the Public Sector (STATSSA, 2022). The public sector employees are a critical resource in achieving the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 and the Medium-Term

¹ University of KwaZulu Natal, Graduate School of Business and Leadership, (238 Mazizi Kunene RD, Glenwood, Durban 4041), South Africa. GovenderK@ukzn.ac.za

² University of KwaZulu Natal, Graduate School of Business and Leadership, (238 Mazizi Kunene RD, Glenwood, Durban 4041), South Africa. 221049841@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024 (STATSSA, 2022). At the core of delivering quality services to the people of South Africa is the Batho Pele White Paper for Transforming Public Service Delivery. Compared to other industries, the public sector is driven by competitive advantage and relies on motivated and engaged employees (Pepra-Mensah & Kyeremeh, 2018). Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that “good human resources management and career development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated, and a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:99). Pepra-Mensah and Kyeremeh (2018) highlighted that the public sector must begin to make employee engagement a strategic focus by incorporating it into its human resources plans. These researchers further stated that “the public sector should instil a sense of belonging and ownership in their employees by clearly defining and ensuring a favourable organisational culture and emphasising assumptions and beliefs that members share to assist in improving their collaboration with the mission, values, and goals of the organisation,” (Pepra-Mensah and Kyeremeh, 2018:24). Little and Little (2006:118) called for “continued research into employee engagement to understand better and capture its contribution to organisational and individual performance”. Considering the above, there is a need to conceptually map the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance in the Public Sector in South Africa. Research has been indecisive in clarifying the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance within the context of the South African public sector (Pepra-Mensah & Kyeremeh, 2018; Slack & Singh, 2017; Jin & McDonald, 2016; Al-Matari & Bin Omira, 2017). This study seeks to contribute to the field of knowledge on organisational behaviour, industrial psychology, and human resources management by considering leadership, communication, a challenging environment, organisational commitment, job involvement, employee satisfaction, motivation, retention and organisational results as sub-component variables of organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance (Dash & Roy, 2020; Khan & Naeem, 2018; Al-Matari & Bin Bin Omira, 2017).

2. Literature review

Culture is one of the crucial sources of competitive advantage and will always be since it affects organisational behaviour and corporate performance (Brenyah & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017:1). Cole (2012), as cited in Brenyah and Obuobisa-Darko, (2017) highlighted “that the purpose and goals of any organisation are to influence its culture and significantly affect employee morale, retention and their level of engagement”. Podgorniak-Krzykacz (2021:2) states, “organisational culture is an important determinant of collaborative, citizen-centred governance and co-production of public services”. Pepra-Mensah and Kyeremeh (2018:11) maintain that for the public sector to adapt to today’s turbulent environment, it needs engaged employees.

Little and Little (2006:118) indicate that the “employee engagement construct should be rigorously tested for its theoretical soundness and practical application to be strengthened by understanding the nature of the construct and its relationship to attitudes, behavioural intentions and behaviours applied to benefit organisations and employees. Markos and Sridevi (2010:89) state that “constructive employee engagement is built on the foundation of earlier concepts like job satisfaction, employee commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour”.

A study conducted by Pepra-Mensah and Kyeremeh (2018) on organisational culture recommended that more emphasis be placed on organisational culture facets like employee development, teamwork, and collaboration to nourish employees’ cognitive abilities and improve their physical engagement. “In the changed business scenario, it is increasingly realised that organisations can gain and maintain a competitive edge through people as creators of assets” (Mohapatra & Sharma, 2010:282). Furthermore, Mohapatra and Sharma (2010:282) indicate that “employee engagement assumes significance as a way of managing people in the organisation because engaged employees are believed to deliver high quality/committed service and they form work teams that produce high-quality results”. Thus, employee engagement is important to ensure organisation become competitive and increases organisational performance (Najeemdeen et al. 2018:205).

Tsai, Edwards and Sengupta (2010), Dash and Roy (2020), Little and Little (2006), (Khan and Naeem (2018), Mohapatra and Sharma (2010), Kuo (2011), and Al-Matari and Bin Omira (2017) highlighted the need to scientifically explain the interlink between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance using mediating variables such as inspiring leadership, open and transparent communication, engaging and challenging environment, organisational commitment, job involvement, employee satisfaction, employee motivation, employee retention and organisational results.

Several scholars have studied organisational culture, employee engagement, and organisational performance due to their effects on human resources, organisational behaviour, and industrial psychology practices. However, most studies were conducted in primarily developed countries and focused on the private sector. There is scant research on the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance in the South African public sector.

