

Addressing Gaps: Impact of Work Engagement on Job Performance

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to systematically review the existing literature on the impact of work engagement on job performance. One objective was to examine work engagement and job performance definitions to develop working definitions for both concepts. The primary objective was to investigate gaps using a research gap classification model. Accordingly, key studies regarding the impact of work engagement on job performance were meticulously examined through a systematic literature review with a meta-analysis, which involved investigating research gaps. The study referred to databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate to examine the impact of work engagement on job performance, focusing on publications from 2013 to 2023. Initially, 33 documents were referred and only 16 were left after screening as the sample. Tables and graphs were utilized to synthesize research gaps across various domains. According to the gap's classification model, four types were investigated; empirical gap, knowledge gap, methodological gap, and population gap. This study systematically identified and classified research gaps, providing a platform for future investigations that enhance existing knowledge. Considering the limitations of the study, several directions for future research are suggested.

Keywords: Gaps, Impact, Job Performance, Systematic Literature Review, Work Engagement

I. Introduction

Human resources are one of the most valuable assets of an organization (Wardiansyah et al., 2024; Linus, 2022; Arıkan & Çankır, 2019). Thus, the success of an organization may fluctuate based on the behaviours exhibited within the organizational context. According to Dhir and Shukla (2019), the misbalance between an organization and an employee's expectations results in disengagement, ultimately causing a decline in employee performance. This suggests that various factors, both associated with the organization and the employees, are interconnected and contribute to the occurrence of this phenomenon. Therefore, exploring the connection between work engagement and job performance is a crucial area of study that has received significant attention because of its important impact on organizational effectiveness (Nkansah et al., 2023). Accordingly, the archival method was applied to study the definitions of work engagement and job performance to develop working definitions of them. The archival method is considered a practical and advanced tool that researchers can effectively utilize in singular or mixed-method studies (Das et al., 2018). Moreover, they have argued that it improves the robustness of business and organizational research. Then the researchers can obtain thorough, complex, and trustworthy insights from past data. However, Miles (2017) has highlighted the scarcity of theories and studies specifically focused on identifying gaps. Moreover, he has acknowledged that identifying gaps is a common difficulty for novice researchers. Ajemba and Arene (2022) argued that acknowledging research gaps provides an opportunity to engage in new or improved research. Accordingly, it is crucial to identify the gaps to enhance the comprehension of work engagement and its impact on job performance. The identified research gaps in this study present an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to make significant contributions in terms of valuable insights and novel findings. Therefore, the question to be addressed through this study is how work engagement impacts job performance, and what are the gaps in the existing research on this connection? The research objectives addressed in this study are,

1. To review existing literature on the definitions of work engagement and job performance through archival method and to develop working definitions for them
2. To examine the key studies on the impact of work engagement on job performance by applying a systematic literature review method
3. To investigate research gaps by using Miles' (2017) research gap classification model, of the impact of work engagement on job performance

II. Materials and Methods

Gaps

One of the primary purposes of the literature review is to identify research gaps (Tsoulfas, 2021; Miles, 2017). Tsoulfas (2021) defines a gap as a need for further examination; it is the same as a missing piece of information or an oversight in one's field of study that allows for future research. These gaps bring to light opportunities that require additional research to expand

understanding, settle confusion, or apply new techniques to topics that have been around for a long time. Miles (2017) introduced a new approach delineating seven core research gaps, which are characterized as follows,

1. An Evidence Gap (Contradictory Evidence Gap) emerges when study results, while individually conclusive, present contradictions when viewed in a broader context.
2. A Knowledge Gap (Knowledge Void Gap) is characterized by the absence of desired research findings, leaving a void in understanding.
3. Practical-Knowledge (Action-Knowledge) Gap refers to the conflict that arises when professionals' actual behaviours deviate from their prescribed behaviours.
4. The Methodological Gap refers to disputes stemming from the impact of methodology on research outcomes.
5. Empirical Gap (Evaluation Void Gap) refers to the conflict that pertains to the necessity of evaluating or empirically validating research findings or propositions.
6. The Theoretical Gap (Theory Application Void Gap) focuses on addressing theoretical deficiencies in previous research.
7. A Population Gap occurs when underserved populations remain unstudied, leading to gaps in knowledge about their experiences and needs.

