RESEARCH ARTICLE

Internal communication and psychological empowerment: their relation to employee engagement in hospitality industry in Rusizi district

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between internal communication, psychological empowerment, and employee engagement of selected hotels in Rusizi District for the year 2023. The study was quantitative in nature using the descriptive correlation research design. Out of 281 distributed questionnaires, only 242 individuals participated in filling the questionnaire where 38% were male and 62% were female. The descriptive data was analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage, the mean, and standard deviation. For the inferential components of the research, the Kruskal-Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U-Test, and Regression Analysis were used. The descriptive statistics findings showed that the respondents perceive internal communication as very good, and the level of psychological empowerment and employee engagement as high. The statistical results reveal that only age, marital status, and monthly income affect employee engagement in selected hotels. Based on Pearson correlation findings, internal communication had a positive relationship with employee engagement and its dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. All components of psychological empowerment: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact had a positive relationship with employee engagement and its dimensions. These findings show that meaning, self-determination, internal communication, and competence predict employee engagement. The obtained results are not just similar but they confirm findings of previous studies conducted in different settings showing that the deficiency in internal communication and psychological empowerment would lower the level of employee engagement that will decrease performance and prevent the organization from achieving its goals and objectives as outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement is characterized as a unique and multifaceted concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects. It is closely linked to an individual's job performance within an organization (Saks, 2006, p. 602). Employee engagement extends beyond transient feelings like job satisfaction and commitment. Engaged employees maintain a lasting emotional connection to their work and their organization. (Wagner & Harter, 2006). Engaged employees are individuals who arrive at work with enthusiasm, a strong sense of belonging to their organization, and consistently deliver high-performance results (Meere, 2005). The absence of employee engagement has substantial financial repercussions for both organizations and national economies. In the United States, it is estimated to result in an annual loss of productivity ranging from $250 billion to $300 billion. (Rath & Clifton, 2004). When considering factors such as workplace accidents, illnesses, employee turnover, absenteeism, and fraudulent activities, the overall cost could exceed $1 trillion, which is equivalent to nearly 10% of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (Rath & Clifton, 2004, p. 1). Employee engagement is not a localized issue confined to the United States. Its effects are felt in economies across the world. For instance, unengaged employees are estimated to cost the German economy $263 billion annually (Merre, 2005), the Australian economy $4.9

billion dollars each year (Gopal, 2003), and the Asian market more than $2.5 billion annually (Ratanjee, 2005). The evidence presented in the text underscores the significant financial harm that results from a lack of employee engagement within organizations. This underscores the imperative for organizations to prioritize and invest in strategies that cultivate employee engagement, ultimately leading to enhanced productivity and improved financial performance. "The International Hospitality and Tourism Institute's 2012 report indicated that the hospitality industry experienced lower retention rates, attributed to employee disengagement, with figures of 30% in the UK and 31% in the US (IHTI, 2012)." In Rwanda, Achieng, Kule, Jaya (2016) concluded that involving employees in decision making and in planning processes within the hotel enhances employee engagement. Many organizations are increasingly turning their focus towards employee engagement as a promising approach to enhance staff retention and boost productivity (Lockwood, 2007). Surprisingly, there is a noticeable dearth of academic research on the subject of employee engagement (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006). Macey and Schneider (2008) noted that the shift of attention to employee engagement is relatively recent, transitioning from practical application to inclusion in academic literature. While human resource researchers and practitioners are being called upon to take on a more significant role in crafting strategies to enhance engagement, and employee engagement is being integrated into organizational strategic

planning, there remains a lack of substantial research on effective methods to cultivate employee engagement. While the research affirming the potential significance of employee engagement is well-established, there is a noticeable lack of research concerning the methods to foster employee engagement. This gap in knowledge has created a deficiency of guidance for future research and practical efforts aimed at promoting employee engagement within organizations. Motivated by these observations, the researcher aims to investigate how managers can sustain or enhance their employees' engagement.