Hence, this study aims to conceptually map the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance in the public sector in South Africa.

According to Linna et al. (2010), as cited in Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017), the “mandate of the public sector is to improve the general welfare of the society by delivering public goods and services to individuals, and to private and other public sector organisations, playing a critical role in both the country and the global economy”. A non-compliance culture, accountability, and resource optimisation seem to be the main problems in the public sector (Fourie & Poggenpoel, 2017). “An abundance of research makes it clear that

building strong cultures can play a significant role in the success of the organisations and that, conversely, neglecting cultures can have many costs to organisations and their employees, customers and stakeholders” (Warrick, 2017:403).

To achieve high organisational performance, it is necessary to identify the factors affecting organisational performance (Nikpour, 2016:65). Sahoo and Sahu (2009:73) highlighted that organisational excellence and employee engagement are the mantras of success in achieving organisational goals and vision. Thus, organisations strive to retain competent, committed, creative and experienced employees to attain organisational performance (Dash & Roy, 2020:3). Furthermore, Dash and Roy (2020) indicate that organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance are essential contributors that could add significant value to the organisation.

Little is known about whether the antecedents of organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance have the same influence on South African public sector institutions. Therefore, it is crucial to study these antecedents, assess how they relate to the public sector, and critically conceptually map the antecedents to better understand the current situation of public sector institutions in South Africa.

Organisational culture refers to the shared values, ingrained attitudes, core beliefs and company traditions that determine norms of behaviour, accepted work practices, and operating styles (Thompson, Peteraf, Gamble & Strickland III, 2016:343). Werner, Bagraim, Cunningham, Pieterse-Landman, Potgieter and Viedge (2011: 31) state that organisational culture refers to a system of shared assumptions or meanings members hold that distinguishes one organisation from others. Pepura-Mensah and Kreremeh (2018) revealed that when the Municipal Assembly encourages organisational culture mechanisms, there will be a commensurate increase in highly engaged employees. Albahussin and El-garaihy (2013) state that organisational culture is a complicated connection of values and standards, leading to one’s attitude.

Employee engagement refers to being present during the performance of work by willingly contributing intellectual effort, experiencing positive emotions and meaningful connections to others (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014:63). Dajani (2015:138) states that employee engagement is conceptualised as the individual’s investment of his complete self into role that create a positive attitude where individual goes above and beyond the call of duty, to heighten the level of ownership, and to further business interest of the organisation. In addition, engaged employees express their authentic selves through physical involvement, cognitive awareness, and emotional connection (Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes & Delbridge, 2013).

Markos and Sridevi (2010:94) state that employee engagement is closely linked with organisational performance outcomes. Companies with engaged employees have higher employee retention because of reduced turnover and reduced intention to leave the company, as well as productivity, profitability, growth, and customer satisfaction. Al-dalalmeh, Masa’deh, Khalaf and Obeidat (2018) state that job satisfaction can be used to transfer the effect of employee engagement on organisational performance.

“Organisational performance refers to the outcome of the organisation’s operations or the achievement of the organisation’s goals” (Uluskan, Godfrey & Joines, 2017:1530). Similarly, Rezaei, Mardani, Senin, Wong, Sadeghi, Najmi and Shaharoun (2018) stated that organisational performance can be regarded as the goals and achievement of a given organisation and is measured using three performance metrics (customer services, employee satisfaction and business results). Also, Olawela and Salman (2021) defined organisational performance as the capability to accomplish the goals and expectations of stakeholders and market survival.

Organisational performance has been defined from different perspectives, such as financial and non-financial performance (Khan & Naeem, 2018:1410). Examples of financial performance are sales revenue, return on investment, profit indexes, net profit and return on total assets, whereas examples of non-financial performance are working environment, customer satisfaction, productivity, human resources results (low employee turnover, low employee absenteeism, high employee morale and job performance) and market performance (Khan & Naeem, 2018:1410).

Brenyan and Obuobisa-Darko (2017) focused on the relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement within the Ghanaian public sector. The study focused on 267 employees randomly drawn from the public sector in Ghana using a questionnaire. The study’s findings demonstrated that employee engagement is significantly and favourably impacted by achievement culture, and employees who exercise discretion at work display higher levels of zeal, a sign of an engaged worker. Pepra-Mensah and Kyeremeh (2018:24) argued that comparing engagement levels in the public sector is scant. Looking into this gap could give a better picture of employee engagement issues in the South African public sector.

