



THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Elton Vakira

Lupane State University, Department of Human Capital Development, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Nemashakwe Paul 

Catholic University of Zimbabwe, Department of Business Management, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
paulnemashakwe@cuz.ac.zw

Njabulo Ndlovu

Lupane State University, Department of Human Capital Development, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Abstract

Employee engagement is an important component that enlarges the organisational outcome and is linked with high-performance work systems. However, despite the importance of employee engagement, organisations globally are facing a serious crisis of employee disengagement which negatively impacts the survival and success of the companies. Despite a dearth of literature about the effect of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) on employee engagement, organisations that endeavour to improve their performance may apply a combination of HR systems to enhance their performance. The current study seeks to assess the mediating role of inclusive leadership in the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement. The study adopted a quantitative research design where primary data was collected from a sample of 157 employees of Kubatana Children's Village chosen through proportional stratified sampling. Findings showed that inclusive leadership partially mediated the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement. It was concluded that HPWS such as employee involvement, training and development and employee empowerment enhance employee engagement in an organisation. It was recommended that

leaders should improve the rewards they give to employees and provide a conducive environment and resources for employee development. Leaders should also empower employees and involve them in decision-making.

Keywords: Employee empowerment; Employee engagement; Employee involvement; High Performing Work Systems; Inclusive leadership

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is an important component that enlarges the organisational outcome and is linked with high customer satisfaction (Akhmetshin, Ilyina, Kulibanova & Teor, 2019). Undoubtedly, employee engagement enhances production which leads to maximum output due to the effort exhibited by employees (Radda, Majidadi & Akanno, 2015). Haddock-Millar, Sanyal, & Müller-Camen, (2016) posit that engaged employees perform 20% better than those who are not engaged and are 87% less likely to leave the organisation. However, despite the importance of employee engagement, organisations globally, are facing a serious crisis of employee disengagement which negatively impacts the economy (Mann & Harter, 2016) and organisations in Zimbabwe such as Kubatana Children's Villages are not spared. The current study evaluated the facilitating role of inclusive leadership on the relationship between High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and employee engagement.

Background of the study

Employee engagement has caused several organisations around the globe to lose a lot of opportunities and money. The United States of America (USA) and Canada have the highest number of employees who are engaged at 29%, further to that, Australia and New Zealand are the next in terms of employee engagement with 24% (Mann & Harter, 2016). Highly established consulting firms in the USA reveal that 25% of employees are dedicated to their work. The statistics above indicate that most countries in the developed world are facing serious workforce disengagement problems and Africa is not spared.

Gallup group carried out a comparative study in the context of African countries regarding employee engagement and revealed that most countries are facing serious challenges in terms of employee disengagement (Mann & Harter, 2016). In the Southern region of Africa, the group disclosed that 10% of employees in Botswana are engaged while in South Africa only 9% of its workforce is engaged (ibid). In the same vein, it was also shown that labour turnover is very high in Zimbabwe with professionals crossing the borders every day in search

of greener pastures in neighbouring countries such as South Africa, Botswana, and even in faraway places (Shereni, 2019).

The economic situation in Zimbabwe is volatile and it has necessitated employees to leave their organisations, which is a strong predictor of employee disengagement. A national survey of 5222 employees in Zimbabwe by Shoko & Zinyemba (2014) indicated that 41% of respondents acknowledged that they knew what was expected of them to increase productivity but were lackadaisically reluctant to do so. Furthermore, the survey also highlighted that 53% of respondents were actively looking for jobs elsewhere and only 7% of employees were engaged in their work (ibid).

Several organisations in Zimbabwe are faced with challenges related to employee disengagement and Kubatana Children's Village is not spared (Bhebe, 2020). The organisation is well known for its culture of paying its human capital using United States dollars. However, employees are leaving the organisation highlighting issues such as leadership style, working conditions and stagnant salaries. According to an internal memorandum released in 2021, from August 2020 up to the time of the release of the memorandum, 25% of employees had left the organisation. Further, those who remained with the organisation were actively disengaged. Employees at Kubatana Children's Village are not happy; although the organisation pays employees in United States dollars, and provides them with unlimited Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) and transport services to and from work, monthly targets are consistently not met and several employees are actively selling their different wares using the WhatsApp platform during working hours when they are expected to be productive (Internal Memorandum, 2021).