Objective of the study

This study sought to determine the relationship between internal communication, psychological empowerment and employee engagement. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- How do employees in the hotel industry perceive the clarity and effectiveness of communication channels within the hospitality industry in Rusizi district?
- What is the perceived level of meaning employees associate with their work in the hospitality industry in Rusizi district?
- To what extent do employee's express dedication to their roles and responsibilities within the the hospitality industry in Rusizi district?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

References to employee engagement are often associated with survey agencies and consulting firms rather than being seen as an academic concept. In the realm of Human Resources Management, this concept is relatively recent and has only been present in the literature for about two decades (Ellis & Sorensen, 2007; Melcrum Publishing, 2005; Rafferty, Maben, West & Robinson, 2005). The concept of employee engagement originates from two established academic concepts that have undergone empirical research: Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) (Rafferty et al., 2005; Robinson, Perryman & Hayday, 2004). Employee engagement shares similarities with and intersects with these two concepts. According to Robinson et al. (2004), both commitment and OCB fall short in adequately representing two crucial aspects of engagement: its dual-directional nature and the degree to which engaged employees are anticipated to possess a level of business acumen, despite the apparent similarities between engagement and these two concepts.

Rafferty et al. (2005) also differentiate employee engagement from the two previous concepts, Commitment, and OCB, on the basis that engagement explicitly illustrates its nature as a mutually interactive process between the employee and the organization. The term 'employee engagement' lacks a singular, widely accepted definition. This becomes evident when examining the various definitions put forth by three prominent research organizations in the field of human resources, not to mention the diversity of definitions proposed by individual researchers. Below are these definitions. Perrin's Global Workforce Study in 2003 defines employee engagement as "the willingness and capability of employees to contribute to their company's success, primarily by offering voluntary and consistent effort." The study also highlights that engagement is influenced by numerous factors encompassing both emotional and rational elements associated with work and the overall work environment (Perrin, 2003). Dernovsek's definition of employee engagement characterizes it as active involvement in and enthusiasm for one's work. He draws parallels between employee engagement and a positive emotional connection to work, as well as employees' commitment (Dernovsek, 2008). Additionally, Fernandez (2007) highlights a clear distinction between job satisfaction, a widely recognized management concept, and employee engagement.

Fernandez argues that employee satisfaction should not be conflated with employee engagement. Given that managers cannot solely depend on employee satisfaction as a means to retain their top talent, Fernandez underscores the critical importance of employee engagement (Fernandez, 2007). Engagement is about passion and commitment-the willingness to invest in oneself and expand one's discretionary effort to help the employer succeed, which is beyond simple satisfaction with the employment arrangement or basic loyalty to the employer (Blessing White, 2008; Erickson, 2005; Macey & Schnieder, 2008). Stephen Young, the executive director of Towers Perrin, makes a clear distinction between job satisfaction and engagement, asserting that only engagement, not satisfaction, serves as the most potent predictor of organizational performance (Human Resources, 2007). Following a survey of 10,000 employees in Great Britain, the Institute of Employment Studies identifies that the central catalyst for employee engagement is the perception of being valued and actively participating. This encompasses factors like involvement in decision-making, the employees' ability to express their ideas, opportunities for job development, and the organization's commitment to employee health and well-being (Robinson et al., 2004).