Mohapatra and Sharma (2010) highlighted the relationship between employee engagement and its predictors in an Indian Public Sector undertaking by focusing on a sample of 84 managerial employees. The researchers argued that employee engagement is most certainly influenced by how the management of an organisation manages its employees. The study revealed that three factors, pay, job content and objectivity, were found to be significant predictors of employee engagement. These factors will also be mapped in the proposed conceptual framework.

Nikpour (2016) focused on the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance. The study focused on 190 employees randomly drawn from the public sector in Iran’s Kerman Province. “The results indicated that the organisational culture not only has a direct positive impact on organisational performance but also indirectly affects organisational performance using employee’s organisational commitment and the indirect impact is more than the direct impact (Nikpour, 2016:70). Furthermore, Nikpour (2016) was of the view that organisational culture has a positive and significant impact on employee organisational commitment in the public sector. Thus, mapping these constructs conceptually may provide a better understanding within the context of South African public sector organisations.

Al-Matari and Bin Omira (2017) explored the relationship between organisational culture and organisational performance in the public sector by focusing on 384 employees randomly selected from 16 Saudi Arabian public service ministries. A questionnaire was used to measure constructs such as organisational culture, organisational commitment, and organisational performance. "The study findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between organisational culture and performance, and a partial mediating impact was revealed to have originated from organisational commitment on the organisational culture-organisational performance relationship" (Al-Matari & Bin Omira, 2017:75). "The study recommended that future researchers should add some variables such as leadership styles, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, culture and Islamic perspective that can potentially improve level of organisational performance in the public sector (Al-Matari and Omira, 2017:75)".

Triguero-Sanchez, Pena-Vinces and Guillen (2018) focused on the relationship between organisational performance, employee diversity and organisational culture. A sample of 102 focused on employees from the public sector in Spain. A questionnaire was used to measure organisational performance, employee diversity and organisational culture (Triguero-Sanchez, Pena-Vinces and Guillen, 2018:391). The study's results revealed a positive correlation between employee diversity and human resources practices, where such practices encourage employee commitment rather than control. As a result, researchers identified a non-linear relationship between human resources management practices and organisational performance. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended more studies in other geographical areas with different cultures to generalise results (Triguero-Sanchez, Pena-Vinces & Guillen 2018).

Albrecht, Breidahl, and Marty (2017) explored the link between organisational resources, organisational engagement atmosphere, and employee engagement. In this study, the cross-sectional data prevented the identification of causal relationships despite the adoption of rigorous confirmatory and structural modelling approaches (Albrecht, Breidahl and Marty, 2017:14). Furthermore, the researchers proposed that longitudinal studies be conducted to enable more robust assertions about the reciprocal effect and causation among factors (Albrecht, Breidahl & Marty, 2017:14). Future studies should evaluate the impact of organisational resources including organisational culture, overall organisational environment, knowledge management, and clearly defined organisational values (Albrecht, Breidahl & Marty, 2017). Such a study might be conducted most effectively by utilising a job demand-resources (JD-R) model, which takes organisational, job, and personal resources into account and considers burnout (Albrecht, Breidahl & Marty, 2017).

Tsai, Edwards, and Sengupta (2010) emphasised the influence of organisational performance on employee attitude and the role of human resources management practice as the mediator of organisational performance and employee attitude. They used surveys to assess organisational performance, employee attitude and human resources management. The study has provided preliminary evidence of correlation for the complex

relationships. Thus, researchers recommended that ‘longitudinal research is required to address the causality of the association’ (Tsai, Edwards & Sengupta, 2010:17).

Jin and McDonald (2016) investigated the mediating role of perceived organisational support in the link between supervisor support and employee engagement in the public sector. They used a survey to assess perceived organisational support, supervisor support and employee engagement. The study identified perceived organisational support as a key channel through which the positive perceptions of supervisor support increase employee engagement. The study also found that employee engagement increases when the employees perceive that their supervisor supports them (Jin & McDonald, 2016). This study used a cross-sectional design, which makes it impossible to show that the variables are arranged randomly. Predominantly, highly engaged staff members could influence their manager to treat them better. Thus, a longitudinal methodology might more clearly identify the direction of casual relationships and monitor potential changes over time in the impact of work engagement (Jin & McDonald, 2016). The researchers also acknowledged that they did not use the well-known Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, which has been demonstrated to have excellent psychometric properties regarding the three underlying dimensions of employee engagement (vigour, dedication, and absorption), in measuring employee engagement in the public sector (Jin & McDonald, 2016).