Additionally, every month the organisation is recruiting new employees and most of the recruited personnel are unaware of the organisational systems and culture. This has negatively affected their ability to meet organisational targets. However, the entity will be compelled to spend some of the money on training of new hired personnel. In that regard, few committed employees are always overwhelmed with work resulting in fatigue and stress. Due to increased workload and unpaid overtime, the relationship between managers and employees is becoming strained. Employees are depicting symptoms of a half-hearted approach to their work.

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) is a strategy that is being hailed as the panacea to employee performance and organisational productivity challenges worldwide (Panigrahi, Mohanty, & Mishra, 2019). This is supported by Huang, Ma & Meng, (2018) who posited that sustainable organisational performance and employee engagement are anchored on a highly-skilled, involved and committed workforce. Therefore, organisations that endeavour to improve their performance may apply a combination of HR systems to enhance their performance, necessitated by employee engagement (Tang, Yu & Cooke 2017). However, there

is a dearth of research in the literature particularly focusing on linking HPWS to employee engagement with inclusive leadership playing a mediating role.

Theoretically, there are limited studies that have been done in upcoming countries in terms of economic development, particularly in Africa, focusing on the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement facilitated by inclusive leadership. A couple of studies on HPWS have been done in China, Brazil, India and Austria such as Bücken et al. (2015); Muduli, Verma, & Datta, (2016); Lv & Xu (2018); Huang et al. (2018); Cooke et al. (2019) and Machnik (2020). Therefore, the current study seeks to assess the mediating role of inclusive leadership on the association between HPWS and employee engagement at Kubatana Children's Village in Zimbabwe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement

Employee engagement studies have been thriving over the past two decades (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). The term employee engagement was introduced in the late 1990s through the work of Kahn (1990) and it has become popular in human resource and psychology literature. Human resources and psychology are regarded as instrumental in augmenting and utilising other resources like capital, equipment, and enterprise. Consequently, employee engagement has become a mantra in human resource management and psychology literature because of its relevance in changing employee behaviour (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016).

Employee engagement was expressed as the yoking of employees to their work roles so that they can unveil themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally during their working hours (Khan, 1990). There are two types of personal engagement namely job engagement and organisational engagement which were articulated in the literature, and they were explained differently (Rabiul, Mohamed, Patwary, Yean & Osman, 2021). Job engagement means that the person is only motivated to do what he/she is employed to do, for example, the person is engaged in the profession of accounting or human resource management, not the organisation. Further, there is a nexus between organisational engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour because employees are more interested in being associated with the entity. Organisational engagement is articulated as the roles and responsibilities and tasks associated with employees in an entity (Saks, 2019).

Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, (2003) described employee engagement as "a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Radda et al., 2015; Rabiul et al., 2021). Employees with vigour are energetic, focused and persistent in their work. These employees are always ready to work even the whole

day because of their strengths and focus. They tend to enjoy their work when they are called for duty (Roof, 2015). Dedicated workers are engrossed in their work and they are proud of their work, to the extent that they are not ashamed of their job responsibilities. These employees are not easily taken away from their work because they do enjoy what they do, and to a certain extent, they are happy with the organisation where they are contracted. Dedication refers to a sense of involvement in work duties and responsibilities (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Absorption means that employees are cognitively connected to their work. Absorption can be articulated as a relevant and positive state of mind that is directed toward work duties and responsibilities (Bailey, Madden, Alfes & Fletcher, 2017). Employees with work absorption are engrossed or enmeshed in their job roles and it is not easy to remove them from their work. These employees are motivated to work for the organisation and they are also happy with their job roles.

Drivers of Employee Engagement

There are several drivers of employee engagement. These drivers impel human capital to be affianced in their jobs and the institution at large. For employees to find work meaningful, they want a work environment that stimulates them to be engaged. Gibbons (2006) after an exhaustive meta-analysis of drivers of employee engagement, articulated twenty-six (26) drivers of employee engagement (Radda et al., 2015). However, the current study concentrated on nine drivers of employee engagement as they are viewed as the most important.