According to CIPD (2006), based on a survey of 2,000 employees throughout Great Britain, effective communication emerges as the primary factor in driving employee engagement. The report specifically highlights the importance of employees having the chance to share their feedback and opinions with higher-ups as the most significant driver of engagement. Additionally, the report underscores the value of keeping employees informed about organizational developments. Gallup, the longest-standing consulting organization in engagement surveys, has discovered that managers play a pivotal role in fostering an engaged workforce. James Clifton, the CEO of Gallup organization, points out that employees who cultivate close friendships in the workplace tend to be more engaged in their roles (Clifton, 2008). Many companies consider employee engagement a powerful catalyst for gaining a competitive edge, drawn by its perceived ability to tackle ongoing organizational challenges such as reducing turnover rates and boosting productivity. Research has further supported this idea by demonstrating that organizations characterized by high levels of employee engagement often achieve positive organizational outcomes (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). Moreover, there is compelling evidence suggesting that the concept of employee engagement is gaining increasing traction in the highest echelons of organizations today. In one survey of 1,800 corporate managers and leaders, 58% identified "creating an engaged workforce" as the foremost management challenge for their organizations (TKBC, 2008). Another study found that 82% of the surveyed workforce regarded employee engagement as one of the most significant issues currently confronting their company (Czarnowsky, 2008). In another study conducted within the hotel and accommodation industry, the Marriott Corporation revealed in 2006 that a mere 1 percent rise in employee turnover would result in a substantial cost ranging from $US5 million to US$15 million. Research in this context has shown that effective employee engagement, whether at the company or hotel level, not only boosts trust but also serves as a valuable tool for motivating employees (Pizam, 2006).

In conclusion, the findings from both Hotel A and Hotel B illustrate significant differences in their overall performance. There is compelling evidence indicating that highly engaged workgroups in Hotel B consistently outperform groups with lower levels of employee engagement, as observed in Hotel A. Consequently, Hotel A has a larger portion of its employees who are completely disengaged compared to Hotel B, which excels in employee engagement. Employees at Hotel B exhibit high satisfaction levels and a strong inclination to remain with their employer, while those at Hotel A are partially disengaged and consequently more inclined to leave the organization. Consequently, Hotel B maintains a competitive advantage, boasting a market share of 43.7% compared to Hotel A's 17.3% market share (Ncube &Jerie, 2012). Many managers in the hospitality industry acknowledge a common challenge: a significant portion of their employees view their current positions as

temporary steps toward more permanent roles. Consequently, they believe that regardless of their efforts, reducing turnover or fully engaging these employees during their relatively short tenure is a difficult task (Renk, 2007). A recent study exploring employee alienation, which is synonymous with disengagement, in 595 quick-service restaurants and hotels, revealed that employee alienation does not affect all individuals in the same way among those surveyed (DiPietro &Pizam, 2007). The authors of this study came to the conclusion that employee disengagement is not necessarily a result of the nature of the work itself (including unfavorable working conditions, inconvenient hours, and low pay), but rather, it is primarily influenced by the leadership style and practices within the organization (DiPietro &Pizam, 2007). Hellriegel, Jackson, and Slocum (2005) emphasized the significance of the skill of giving feedback, particularly for managers who are tasked with providing regular feedback to their employees. In the context of Hotel B, approximately 68% of the employees agreed that the hotel maintains regular communication with them regarding critical issues, while 21% disagreed. Conversely, in Hotel A, only 38% of the employees agreed with this statement, and a concerning 52% of them felt unrecognized and lacked positive feedback. This stark contrast highlights Hotel B's more diligent approach to communication and feedback with its employees compared to Hotel A. It is worth noting that employee recognition and positive feedback are essential components for fostering effective employee engagement. The aforementioned theories presented in this discussion have provided valuable insights into the concept of employee engagement, which have aided the researcher in developing the conceptual framework for the study.

Conceptual Framework: The study is anchored on the following theories: Public Relations Theory by Grunig (1984), Psychological Empowerment Theory by Thomas &Velthouse (1990), and Employee Engagement Model by Schaufeli (2002).Grunig and Hunt (1984) played a significant role in re-conceptualizing public relations by defining it as "the management of communication between an organization and its public". Funded by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation, a team of six researchers (Grunig, Grunig, Dozier, Ehling, Repper, & White, 1984) initiated their research by addressing a fundamental question: "How, why, and to what extent does communication contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives?" Alongside this question, they introduced what they referred to as the "excellence question": "How should public relations be practiced, and how should the communication function be organized to maximize its contribution to organizational effectiveness?" (Grunig et al., 1992).