Work Engagement

The terms 'personal engagement', 'job engagement', and 'employee engagement', are often used interchangeably in research to describe the concept of work engagement (Iddagoda *et al.*, 2015). Table 1 includes the definitions of work engagement by applying the archival method.

Table 1 Definitions of Work Engagement

Author(s), Year	Definitions	Comments
(Khan, 1990)	Personal engagement refers to the synchronization of individuals' personal identities with their roles and duties within the organization.	The term "personal engagement" refers to how individuals adjust to align with their roles in an organization, encompassing both engagement and disengagement.
(Maslach <i>et al.</i> , 2001)	Engagement was defined as the antithesis of burnout, characterized by a state of vigour, involvement, and efficiency.	Engagement was seen as the opposite of burnout.
(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004)	Engagement is a positive mental state linked to work, characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption.	Work engagement and burnout are clearly separate concepts.
(Macey & Schneider, 2008)	Employee engagement is described as an ideal condition aligned with organizational objectives, encompassing involvement, dedication, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and vitality. It involves both behavioural actions and attitudinal aspects.	Employee engagement excludes models of behaviour centred around withdrawal, maladaptive behaviour, or other forms of disengagement from consideration. It comprises two primary components: attitudinal and behavioural.
(Shuck & Wollard, 2010)	Employee engagement refers to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state of an individual employee, directed towards achieving desired organizational objectives.	Employee engagement encompasses three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. It is often regarded as an antecedent, influencing various outcomes within the organizational context.
(Robbins & Judge, 2013)	The degree to which an individual is enthusiastic, satisfied, and involved in the work they perform.	Engaged employees are deeply passionate about their work and feel strongly connected to their organization.
(Iddagoda <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Employee engagement refers to the extent to which a worker invests themselves mentally, emotionally, and behaviourally in their workplace and the organization overall.	Employees engage with their jobs and organization, as researchers identify three dimensions of employee engagement: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural involvement.
(Fadhilah <i>et al.</i> , 2022)	Employ engagement ensures the employees' commitment to achieving the goals of the organization.	This helps the employees with the resources and support to achieve the goal.

Source: Developed by the researchers based on literature

In 1990, Khan employed the phrase "personal engagement" at the outset of the concept. According to Saks (2006), there exists a significant difference between individual job engagement and organizational engagement. According to Bakker and team (2008), work engagement and employee engagement do not exhibit a significant difference. However, Iddagoda and team (2015) favoured employee engagement within both the job and the organization over work engagement. Employee engagement stands as a primary focus for practitioners in psychology and business fields (Mercurio, 2015), yet it lacks a precise definition (Iddagoda *et al.*, 2015). Chandel (2018) expresses the same, that there is a lack of consensus on a standard definition for employee engagement. It is highlighted in Table 1.

Khan introduced the term "personal engagement" in 1990, describing how individuals either include or exclude themselves when fulfilling job roles. He coined this term for the first time, defining it as the process of aligning individual members of an organization with their responsibilities within the organization. Furthermore, in order to effectively carry out the function, personal engagement necessitates a connection on all levels, including the physical, cognitive, and emotional categories. This indicates that persons are not only physically present and actively immersed in the tasks they are performing, but that they are also cognitively focused and emotionally invested in the activities. As a result of such engagement, individuals are able to discover meaning and purpose in their jobs, which indicates that there is a strong congruence between their personal and professional identities. When individuals believe that their personal beliefs and ambitions are mirrored in their professional obligations, they experience higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. This alignment leads to higher levels of overall performance.