Training and Development

Employees are the bloodstream of any organisation and the most valuable asset of every entity, so the organisation must invest in them by oiling their skills continuously. Furthermore, training and development necessitate personal attributes such as knowledge, skills, abilities, temperament, attitudes and personality. The above-mentioned elements can enhance the engagement of employees and it can spill over to organisational performance (Tran, 2018).

Pay and Benefits

Employees are driven to work by tangible issues like pay and benefits. These motivating factors are important to every employee working whether in developing or developed countries. They coerce most of the employees to report to work on time and accomplish their daily duties. Pay is important because employees would want to fulfil their basic needs such as accommodation and food. However, employees need a transparent system of pay and benefits so that they can be engaged in the organisation. In that same vein, employees need to be paid

according to their skills, knowledge, positions and experience in the organisation. If they realise that the payment system in the organisation lags in terms of fairness and equity, they will be disengaged (Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes & Delbridge, 2013).

Employee involvement

The involvement of employees in decision-making, change management process and collective bargaining negotiations enhances employee engagement (Tran, 2018). It is imperative to note that every organisation which is looking forward to extending its tents economically should make sure that employee involvement is a critical wheel that carries the success of the organisation.

Health and Safety

Maslow's hierarchy of needs indicates that at a certain level, employees need security, hence in an organisational view, health and safety are the components that are considered by employees. If employees feel safe at work, it will be easy for them to be positively involved in their work and the organisation they are contracted to (Tran, 2018). In organisations where employees feel a strong emotional bond with the organisation, absenteeism is reduced, fewer accidents are experienced, production increases and in turn, more profits are generated (Truss et al., 2013).

Work-life balance

Work-life balance has been a topical issue in the corporate world and governments. Most employees, especially in the 21st century, appreciate work-life balance more than money (Meenakshi, 2013). It is imperative to note that, work-life balance is not an expense to the organisation but it triggers more energy to employees when they are reverting to their work roles. Employees with proper work-life balance do not suffer from burnout and stress which can spill over to negative behaviour at work. This ultimately strengthens employee loyalty and productivity.

Working conditions

Employees are most likely to be engaged in their work and organisation if their work environment is safe and feel like they have support from their workmates and management. In addition to the above, the support of management means a lot to employees (Javed, Muhammad, Raza, Khan & Arjoon, 2017). In the 21st century, employees consider leader inclusiveness as one of the ingredients which necessitate a safe working environment.

Employees need leaders who are open, available and accessible when they want help (Ali, 2017).

Leadership

Employees are more engaged in their organisation if they have a strong and positive leader. Good and sensitive leaders compel employees to feel confident in their work and their ability to do a quality job. A good leader enhances employees' performance and motivates them to do their best at work (Ali, 2017). Good leadership enhances a good relationship between employees and they are more likely to perform better if they know that they have the support of their leaders and other colleagues (Javed, Abdullah, Zaffar, Haque & Rubab, 2019).

Internal communication

Internal communication is the interaction between the management of the organisation and its key internal customers that is employees. Internal communication shows that the top management of the organisation is eager to pass important information to its important asset, that is employees and other vital stakeholders who support the organisation (Rani & Mishra, 2014). The role of internal communication is to make sure that important information is shared among various departments, in a quest to attain organisational objectives. It should be articulated that, without proper internal communication, employees might be demotivated, to the extent that they may quit the organisation.

Internal communication is an engine which impels employees to accomplish their objectives. It can act as a motivating factor for employee availability and commitment because all employees are aware of what is expected of them in their job roles. Eldor, (2017) posited that communication is a lubricant that prevents corporate machinery from self-destructing as a result of the friction of change. It smoothens the way operations are done in the organisation because every fundamental issue is articulated to the right person at the right time. Therefore, it can be argued that internal communication is exigent in curtailing the number of employees intending to leave the organisation.