The IABC research team embarked on their journey to develop a theory of the value of public relations by delving into various theoretical foundations, including theories related to business social responsibility, ethics, and conflict resolution. Their core assertion was that public relations holds value not only for individual organizations but also for the broader society. In their quest to identify the value of exceptional public relations, the team meticulously examined prior research on management excellence and sought to comprehend the essence of organizational effectiveness. Ultimately, the IABC team reached the conclusion that organizations attain effectiveness when they set and achieve objectives that are not only in their own self-interest but also align with the interests of key stakeholders in their environment. They argued that public relations departments contribute to organizational effectiveness by facilitating the establishment of relationships and the resolution of conflicts between the organization and its strategic stakeholders, thus enhancing the overall performance and impact of the organization (Grunig, Grunig, & Ehling, 1992). As per Grunig et al. (2002), the IABC research team also delved into the connection between internal communication factors and achieving excellence in public relations. Their findings, as reported by Grunig et al. (2002), revealed that organizations characterized by organic structures (small in scale yet featuring high complexity structures) tend to possess symmetrical internal communication systems. These organizations foster participative cultures marked by transparent communication practices, which

include elements such as active participation, the provision of substantial information, and accountability (Grunig et al., 2002).

Psychological Empowerment Theory: Psychological Empowerment Theory, formulated by Thomas and Velthouse in 1990 and built upon the groundwork laid by Conger and Kanugo in 1988, presents a comprehensive view of empowerment rooted in intrinsic motivation. It encompasses four core cognitive elements that reflect how an individual perceives and relates to their work role:

Meaning: This dimension revolves around the alignment between the demands of a person's job and their personal beliefs, values, and behaviors. Essentially, it examines whether the tasks and responsibilities in a job resonate with an individual's own convictions (Brief & Nord, 1990).

Competence: Competence pertains to an individual's self-assurance and belief in their ability to perform job-related activities with skill and expertise. It corresponds to concepts such as agency beliefs, personal mastery, or the anticipation of effort leading to successful performance (Gist, 1987).

Self-determination: Self-determination underscores the sense of autonomy and freedom an individual has in regulating their actions within the workplace. It encompasses the liberty to make decisions regarding work methods, pace, and effort, reflecting an individual's control over the initiation and continuation of work-related behaviors (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989; Bell &Staw, 1989).

Impact: Impact measures the extent to which an individual can exert influence over strategic, administrative, or operational outcomes within their work environment. It stands in contrast to learned helplessness and signifies an individual's capacity to effect change and have a meaningful impact on their professional surroundings (Ashforth, 1989). These four dimensions interact synergistically to constitute the overarching construct of psychological empowerment. This theory underscores the intrinsic motivation and cognitive components that contribute to an individual's sense of empowerment in the workplace (Spreitzer, 1996; Spreitzer et al., 1997).

Employee Engagement Model by Schaufeli: According to Schaufeli's perspective, work engagement is defined as a positive and deeply fulfilling state of mind related to one's work. This state of engagement is characterized by three key components (Schaufeli et al., 2002):

Vigor: Vigor is marked by having high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. It involves a strong willingness to invest effort in one's tasks and a persistent approach, even in the face of challenges.

Dedication: Dedication encompasses being highly engaged and emotionally invested in one's work. It includes experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride, and finding challenges in one's job.

Absorption: Absorption reflects the state of being fully engrossed and deeply concentrated in one's work. When experiencing absorption, time seems to pass quickly, and individuals find it challenging to detach themselves from their work. In summary, Schaufeli's approach defines work engagement as a positive and immersive mental state related to one's job, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

The subjects of the study: The respondents of the study were composed of 320 regular and nonregular employees of Hotel A, Hotel B, Hotel C, Hotel D, and Hotel E situated in Ruzizi District during the calendar year 2023. Out of 281 distributed questionnaires, only 242 individuals participated in filling the questionnaire where 38% were male and 62% were female.