In 2001, Maslach and team differentiated engagement from other constructs in organizational psychology such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job involvement and defined engagement as the opponent of burnout, characterized by vigour, involvement, and efficiency. However, the absence of burnout does not necessarily imply that the employee is engaged in work. Although not being burned out shows that someone is not suffering from the negative consequences of ongoing stress and fatigue, it does not imply that they are involved in their profession. Even though employees are not showing signs of burnout, they may lack the enthusiasm, drive, and sense of fulfilment that define true engagement. Hence, these are two distinct terms. Accordingly, engagement represents a positive, fulfilling state of mind at work, characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Later, Macey and Schneider in 2008, deliberately omit models of behaviour centred around withdrawal, maladaptive behaviour, or other disengagement phenomena. Their definition of employee engagement, as outlined in 2008, entails a desired state that encompasses both behavioural and attitudinal components. This state aligns with organizational goals and is characterized by involvement, dedication, passion, enthusiasm, concentrated effort, and energy.

Next, the emphasis has been moved from organizational goals to organizational outcomes. The definition of employee engagement, as articulated by Shuck and Wollard (2010), portrayed it as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes". This concept implied that employee engagement had been considered a significant factor by relating the cognitive, behavioural, and emotional components of employee engagement with the outcome. It was recognized by combining these aspects that involvement was more than just a mental state and included visible behaviours and emotional commitment. According to this comprehensive view, emotionally, behaviorally, and cognitively engaged workers could benefit the company and the individual. Among such results could be better performance, more commitment from the organization, and higher levels of production. Therefore, companies could use employee engagement as a strategic instrument to promote success and a healthy workplace culture by realizing the complex nature of engagement and its possible effects.

Robbins and Judge (2013) defined employee engagement by emphasizing the results that occur with higher engagement levels. Accordingly, it pertains to an individual's degree of involvement, satisfaction, and excitement towards their work (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The importance of highly engaged employees, who demonstrate enthusiasm for their work and possess a strong sense of connection to their organization, is underscored. This underscores the significance of personnel who not only comprehend and concur with the organization's objectives and principles but also actively invest their vigour and enthusiasm in their realization. Employees who are exceptionally engaged are more inclined to exhibit elevated levels of motivation, dedication, and productivity, which ultimately contribute to favourable results for the entire organization.

However, as per Iddagoda *et al.*, (2015), their definition was slightly different. Employee engagement was described as the degree of mental, emotional, and behavioural commitment that an individual showed toward their workplace and the organization overall. The level of behavioural, emotional, and mental dedication a person has to their job and the company as a whole is known as employee engagement. This thorough description includes the behavioural component of actively investing time and effort to accomplish common goals, the emotional component of feeling connected to and invested in the work, and the cognitive component of comprehending and aligning with the organization's aims. It represents a comprehensive understanding of engagement that extends beyond contentment with one's work to include a more profound degree of commitment and involvement, all of which are essential for creating a productive workplace and accelerating organizational success.

According to Fadhilah *et al.*, (2022), employee engagement provides a systematic framework and resources to motivate and empower employees to achieve their maximum potential. Employee engagement is beyond mere productivity enhancement; it fosters a supportive organizational culture in which personnel feel valued and associated with the company's mission.

Considering all, the current study adopts the following working definition (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) of work engagement; engagement signifies a favourable and gratifying mental state at work, characterized by strength, commitment and intense concentration.

Theoretical explanations suggest a correlation between work engagement and employee performance (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Gruman & Saks, 2011). Bakker and Leiter (2010) highlight it as follows;

“The energy and focus inherent in work engagement allow employees to bring their full potential to the job. This energetic focus enhances the quality of their core work responsibilities. They have the capacity and the motivation to concentrate exclusively on the tasks at hand.”

(Bakker & Leiter, 2010)

This implies that individuals who are exceptionally invested in their tasks are more inclined to effectively carry out their duties and make constructive contributions to the overall success of the organization.

Job Performance

Terms such as ‘work performance’, ‘individual work performance’, and ‘employee performance’ are employed interchangeably to refer to job performance (Ramawickrama *et al.*, 2017). Practical usage frequently includes the interchangeability of these terms. Nevertheless, it is critical to acknowledge that they symbolize unique notions characterized by subtle distinctions in significance and ramifications. Although there may be instances of overlap, a comprehensive comprehension of their distinct definitions can facilitate more accurate correspondence and focused approaches to improving the welfare of employees and the achievements of the organization. Applying the archival method, definitions of job performance were added to Table 2.