Opportunities for Growth and Development

Every normal person needs to positively change or improve be it social life, education and financial capacity. Further, employees also seek opportunities to learn and improve their skills and knowledge. Therefore, leaders need to understand the aspiration and learning abilities of their followers (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016). Owners of production, particularly management need to provide the right opportunities to leverage the skills of employees through training

programmes and policies. Succession planning or managerial development programmes are critical policies that can minimise the labour turnover rate within the organisation (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015).

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) is a set of distinctive but interconnected functions and processes that lead to attracting, developing, and helping to maintain an organisation's human capital (Muduli et al., 2016). Successful employee recruitment allows organisations to respond to market threats and opportunities in a proactive manner. HPWS practices like empowerment, training and reward management augment employee skills, knowledge, and abilities and encourage them to achieve a higher level of service delivery and productivity. Bundling human resource functions together is imperative as it lightens how the job is done.

In addition, Huang et al. (2018) defined HPWS as a set of broadly defined human resource management (HRM) practices encompassing performance-related pay, employee voice and involvement, training and team-based work. When used in combination, HPWS are mutually reinforcing and able to generate superior organisational performance. For example, bundling of employee involvement and training and development is very critical in the sense that involved employees are aware of the objectives of the organisation, hence they know the training and development criteria used by the organisation. In that regard, there is limited jealousy and competition among employees, rather, there will be improved motivation and support between employees.

Dimensions of HPWS

Employee involvement

The business environment is so volatile, organisations need to rapidly change, to remain relevant and competitive. Politics, economic changes, and technology are some of the variables which are necessitating change. Such external circumstances do not allow reliable prediction of the organisational future and creating long-term plans (Jyoti & Rani, 2017). Consequently, management is under pressure for new innovative strategies and to make instant decisions that are in line with the changes which are taking place globally. However, organisations in the 21st century have employees with relevant skills, experience, and abilities that can augment organisational productivity (Abbassi et al., 2016). Therefore, management needs to consider involving employees in decision-making.

Recruitment and selection procedures

Recruitment and selection are the first steps in employing the proper person for the job. Failure to recruit and place the new person in the organisation triggers predicaments such as stress, fatigue, and burnout. It is imperative for the department, particularly human resource practitioners to employ the right person because it protects the organisation from high labour turnover. This process of recruiting and selecting the right candidate for the job is so crucial to the success and performance of an organisation (Saeed, Afsar, Hafeez, Khan, Tahir & Afridi, 2019). The effect of an organisation's selection system or procedure influences the bottom line of the business such as financial performance and productivity (Ekwoaba, 2015). Investors do not want to be associated with organisations that fail to increase their capital, hence the basic thing in business is to hire the right people for the job.

Training and Development

Training is the effort put in by the organisation to foster learning in its employees. Development is an effort initiated by the organisation to improve and widen individual skills for present or future responsibilities (Engetou, 2017). In other words, development is proactive, where the Human Resources department anticipates that the organisation might need the skill or knowledge in the future. Training and development are continuous efforts designed to augment employees' competence. Organisations should make sure that their talent pool should continuously improve their skills so that they can have a competitive advantage.

Inclusive Leadership as a Mediator

Nembhard & Edmondson (2006) defined inclusive leadership as “words and deeds by a leader or leaders that show innovation and appreciation for others”. Carmeli et al. (2010) defined inclusive leadership as “leaders who exhibit openness, accessibility, and availability in their interactions with followers”. Javed et al. (2019) defined an inclusive leader as someone available to subordinates and understandable to employees with ease of access. Inclusive leaders support employees to develop new and novel ideas that help the organisation to be competitive and attract both internal and external customers. In that same vein, inclusive leaders necessitate employees to have access to exigent resources of the organisation, both tangible and intangible, and these variables facilitate employees to promote and implement new practical ideas, that help the organisation and the country at large (Javed et al., 2019).