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative in nature using the descriptive correlation research design which includes self-constructed and adapted questionnaires that were designed for data gathering. The descriptive data was analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage, the mean, and standard deviation. For the inferential components of the research, the Kruskal-Wallis Test, Mann-Whitney U-Test, and Regression Analysis were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the data of the study, the researcher came up with the following findings:

Internal Communication: The only item which registered a response of *sometimes* and which had the lowest means was the item, "*Admits his mistakes*" (M =3.44). It is not common for the managers to admit their mistakes but the findings show that they sometimes do. The item "*provides me detailed information I need*" had the highest mean (M=3.98). This shows that the internal communication was very good between the respondents and their supervisors.

Responses on Internal Communication

Inter	M	SD	SR	VI
provides me detailed information I need	3.98	.66	Often	Highly Practiced
provides me relevant information	3.94	.66	Often	Highly Practiced
is responsive to employees	3.92	.76	Often	Highly Practiced
invites feedback	3.90	.69	Often	Highly Practiced
dialogues with the employees	3.86	.59	Often	Highly Practiced
provides me accurate information	3.82	.78	Often	Highly Practiced
encourages difference of opinions	3.80	.80	Often	Highly Practiced
admits his mistakes	3.44	.80	Sometimes	Moderately Practiced
Grand Mean and SD for Internal Communication	3.84	.40	Often	Highly Practiced

Legend: M = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SR = Scaled Response, VI= Verbal Interpretation

It also implies that the supervisors often provided accurate, detailed, relevant, complete information and easy to understand for the employees. They often dialogue with employees, are often responsive, open to new ideas, and often invite feedback. The findings of this study are in harmony with the studies of Allen (2008) and Rawlins (2009) who stated that Internal Communication includes three analytically distinct aspects: substantial information, participation, and accountability that require communication efforts. They characterized substantial information by completeness, relevance, reliability, and accuracy of the information given to employees.

Psychological Empowerment: The respondents registered an overall response of agreeing to the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, which is interpreted as high empowerment. Of the four dimensions, however, meaning had a higher mean (4.02); competence had a mean (4); impact had a mean (3.84); and self-determination had a mean (3.82). In support, Spreitzer (2008) stressed that psychological empowerment places an individual's psychological state into focus, which is important for employees to experience control over their work.

Summary of Psychological Empowerment

Psychological Empowerment	M	SD	SR	VI
Meaning	4.02	.52	Agree	High Empowerment
Competence	3.99	.43	Agree	High Empowerment
Impact	3.84	.45	Agree	High Empowerment
Self-determination	3.82	.42	Agree	High Empowerment
Grand Mean and SD for Psychological Empowerment	3.89	.31	Agree	High Empowerment

Legend**:** *M = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SR = Scaled Response*

Employee Engagement: Based on the results, vigor registered the highest mean (M = 4.03), followed by dedication (M = 3.93) and absorption (M = 3.87) which are interpreted as Agree. Overall employee engagement rated the mean = 3.95 (SD = .34) which implies that employees have a high level of engagement. The results are supported by Schaufeli et al. (2006) who stated that work engagement is most defined as "… a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption". In essence, work engagement captures how workers experience their work: as stimulating and energetic and something to which they really want to devote time and effort (vigor component); as a significant and meaningful pursuit (dedication); and as engrossing and something on which they are fully concentrated (absorption).

Summary of Descriptive results of Employee Engagement

	M	SD	SR	VI
Vigor	4.03	.83	Agree	High Engagement
Dedication	3.93	.96	Agree	High Engagement
Absorption	3.87	.81	Agree	High Engagement
Overall Mean Employee Engagement	**3.95**	**.34**	**Agree**	**High Engagement**

Legend**:** *M = Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, SR = Scaled Response*

Correlation Results of Internal Communication and Employee Engagement: It was found that internal communication significantly correlates with employee vigor in selected hotels. It was identified that the employees' vigor, absorption, and dedication in hotels were also influenced by internal communication which is very good in their hotel. Based on the results, it was identified that internal communication was one of the contributing factors to employee engagement. The correlation between Internal communication and overall engagement has a Pearson correlation of 468 (p-value = .000) which was found to be significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between Internal communication and employee Engagement