Table 2 Definitions of Job Performance

Author(s), Year	Definition	Comments
(Lawler & Porter, 1955)	Taken into consideration for both the amount and quality of the worker's production.	Recognition for excellent performance boosts future performance, with satisfaction as a result, not the cause.
(Bass, 1980)	Team productivity is determined by aggregating the individual contributions made by each member of the team.	Individual contribution entails the allocation of individual capabilities, the assignment of roles, and the effective organization of these contributions.
(Hunter, 1986)	In every occupation, general cognitive ability plays a pivotal role in influencing job performance.	Cognitive ability acts as a reliable predictor of job performance, regardless of whether the job is classified as 'manual' or 'mental'.
(Murphy and Kroeker, 1989)	Job performance is viewed as an activity aimed at achieving specific goals.	Achieving goals depends on performance dimensions delineated in the context of work behaviours.
(Campbell <i>et al.</i> , 1996)	Job performance is equivalent to behaviour.	The behaviours are observable and measurable.
(Motowidlo <i>et al.</i> , 1997)	The overall expected organizational value for each specific behavioural occurrence that an individual engages in within a set timeframe.	The assumption is that job performance encompasses behaviour, unfolds episodically, undergoes assessment, and is multifaceted.
(Motowidlo, 2003)	The aggregate expected value of an individual's distinct behavioural events over a specific duration.	Performance is a fundamental aspect of behaviour.
(Pushpakumari, 2008)	The degree of effort and energy dedicated to an employee's job duties.	It is presumed that the skills and abilities of employees stay reasonably stable.
(Campbell & Wiernik, 2015)	Genuine attempts are made by individuals to support the goals of the organization.	It encompasses all individual acts that, in varying degrees, help the organization achieve its objectives.
(Augustrianto <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	A record of the activities and tasks finished in a certain amount of time.	It is measurable.
(Jabeen & Rahim, 2021)	A monetary and non-monetary result is achieved by an organization.	Measured giving monetary values.

Source: Developed by the researchers based on literature

According to Lawler and Porter (1955), employee job performance encompassed both the quality and quantity of their work output, reflecting how well they fulfilled their assigned duties within the organization. This suggested that the job performance of an organization was impacted by the conduct of its employees, which in turn was influenced by the particular job responsibilities they engage in.

According to Bass (1980), there had been a notable emphasis on evaluating job performance, particularly with the identification of a set of variables linked to team task performance. Team performance was viewed as dependent on the extent, interaction, and utilization of capabilities possessed by its members, both individually and collectively. This framework highlighted that the combined individual contributions from each member determined overall team productivity. This framework included how responsibilities were assigned, how individual competencies were distributed, and how these were integrated into the team structure (Bass, 1980).

Hunter (1986) pinpointed general cognitive ability as a crucial element influencing job performance outcomes. This factor was a cornerstone predictor of an individual's job effectiveness. Hunter (1986) emphasized the paramount significance of learning, arguing that it remained crucial even for seemingly minor tasks. Furthermore, he posited that job efficacy was constrained by the learning process. Notwithstanding this, a deliberate effort was being made to shift the emphasis from simple task execution to the development of a taxonomy of job performance that was solidly grounded in theoretical frameworks. This transition acknowledged the multifaceted nature of job performance, which included elements such as innovation, collaboration, and adaptability in addition to task completion. As a result, it demonstrated a more holistic comprehension of the efficacy of an organization.

In 1973 James, and 1976 Smith, as cited in Murphy and Kroeker (1989) engaged in deliberation regarding whether the domain of job performance should be defined as behaviour or the result of behaviour. Job performance was comprised of work-related behaviours that demonstrated goal-directed activities and may differ depending on the specific responsibilities assigned. This underscored the constantly changing nature of job performance, in which the actions of individuals were focused on attaining particular goals and were impacted by the duties and obligations given to them in their positions. This leads to the development of specific characteristics applicable to both general positions and specific occupations (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000).

Campbell, Gasser and Oswald, (1996) defined job performance as synonymous with behaviour. Within this particular framework, behaviour referred to quantifiable and observable actions performed by personnel, which served as an indication of their degree of input. This underscored the concrete characteristics of behaviours that were observable, quantifiable, and evaluable to gauge the performance of an individual in a professional setting.