Specifically, inclusive leaders share the vision of the organisation and also incorporate the input of others. Inclusive leaders in the 21st century are crucial because the calibre of the current employees is not only motivated by money, but they also need leaders who can avail

themselves to employees. Current employees want to learn more; hence this can only happen when leaders are accessible when they are needed by their followers. This style of leadership is of great importance because employees can understand what their leader is expecting, rather than waiting to be corrected. Inclusive leadership is critical because it allows employees to correct their mistakes while they are still doing the job.

Dimensions of inclusive leadership

The definition which was provided by Carmeli et al. (2010) indicates that inclusive leadership comprises three components namely openness, availability and accessibility and these components are discussed in the ensuing section.

Openness

Openness means that leaders have the time to discuss some critical issues at work and take decisions resulting from cooperation and interactions with their subordinates. Open communication invites input which necessitates engagement (Rodriguez, 2018). Inclusive leadership captures the diversity-friendly notion that allows everyone to contribute something in an organisational setup. Employees who can be accessed and participate in decision-making feel a sense of openness to speak their minds (Mir, 2019). Additionally, inclusive leaders who exercise openness to their employees are innovative and creative at work. Openness cultivates a scenario in which people feel a sense of being psychologically safe to voice and bring in new ideas that may be critical to the organisation sometimes.

Availability

Availability of leaders means that when employees are facing some challenges in their job roles, the leader is easily available for help or to give a solution. Qi, Liu, Wei & Hu, (2019) believed that inclusive leaders provide resources that comprise time, information, and support which triggers innovative behaviour. The resources mentioned above indicate that the leader is available and the outcome is innovative behaviour which also propels employee engagement (Mir, 2019). Organisational support theory suggests that the performance of employees depends on organisational support. Consequently, if leaders are available for their employees, it means that employees can get the support they need, which spills over to innovative behaviour which also necessitates employee engagement (Qi et al., 2019). Leaders should be ready to listen to the requests put forward by their subordinates to enhance the level of employee engagement (Javed et al., 2019).

Accessibility

Accessibility means that leaders allow their subordinates to ask or visit them if they have issues that need to be deliberated and solved. Accessibility improves the confidence of employees because they get to know more about their leaders (Mir, 2019). Therefore, if leaders are accessible, it means that there is a noble and exigent relationship that has been cultivated and it augments employee engagement. Inclusive leaders who exhibit accessibility provide beneficial resources to their employees because they can confidently share their ideas (Fit, 2017). In addition to the above tenet, these resources influence employees to be fully involved in organisational work physically, mentally, and emotionally (Qi et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study embraced a quantitative research strategy to quantify opinions (Mohajan, 2020) and to measure variables numerically and analyse them statistically (Apuke, 2017).

Research strategy

The study used a survey strategy, collecting primary data using a questionnaire. Neuman (2014) postulates that a survey strategy is widely used in social sciences. A survey enables cost-effective measures on standardised data to be collected.

Population and sampling

The population of the study comprised employees (non-managerial, supervisors and managers) of Kubatana Children's Village. A sample of 157 participants was chosen using proportional stratified sampling. Firstly, the employees were divided into relevant and significant strata based on the department they worked; then a random sample was taken from each stratum proportional to the relative size of the stratum in the population as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample distribution by department

Department	% share	Non-managerial	Supervisor	Managers	Total
Family care	18%	20	6	2	28
Family Enhancement	15%	17	5	2	24
Service centre	9%	10	3	1	14
Education	48%	60	10	5	75
Kindergarten	10%	10	4	2	16
Total	100%	117	28	12	157

This technique was chosen because of its ability to improve the representativeness of the sample which allowed for the generalisability of the findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

Data analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis with Macro process by Hayes (2019) were used.

Ethics

The study was conducted in line with modern research ethical principles observing the best interests of research participants (Magwa and Magwa, 2015). Firstly, access to Kubatana Children's village was properly sought. Adequate information was availed to potential participants before they voluntarily gave their informed consent. Data collected was used only for academic purposes. The study ensured that high levels of anonymity and confidentiality were respected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 157 questionnaires that were distributed, 138 were returned and were considered sufficient for statistical analysis to take place (Saunders et al., 2016; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The returned questionnaires gave a response rate of 87.9%.