Baird and Harrison (2015) examined the association between organisational culture and the use of management initiatives within the public sector in Australia. According to the study’s findings, managers in the public sector who want to encourage management initiative adoption and employee involvement must assess and consider the organisation’s culture. The researchers noted that the scope of their research was limited to the Australian public sector. With the public sector under the same demand for reform and imitation of the private sector, Australia has followed a worldwide trend among Anglo-American nations. Australia shares a national culture with other advanced, Anglo-based nations. Therefore, there is no justification to argue that the context of Australia cannot be applied to the public sector (Baird & Harrison, 2015:325). The researchers suggested further study to explore the impact of organisational culture on management initiatives in other Anglo-based cultures, as well as research in nations with diverse national cultural characteristics and public sector (Baird & Harrison, 2015).

Slack and Singh (2017) explored the diagnosis of organisational culture in the public sector. They used mixed methods to collect qualitative and quantitative data on Fiji civil servants. The Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument was used to assess culture type, strength, and congruence. Slack and Singh (2017:378) highlighted that more “organisational culture studies conducted in Western cultures and specifically of public enterprises are needed to determine if the results are robust between countries”. They also recommended that future research “examine the effects of different dimensions of culture on organisational change and performance. Lastly, they recommended that future research investigate public sector variation from the average culture profile for the Public Administration reference culture” (Slack & Singh, 2017:378).

Given the above literature, it is evident that very little research has been reported on the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement, and organisational performance in the context of the South African public sector. Many studies were conducted in Asia, America, Australasia, Europe, and a few in the west of Africa. The researchers also recommended that future research be conducted in other countries to collect further empirical evidence on the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance in the public sector. This study aims to develop a new conceptual framework to theoretically map the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement, and organisational performance in the public sector in South Africa.

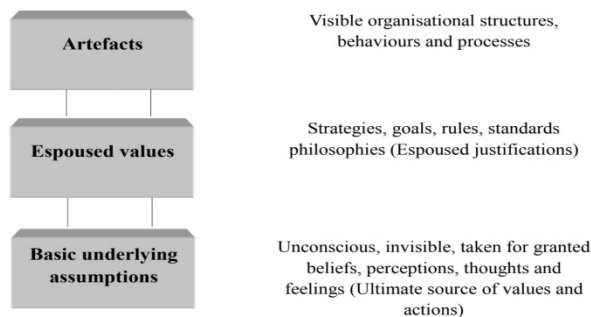
2.1. *Conceptual framework*

“Organisational culture is the set of shared values, beliefs and norms that influence the way employees think, feel and behave in the workplace” (Lunenburg, 2011:1). Organisational culture has the potential to enhance organisational performance, employee job satisfaction, and the sense of certainty about the problem. “If an organisational culture becomes incongruent with the changing expectations of internal and/or external stakeholders, the organisation’s effectiveness can decline as has occurred with some organisations” (Lunenburg, 2011:2). Alshamari (2017:129) “states that the concept of organisational culture first appeared in the literature of researchers and practitioners dating back to the 1980s, after both scientific management and experience management approaches were examined”. Organisational culture, as a concept, has been studied in various disciplines ranging from anthropology to industrial-organisational psychology (Alshamari, 2017). Alshamari (2017:130) defined organisational culture “as the set of beliefs, values, behavioural patterns and assumptions shared by members of the organisation”. Warick (2017:391) concurred that the studies on the impact of organisational culture on performance and other factors gained momentum in the late 1980s. “Thereafter, studies on organisational culture began to provide convincing evidence that culture can have a significant influence on performance, morale, job satisfaction, employee engagement and loyalty, employee attitude and motivation, turnover, commitment to the organisation and efforts to attract and retain talented employees” (Warrick, 2017:399). Rovis, Sayadi, Pourkiani, and Abbasi (2020) found that within the framework of organisational theory metaphors, culture is seen as a metaphor for organisation, and cultural metaphors are customs, traditions, stories, myths, human artefacts, and organisational metaphors or symbols. Researchers also defined organisational culture as a set of assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, thoughts, norms, feelings, behaviours, and behaviours shared by employees of an organisation. Employees of an organisation

embrace these ideas, values, standards, and behaviours, teach new hires and act accordingly (Rovis, Sayadi, Pourkiani and Abbasi, 2020).