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT					
Internal Communication		**Vigor**	**Dedication**	**Absorption**	**Overall Engagement**
	Pearson r	.351**	.421**	.287**	.468**
	Sig. (2 –tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	VI	S	S	S	S

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed), VI=Verbal Interpretation, S = Significance

This implies that internal communication significantly correlates with employee engagement in selected Hotels. Based on the results, the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between internal communication and employee engagement is rejected. The result of this study is supported by Krishnan and Wesley (2012) who averred that internal communication has a significant relationship with employee engagement level and it is the predictor of employee engagement level among the star hotel employees in Coimbatore.

Correlation Results of Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement: Results show that there is no relationship between meaning, competence, and overall engagement, (r= .475, p =.075; r = .444, p = .122).

Also, results show that there is a significant positive relationship between self-determination, impact, and overall engagement, (r = .472, p< .001; r = .417, p< .001). Based on the results, the hypothesis that says that there is no significant relationship between psychological empowerment and employee engagement is rejected in terms of self-determination and impact and is accepted in terms of meaning and competence. Generally psychological empowerment influences employee engagement, according to Stander and Rothmann (2010) who specifically investigated the relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement and found evidence for a positive relationship between the two.

Correlation between Psychological Empowerment and Employee Engagement

Psychological Empowerment		Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall Engagement
Meaning	Pearson r	.393**	.501**	.165*	.475**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.010	.075
	Verbal Interpretation	S	S	S	NS
Competence	Pearson r	.373**	.506**	.108	.444**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.095	.122
	Verbal Interpretation	S	S	NS	NS
Self-determination	Pearson r	.253**	.231**	.627**	.472**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Verbal Interpretation	S	S	S	S
Impact	Pearson r	.389**	.142*	.424**	.417**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.028	.000	.000
	Verbal Interpretation	S	NS	S	S

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed) ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Psychological Empowerment		Vigor	Dedication	Absorption	Overall Engagement
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Competence	Pearson r	.373**	.506**	.108	.444**
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	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Verbal Interpretation	S	S	S	S
Impact	Pearson r	.389**	.142*	.424**	.417**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.028	.000	.000
	Verbal Interpretation	S	NS	S	S

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed); ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Comparison in Employee Engagement between age groups

Variable	Age	N	Mean Rank	U	p-value	VI
Employee Engagement	Below 20	30	139.33	13.238	.010	S
	20-29	118	126.99			
	30-39	29	80.95			
	40-49	34	127.63			
	50-59	31	114.55			

Legend: N = Number of Population, Sig = Significance, VI = Verbal Interpretation

Difference in Engagement by Length of service

	Length of Service	N	Mean Rank	H Test	p-value	VI
Vigor	5yrs or less	156	121.27	3.067	.216	NS
	6-10	56	131.07			
	11 yrs& above	30	104.82			
Dedication	5yrs or less	156	123.27	2.201	.333	NS
	6-10 11 yrs& above	56	111.29			
		30	131.35			
Absorption	5yrs or less	156	122.62	.347	.841	NS
	6-10	56	121.87			
	11 yrs& above	30	115.00			
Employee Engagement	5yrs or less	156	119.18	3.095	.213	NS
	6-10	56	134.54			
	11 yrs& above	30	109.25			

Legend: N = Number of Population, P = P-Value, VI = Verbal Interpretation, NS = not Significance.

The dimensions of psychological empowerment, meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination predicted work engagement in a statistically significant way.

Comparison in Employee Engagement between Age Groups: This post hoc analysis revealed significant differences in employee engagement between the 30-39 age group (mean rank = 80.95) and 20-29 age group (mean rank = 126.99) (p = .013) age groups and between the 30-39 age group (mean rank = 80.95) and less than 20 age group (mean rank = 139.33) (p = .012). However, no significant difference was found on any other group combination.