Instrument reliability

The reliability of the research instrument was measured using the Cronbach alpha coefficient and the results are shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Instrument reliability

Theme/ Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach alpha
HPWS	10	0.793
Employee engagement	8	0.760
Inclusive leadership	9	0.939
Total	27	

The Cronbach alpha values were all above 0.7 which indicated a strong and solid item covariance (Saunders et al., 2016; Gerber and Hall, 2017). This showed that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Pearson correlation

A Pearson correlation coefficient was used to quantify the direction and strength of the monotonic relationship between three dimensions of HPWS (employee involvement, training and development, employee empowerment) and employee engagement and also on three dimensions of inclusive leadership (leader openness, leader availability, leader accessibility) and employee engagement. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Pearson correlation values

Dimension	Employee engagement
Employee involvement	0.600
Sig	0.000
N	138
Training & development	0.557
Sig	0.000
N	138
Employee empowerment	0.354
Sig	0.000
N	138
Leader openness	0.573
Sig	0.000
N	138
Leader availability	0.512
Sig	0.000
N	138
Leader accessibility	0.483
Sig	0.000
N	138

The results showed that all three dimensions of HPWS namely employee involvement, training and development and employee empowerment were positively correlated to employee engagement and the relationships were statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. The findings showed that the dimensions of employee involvement (0.6), training and development (0.557) and employee empowerment (0.354) were moderately related to employee engagement (Saunders et al., 2016).

Findings showed that all the three dimensions of inclusive leadership namely leader openness (0.573), leader availability (0.512) and leader accessibility (0.483) were positively related to employee engagement and were also statistically significant at a 5% level of significance. Results of the study also showed that the relationships were moderate (Saunders et al., 2016).

Mediation analysis

To test the mediation variable (inclusive leadership), the regression analysis model employed the mediation process model 4 to assess if there was a full mediation or partial mediation on the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement. Hayes & Rockwood (2019) noted that the mediation should meet three issues which are: firstly, the independent variable should predict the dependent variable and secondly, the independent variable should also predict the mediating variable. Lastly, the mediating variable should predict the dependent variable. Still further, for full mediation to be accepted, the independent variable should be insignificant to the dependent variable in the presence of the mediating factor. Where the predictor variable is still relevant, then partial mediation is accepted.

HPWS on employee engagement

Regression analysis was used to examine whether HPWS enhanced employee engagement and the results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: HPWS on employee engagement

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Employee engagement						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6307	.3978	13.0988	89.8404	1.0000	136.0000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	11.1597	2.2770	4.9011	.0000	6.6568	15.6626
HPWS	.4402	.0464	9.4784	.0000	.3484	.5321

The findings of the current study showed that there is a relevant predictable relationship between HPWS and employee engagement, $B = .44$, $SE = .05$, and $p\text{-value} = .000$ which is less than $.005$. Approximately 40% of the changes in employee engagement was caused by high-performance work systems ($R^2 = .3978$). These results corroborate the findings of Justice & Peprah, (2020) and Huang et al. (2018) who also found a positive effect between HPWS and employee engagement.

HPWS on Inclusive Leadership

Regression analysis was used to test whether HPWS positively affect inclusive leadership and the results are shown in table 5.

Table 5: HPWS on inclusive leadership

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Inclusive leadership						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6096	.3716	24.6131	80.4160	1.0000	136.0000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff.	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	9.6010	3.1212	3.0760	.0025	3.4285	15.7734
HPWS	.5709	.0637	8.9675	.0000	.4450	.6969

The results above revealed that there is a positive relationship between HPWS and inclusive leadership, $B = .57$, $SE = .06$, and $p\text{-value} = .000$ which is less than $.005$. Roughly, 37% of the difference in inclusive leadership was caused by the predictor ($R^2 = .3716$). R is at $.6096$ which depicts that there is a positive relationship between HPWS and inclusive leadership. These findings are consistent with the results of Miao & Cao (2019) and Machnick (2020) who also revealed that there is a strong relationship between HPWS and leadership.