Organisational culture is viewed as something that describes an organisation; it can be controlled and adjusted, relying on leadership and members (Tandon & Mehta, 2018). The researchers further highlighted that “organisational culture speaks to the aggregate esteems, convictions and standards of hierarchical individuals and is a result of such factors as history, item, advertise, innovation, methodology, kind of workers, administration style and national culture; culture incorporate the organisation vision, values, standards, frameworks, images, dialect, suppositions, condition, area, convictions, and propensities” (Tandon and Mehta, 2018:265). Wambugu (2014:80) highlighted that “theories of organisational culture attempt to explain the phenomena that occur in and around individuals”. Rather than a mathematical formula, the study of organisational culture includes shared understanding, intangible values and assumptions, and the effects culture has on human behaviour (Wambugu, 2014). Wambugu (2014) further highlighted that theories on organisational culture typically have different overall corporate mindsets, such as ethics, profits, or philanthropy. The researcher reiterated that organisational culture theory is one of the most cited culture models and serves a high degree of abstraction and complexity reduction. According to the researcher, the organisational culture theory mainly consists of three domains: basic underlying assumptions, espoused values, and artefacts (Wambugu, 2014). This is depicted in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Theory of Organisational Culture



Source: Adapted from Wambugu (2014: 82)

Srinivasan (2019:29) argued that “employee engagement has its roots in motivational theory, which was first propositioned by Elton Mayo’s motivation experiments in Cicero, Chicago, 1927-1932”. These experiments resulted in the proposal that workers are motivated by emotional rather than economic factors. So, an employee will place more importance on being involved and feeling important than improving workplace conditions. Mayo laid the groundwork on which later theorists, such as Herzberg, Maslow

and McGregor, would build their theories. "Employee engagement is now being considered as an aspect on which human resources management theorists are beginning to formulate metrics. Also, the interventions to facilitate and generate increased engagement are being developed to foster increased performance levels and their measurable impact on an organisation's bottom line" (Srinivasan, 2019:29). This is elaborated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Components of Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement Components	Descriptions
1. Cognitive Engagement	The main focus is on the work, not thinking about other things while performing tasks.
2. Emotional Engagement	Having an emotional connection with your organisation.
3. Physical Engagement	Willing and able to display discretionary behaviour to go the extra mile and work beyond your contract terms.

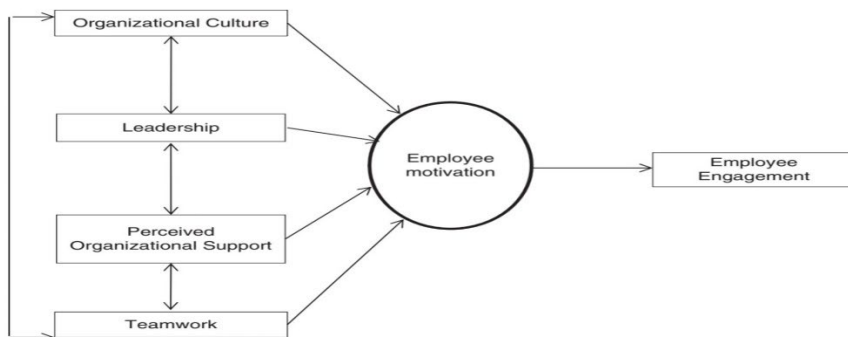
Source: Adapted from Srinivasan (2019:29)

Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019:68) concur that "employee engagement usually refers to employees' physical, cognitive and emotional input in work". Needs-Satisfaction framework, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory have been used to explain varying levels of employee engagement in organisations (Sun and Bunchapattanasakda, 2019:75). According to the Needs-Satisfaction framework, employees' sense of meaningfulness of work elements, job security and the availability of personal resources determine their engagement in role performances. According to JD-R model, high levels of job-related and personal resources can reduce exhaustion and other negative outcomes caused by job demands which require employees to pay additional efforts (Sun and Bunchapattanasakda, 2019:75). "The variables related to employee engagement, antecedent variables mainly include three categories: organisational factors, job factors and individual factors, and outcome variables are mainly focused on individual performance and organisational performance" (Sun and Bunchapattanasakda, 2019:75).

Murthy (2021:96) stated, "The concept of employee engagement itself is a positive one and always associated with the progress and growth aspect of the business organisation". A strong relationship exists between employee motivation and satisfaction, which impacts employee engagement. "Many motivational theories have a strong influence on employee engagement, but Herzberg's two-factor theory stands out as one of the key theories which influence engagement"

(Murthy, 2021:99). The theory describes the two key characteristics of the job influence job satisfaction while the others which will lead to job dissatisfaction. Famously known as a motivator (achievement, the kind of work itself, extent of responsibilities handled and proportionate growth or advancement) and hygiene (type of organisation's policy and administration, nature of supervision, kind of interpersonal relationship, working conditions, salary, status, security, and personal life) factors. "Motivation factors lead to high job satisfaction and greater engagement while bad hygiene leads to job dissatisfaction and low levels of engagement" (Murthy,2021:96). One example of the employee engagement model is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Employee Engagement Framework