This implies that 30- 39-year-old employees have lower employee engagement than those that are younger. The result shows that age as a moderator variable significantly affects all variables in employee engagement. It shows that there was a significant difference in considering the overall employee engagement and age. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in employee engagement when they are grouped according to their age is rejected. Zaniboni, Truxillo and Fraccaroli (2013) that noted there is a significant difference in engagement between younger and older workers. It occurred to them that the different ways to increase employee engagement tended to focus on the average employee, and not on age diversity.

Difference in Employee Engagement considering Educational Attainment

	Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank	H Test	p-value	VI
Vigor	High School Graduates	87	122.65	2.537	.282	NS
	Vocational/Technical Training	93	127.73			
	Bachelor Degree Holder/Post Graduate	62	110.55			
Dedication	High School Graduates	87	101.50	13.996	.001	S
	Vocational/Technical Training	93	137.10			
	Bachelor Degree Holder/Post Graduate	62	126.16			
Absorption	High School Graduates	87	121.94	11.129	.004	S
	Vocational/Technical Training	93	135.48			
	Bachelor Degree Holder/Post Graduate	62	99.90			
Employee Engagement	High School Graduates	87	114.31	13.936	.001	S
	Vocational/Technical Training	93	141.31			
	Bachelor Degree Holder/Post Graduate	62	101.46			

Legend: N = Number of Population, P = P-Value, VI = Verbal Interpretation, NS = not Significance, S= Significant

Difference in Employee Engagement considering Gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	U-value	Sig.	VI
Vigor	Female	149	112.91	5648.500	.011	S
	Male	93	135.26			
Dedication	Female	149	125.41	6345.500	.235	NS
	Male	93	115.23			
Absorption	Female	149	128.25	5923.000	.041	S
	Male	93	110.69			
Employee Engagement	Female	149	119.42	6618.000	.554	NS
	Male	93	124.84			

Legend: N = Number of Population, P = P-Value, VI = Verbal Interpretation, NS = not Significance, S= Significant

Difference in Employee Engagement considering Length of Service: The test was performed further to discover which of the experience group manifested significant difference in their respondents' engagement. The table 25 presents the difference in employee engagement when respondents are grouped according to the length of service. Registered H-value for vigor is *3.067, p= .216,*under dedication H-value is *2.201, p =. 333*, H-value is *.347, p = .841* under absorption. It appears in the mean rank that employees who had experience of 6-10years has a higher mean rank of *131.07* under Vigor, employees who have 11years and above have a higher mean rank of *131.35* under dedication and who have 5years or less have a higher mean rank of 122.62under absorption. The result shows that length of service as a moderator variable does notaffect all variable in employee engagement. This means that length of service does not affect respondents' engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption. It also shows that there is no significant difference in the overall employee engagement considering length of service. Thus, the null hypothesis *that there is no significant difference on employee Engagement when they are grouped according to their length of service* is accepted. The result of the study is in conflict with CIPD (2006) which asserted that engagement levels go down as length of service increases, asign to employers that they need to ensure that longer-serving employees endure the new challenges. According to Wilson (2009) results show no significant relationship between years of service and participant engagement scores. Thus, workers with over 20 years of service to the agency can be just as highly engaged as those with less than five years of experience.

Difference in Employee Engagement Considering Educational Attainment: The table 26 presents the results of the Kruskal- Wallis test which was conducted to determine if there were differences in employee engagement in terms of dedication when respondents are grouped according to the educational attainment.

Registered H-value for vigor is *2.537, p= .282*, under dedication H-value is *13.996, p= .001*, and H-value is *11.129,p= .004* under absorption. It materialized in the mean rank that employees with Vocational/Technical Training had a higher mean rank in all variables than the high school graduates and Bachelor degree holder/Post graduates. Mean of *127.73* under vigor, *137.18* under dedication and *135.48* under absorption. The results show that employee with vocational/technical training are more engaged that High School Graduates and Bachelor degree Holder in all variables of employee engagement. It shows that there was a significant difference in considering the overall employee engagement and educational attainment even though education attainment does not have impact on employee engagement in terms of vigor. Thus, the *null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on employee engagement when they are grouped according their level of education is* accepted.