Mediating Role of inclusive leadership on HPWS and employee engagement

Regression analysis using the mediation process by Hayes (2019) was used to examine whether inclusive leadership mediated the effect of HPWS on employee engagement and the results are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Mediating role of inclusive leadership on HPWS and employee engagement

OUTCOME VARIABLE: Employee engagement						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6720	.4516	12.0172	55.5839	2.0000	135.0000	.0000
Model						
	Coeff.	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	9.0664	2.2555	4.0196	.0001	4.6057	13.5272
HPWS	.3158	.0561	5.6265	.0000	.2048	.4268
Inc_lead	.2180	.0599	3.6388	.0004	.0995	.3365

Table 6 above showed that HPWS had a positive impact on employee engagement, $B = .316$, $SE = .056$, $p = 0.000$, and also there was a positive relationship between inclusive leadership and employee engagement, $B = .218$, $SE = .06$, $p = 0.000$. HPWS had a positive

impact on employee engagement in the presence of the mediator, which is consistent with the rules of partial mediation. Roughly, 45% of the difference in employee engagement was necessitated by the independent variable ($R^2 = .4516$). The findings uncovered that HPWS had a positive association with employee engagement without being interceded by inclusive leadership. As such, inclusive leadership partially mediated the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement. Therefore, it can be assumed that inclusive leadership partly arbitrates the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement.

Direct and Indirect effect

The indirect effect was established using PROCESS macro version 4 (Hayes, 2019) and the results are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Direct and indirect effect of X on Y

The direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
.3158	.0561	5.6265	.0000	.2048	.4268	.4524
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Inc_lead	.1245	.0432	.0281	.1984		

The results indicated that the indirect results were partly positive, $B = .1245$, $SE = .04$. The direct result was relevant in the attendance of the mediator with $B = .3158$ and $SE = .06$. From the total effect contributed by HPWS and inclusive leadership, the predictor variable contributed 31.58%, and the mediator variable contributed 12.45%, which confirmed that the indirect results were partly relevant. It can be highlighted that HPWS had a direct impact on employee engagement. The above assertion is accepted because allowing employees to be involved and receive training positively thrusts them to reciprocate through engagement.

The results of indirect effect were low; $B = .1245$, which showed that HPWS can directly impact employee engagement. However, inclusive leadership is of critical importance because it creates room for negotiation between employees and their leaders. Furthermore, inclusive leadership is of paramount importance because it allows workers to be psychologically safe. The above results were expected because inclusive leadership motivates employees to be close to their supervisors, in that manner, challenges to do with work and life in general can be resolved by the leader. In that case, employee engagement can be enhanced which allows

improvement of organisational performance. Therefore, it can be highlighted that inclusive leadership partly facilitates the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that HPWS had a significant predictive effect on employee engagement. As such it can be concluded that High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) such as employee involvement, training and development and employee empowerment enhance employee engagement in an organisation. The study assessed the mediation role of inclusive leadership on the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement and concluded that inclusive leadership partially mediates the relationship between HPWS and employee engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance employee engagement, leaders should improve the rewards they give to employees. Leaders should continuously identify the best performers to recognise and reward them. This will motivate them and encourage them to continuously exhibit positive behaviour. A culture of unceasing development should be implemented so that employees remain relevant in these times of rapid, constant and disruptive change. In addition to encouraging employees to adopt a culture of self-development, leaders should provide a conducive environment and resources for fruitful employee development.

Leaders should involve employees in decision-making and key activities of the organisation bearing in mind that 21st-century employees have the skills, experience and capability to augment leaders in decision-making. Leaders should not hesitate to empower employees for the good of the organisation. Leaders are encouraged to be open and make time available for their employees. They should be available to help and support employees in whatever way and manner necessary. To achieve this, leaders should be accessible to employees as this improves the confidence of employees in their leaders. All this will cultivate an environment where employees feel psychologically safe with their leaders and organisation and become wholly engaged in the activities of the organisation.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Since the current study employed a quantitative research design, future researchers may do a qualitative study to ascertain the role played by HPWS and inclusive leadership in engendering employee engagement. The study may also be extended to different sectors so that findings in one sector may be compared with findings in the other sectors.

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