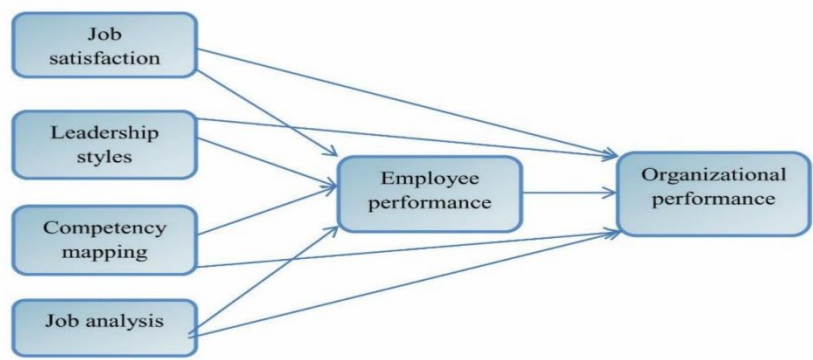


Source: Adapted from Al Mehrzi and Singh (2016:837)

Figure 2 depicts that "employee engagement is the dependent variable, motivation is the mediator, and the independent variables are organisational culture, leadership, teamwork and perceived organisational support" (Al Mehrzi & Singh, 2016:837). "Organisational performance is a significant factor to managers as it allows them to assess the success of the organisational strategy in objective terms" (Alshamari,2017:134). Sarma (2021:4446) highlighted that "the performance of an enterprise, organisation or business is significantly determined and influenced by the performance of human resources engaged with it". Employee participation in decision-making and other important organisational activities is a tool for stimulating organisational performance (Sarma, 2021:4447). Employee engagement and participation in organisational decision-making force employees to strive towards increased organisational productivity (Sarma, 2021: 4446). The researcher also stated that job satisfaction, leadership styles, competency mapping, and job analysis can promote and accelerate organisational performance (Sarma, 2021). The researcher thus proposed a framework serving as a tool for overall organisational performance, which can be enhanced through better employee

performance. Figure 3 depicts a framework for the relationship among determinants of organisational performance.

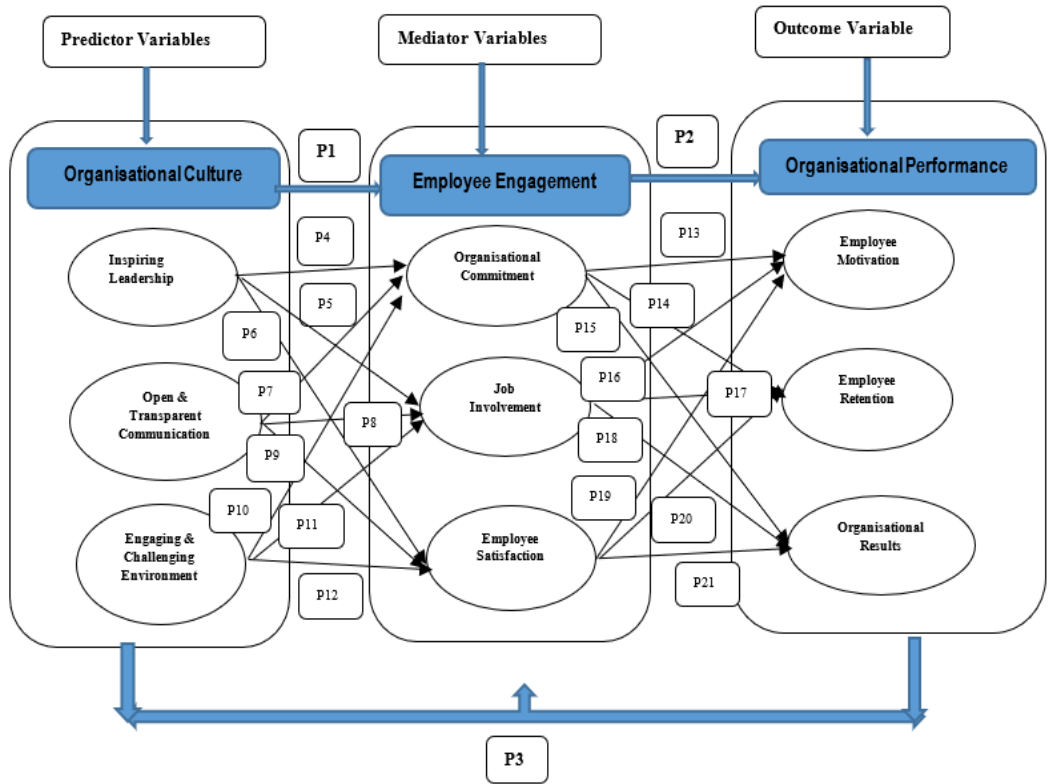
Figure 3: A Framework on Relationship Among Determinants of Organisational Performance