Difference in Employee Engagement Considering Gender: The results revealed that there was no difference in engagement in term of dedication when respondents were grouped according to their gender. However, there was a significant difference in employee engagement in terms of vigor and absorption when respondents were grouped according to gender. Male respondents have higher vigor (mean rank =135.26) than female (mean rank = 112.91). In Absorption, female have high absorption (mean rank = 128.25) than male (mean rank = 110.69). The results of this study disagree with Scottish Executive Social Research (2007) where women were found, in general, to be more engaged than men, but they also tend to be doing different kinds of jobs. Women are more satisfied with their work and hold more positive views of their senior management team than do men. They are more loyal to their organization as an employer and report higher levels of loyalty to their customers and clients than men. Thus, there is a significant difference in engagement between men and women.

Difference in Employee Engagement Considering Marital Statu: The results show that there was a significant difference (p = .010) in considering the overall employee engagement and marital status. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in employee engagement when the respondents are grouped according to marital status is rejected in terms of absorption and overall engagement but accepted in terms of vigor and dedication.

Difference in Employee Engagement considering Work status: The findings showed that there was a significant difference (p-value=.046) in overall employee engagement when the respondents were grouped according to their work status. This means that the work status significantly affects the respondent engagement. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no difference in employee engagement when the work status of the respondents is considered is rejected.

Difference in Employee Engagement Considering the Department Assigned: The result shows that the department assigned as a moderator variable significantly affects employee engagement in terms of vigor and absorption with levels of significance of .005 and .036, respectively. It also shows that there was no significant difference in considering the overall employee engagement and department assigned. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in employee engagement when the respondents are grouped according to their department is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Internal communication was very good in the selected hotels in Rusizi Dsitrict. The employees had a high level of psychological empowerment in their daily tasks, which means that they valued the work, were confident about their ability, could do the job competitively and effectively, and were able to choose on their own how to do their job. The psychological empowerment level of the respondents was high in all dimensions: meaning, self-determination, competence, and impact. In general, the psychological empowerment level was high. Employees had a high level of employee engagement in their work, which means they showed a high level of energy, enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride, and was difficult to detach themselves from the job. The engagement level of the respondents was high in three dimensions: vigor, dedication, and absorption. In general, the engagement level was high. Internal Communication was positively correlated with engagement in all dimensions. Psychological empowerment was positively correlated with engagement in terms of self-determination and impact and was not correlated in terms of meaning and competence. When the respondents' profile was considered in terms of educational attainment, there was a significant difference in employee engagement. No significant difference was noted when the respondents' profile was considered in terms of length of service and gender.

Recommendation

After a careful review of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are forwarded to the following sectors:

For Hotel Management: It is widely recognized that employee engagement is a key business driver for organizational success. It is recommended that hotel management maintains continuous improvement of internal communication and psychological empowerment in order to ensure long-term engagement; and keep providing a platform to give staff an opportunity to voice concerns and give their input; be alert to internal and external factors that might affect the level of employee engagement; and be proactive in maintaining a culture of engagement by designing, measuring and evaluating policies that help attract and retain talent with skills necessary for growth and sustainability.

For Hotel Employees: As the human resources are still the most important asset of any organization, it is recommended that hotel employees keep the level of engagement they have and feel free to cooperate with the management in order to maintain the standard; and keep working with heart, hand, and head in order to become productive and successful.

For Further Research: Since the study was conducted in selected hotels in Rusizi District, it is recommended that future researchers conduct similar studies in public institutions; future research should attempt to flesh out the types of factors that are the most important for engagement such as flexible work arrangements, training programs, and incentive rewards in different roles, jobs, organizations and groups; and future research could also consider individual differences as variables that might predict employee engagement.

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