Source: Adapted from Sarma (2021:4448)

Brenyan and Obuobisa-Darko (2017), Mohapatra and Sharma (2010), Nikpour (2016) and Triguero-Sanchez, Pena-Vinces and Guillen (2018) focused on other sub-components of organisational performance, employee engagement and organisational performance such as higher level of zeal, work ethics, innovation, employee diversity, benefits, job content, professional and personal growth, objectivity, work-life balance, communication, participative management and quality. However, these researchers did not express the need for further scientific research on the link between these sub-components and organisational culture, employee engagement and performance. This study presents 21 research propositions developed from the literature on organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance, further to which a framework is proposed. The framework further presents critical sub-components of organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance as explained by various researchers. Figure 4 depicts the proposed framework showing a direct association between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance.

Proposed Conceptual Model



The primary aim of this study is to critically examine the relationship between organisational culture, employee engagement and organisational performance in the public sector.

6. Conclusions

This theoretical study will help public sector leaders conceptualise their roles and functions and develop strategies, programmes, and policies to reinforce organisational culture, employee engagement and performance in public sector institutions. However, it is recommended that empirical studies be conducted to test and validate the proposed framework within the South African public sector. This is in line with the recommendations from other research studies, many of which were conducted in developed countries (Branyan & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017;

Slack & Singh, 2017; Bird & Harrison, 2015; Jin & McDonald, 2016; Al-Matari & Bin Omira, 2017 and Nikpour, 2016).

References

- Al Mehrzi, N. and Singh, S.K. (2016). Competing through employee engagement: a proposed framework. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 65(3), 831-843.
- Al-bahussin, S.A. and El-garaihy, W.H. (2013). The impact of human resources management practices, organisational culture, organisational innovation, and knowledge management on organisational performance in Large Saudi Organisations: structural equation modelling with conceptual framework. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 8(22), 1-19.
- Albrecht, S., Breidahl, E. and Marty, A. (2018). Organisational resources, organisational engagement climate, and employee engagement. *Career Development International*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-04-2017-0064>, Retrieved on 10 May 2022.
- Al-dalahmeh, M., Masa'deh, R., Khalaf, R.K.A. and Obeidat, B.Y. (2018). The effect of employee engagement on organisation performance via the mediating role of job satisfaction: The case of IT employees in Jordanian Banking Sector. *Modern Applied Science*, 12 (6), 17-43.
- Al-Matari, E.M. and Bin Omira, O.D. (2017). The Mediating Effect of Organisational Commitment on the Relationship between Organizational Culture and Organizational Performance in Public Sector: Evidence from KSA. *International Journal of Business & Management Science*, 7(1), 67 - 77.
- Alshamari, S. (2017). Organisational Culture and Organisational Performance in Qatar's Primary Health Care Sector: A proposed theoretical framework. *Cross-Cultural Management Journal*, 19(2), 129-137.
- Baird, K.M. and Harrison, L.H. (2015). The association between organisational culture and the use of management initiatives in the public sector. *Financial Accountability & Management*, 33(3), 311-329.
- Bhuvanaiah, T. and Raya, R.P. (2014). Employee engagement: Key to Organisation success. *Journal of Indian Management*, 61-71.
- Brenyah, R.S. and Obuobisa-Darko, T. (2017). Organisational culture and employee engagement within the Ghanaian public sector. *Review of Public Administration and Management*, 5(03), 1-7.
- Dajani, M.A.Z. (2015). The impact of employee engagement on job performance and organisational commitment in the Egyptian Banking Sector. *Journal of Business and Management Sciences*, 3 (5), 138-147.
- Dash, S.P. and Roy, S. (2020). Role of Human Capital in Organisational Performance: A Theoretical Framework. *Publishing India/OPUS*, 11(2), 1-26.
- Fourie, D. and Poggenpoel, W. (2017). Public sector inefficiencies: Are we addressing the root causes? *South African Journal of Accounting Research*, 31(3), 169-180.
- Jin, M.J. and McDonald, B. (2017). Understanding Employee Engagement in the Public Sector: The Role of Immediate Supervisor, Perceived Organisational Support, and Learning Opportunities. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 47(8), 881-879.
- Khan, B.A. and Naeem, H. (2018). Measuring the impact of soft and hard quality practices on service innovation and organisational performance. *Total Quality Management & Business*

-
- Excellence*, 29(11-12),1402-1426.
- Little, B. and Little, P. (2006). Employee engagement: Conceptual issues. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications and Conflict*, 10(1),11-120.
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2011). Organisational Culture-Performance Relationships: Views of Excellence and Theory Z. *National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal*, 29(4), 1-10.
- Markos, S and Sridevi, S. (2010). Employee engagement: The key to improving performance. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5 (02), 89-95.
- Mohapatra, M. and Sharma, B.R. (2010). Study of employee engagement and its predictors in an Indian public sector undertaking. *Global business review*, 11(2), 281-301.
- Murthy, T. P. (2021). Employee Engagement – A Theoretical Perspective. *International Journal for Research in Engineering, Application & Management*, 6(12), 96-105.
- Najeemdeen, I.S., Abidemi, B.T., Rahmat, F. D. and Bulus, B.D. (2018). Perceived organisational culture and perceived organisational support on work engagement. *Academic Journal of Economic Studies*, 4(3), 199-208.
- Nikpour, A. (2017). The impact of organisational culture on organisational performance: The mediating role of employee's organisational commitment. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 6, 65-72.
- Pepra-Mensah, J. and Kreremeh, E.M. (2018). Organisational culture: A catalyst for employee engagement in the Ghanaian Public Sector. *Global Journal of Human Resources Management*, 6(3), 11-28.
- Rezaei, G., Mardani, A., Senin, A.A., Wong, K.Y., Sadeghi, L., Najmi, M. and Shaharoun, A.M. (2018). Relationship between a culture of excellence and organisational performance in Iranian manufacturing companies. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 29(1-2), 94-115.
- Rovis, S.S.N., Sayadi, S., Pourkiani, M. and Abbasi, F.B. (2020). A theoretical framework based on organisational culture and personnel values: A case study of Bandar Imam Petrochemicals. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 8(3), 1-17.
- South Africa. Statistics South Africa. (2022). Quarterly Labour Force Survey- Quarter 1. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- South Africa. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108, 1996. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Srinivasan, D. (2019). A Study on the Conceptual Framework of Employee Engagement. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(3), 28-33
- Sun, L. and Bunchapattanasakda, C. (2019). Employee Engagement: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Human Resources Studies*, 9(1), 63-80.
- Tandon, P., Mishra, S. and Mehta, J.D. (2018). A theoretical Framework on Organisational Culture Dimensions. *Journal of Management Research and Analysis*, 5(4), 263-269.
- Thompson, A.A., Peteraf, M.A., Gamble, J.E. and Strickland III, A.J. (2016). *Crafting & executing strategy: The quest for competitive advantage concepts and cases* (20th ed). New York: McGraw Hill Education.
- Triguero-Sánchez, R., Peña-Vinces, J. and Guillen, J. (2018). How to improve firm performance through employee diversity and organisational culture? *Revista Brasileira de Gestão de Negócios*, 20(3), 378-400.
- Truss, C., Shantz, A., Soane, E., Alfes, K. and Delbridge, R. (2013). Employee engagement, organisational performance and individual well-being: exploring the evidence, developing the theory. *The International Journal of Human Resources Management*, 24 (14), 2657-
-

2668.

- Tsai, C.J., Edwards, P. and Sengupta, S. (2010). The associations between organisational performance, employee attitudes and human resource management practices: An empirical study of small businesses. *Journal of General Management*, 36(1),1-20.
- Uluskan, M., Godfrey, A.B. and Joines, J.A. (2017). Integrating Six Sigma to Traditional Quality Management Theory: an empirical study on organisational performance. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 28(13-14),1526-1543.
- Wambugu, L.W. (2014). Effects of Organisational Culture on Employee Performance (Case Study of Wartsila – Kipevu li Power Plant). *European Journal of Business Management*, 6(32), 80- 92.
- Warrick, D.D. (2017). What leaders need to know about organisational culture? *Business Horizons- Journal of the Kelley School of Business*, 60(1), 395-404.
- Werner, A., Bagrain, J., Cunningham, P., Pieterse-Landman, E., Potgieter, T. and Viedge, C. (2011). *Organisational Behaviour: A Contemporary South African Perspective* (3rd ed). Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.