Job performance is a multifaceted concept that includes behavioural, episodic, and evaluative elements. It was defined as the aggregated expected value that an individual's specific behavioural episodes, carried out within a designated period, contribute to the organization (Motowidlo *et al.*, 1997). Accordingly, job performance involved actions, behaviours, and outcomes employees had undertaken or produced within an organization, impacting organizational goals. Effective and efficient performance contributes to organizational success and productivity, emphasizing its significance in driving business success. Therefore, understanding and optimizing job performance were crucial aspects of organizational management and development (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). According to Motowidlo (2003), job performance was the cumulative anticipated worth of an individual's specific behavioural actions throughout a predetermined timeframe. This clarification underscored it as an attribute that differentiated behaviours demonstrated by identical individuals at various moments and by distinct individuals.

Pushpakumari (2008) defined performance as the level of dedication and effort an employee applied to their assigned tasks. In 2008, she posited that employee skills and abilities tend to remain relatively consistent over time. Subsequently, the literature focused on evaluating individual performance based on this assumption. According to Campbell and Wiernik (2015), individual performance was an essential prerequisite for the collective performance of any team, unit, organization, or economic sector. This underscored the vital significance of individual performance to the organization. Considering all factors, in 2015, they defined job performance as the concrete actions that employees execute to accomplish the goals of the organization. This definition emphasized the pragmatic aspect of job performance, highlighting the specific duties and conduct that contributed to the achievement of objectives and results for the organization.

Augustrianto *et al.*, (2018) and Jabeen and Rahim (2021) highlight that job performance is measurable. According to Augustrianto *et al.*, (2018), it measures the activities and the tasks completed within a given period of time while Jabeen and Rahim (2021) give monetary value to them.

The notion of job performance has evolved since its initial focus on evaluating the quantity and quality of production to now encompass various factors such as the contributions of individuals and teams, cognitive capabilities, goal orientation, observable behaviours, organizational value, effort, and alignment with organizational objectives. This development signifies an expanded comprehension of job performance that incorporates ineffable elements like collaboration, problem-solving, and congruence with the mission and values of the organization, in addition to concrete work outcomes. Then the working definition of job performance is, the behaviours and actions, both financial and non-financial, revealed by employees and employers within a specified timeframe, aimed at achieving the objectives of the organization.

Systematic Literature Review

Systematic literature review is a methodical way of combining scientific knowledge to answer a certain research objective (Lamé, 2019). Khan *et al.*, (2003) outlined a methodical five-step process for conducting a systematic literature review. The steps are, coming up with review questions, finding applicable research, judging the quality of the studies that were chosen, putting all the evidence together, and figuring out what the results mean.

First, clear and two focused questions were crafted to guide the review's scope. They were, what are the key studies available on the impact of work engagement on job performance? And what are the research gaps identified in the impact of work engagement on job performance? Then, an extensive search was conducted to find relevant studies. A careful approach was adopted, with emphasis on accessing credible web databases, notably Google Scholar and ResearchGate. These databases were chosen to ensure access to the most relevant and recent articles from 2013 to 2023. Recognizing the dynamic nature of research, the review was limited to the past decade to incorporate the latest insights and developments.

The search targeted specific terms like 'work engagement,' 'job performance,' 'research gaps,' and 'impact' to retrieve directly relevant information. Several articles during the last decade were selected from the two databases. Additionally, three electronic books were consulted to complement the search process. All of the studies that are included were carried out in the English language and are accessible as full-text papers. However, one duplicate article, 'The Impact of Employee Engagement on Job Performance of Executives in a Selected Five-star Hotel in Colombo District, Sri Lanka' was identified and excluded. Titles containing phrases such as 'influence,' 'impact,' or 'effect' were given particular attention during screening. Abstracts were reviewed if these terms were not explicitly mentioned in the title to confirm relevance. Ten articles were excluded due to irrelevance to the topic, while six lacked relevant data. Once identified, these studies were evaluated for their quality and rigour. When assessing the eligibility of the articles, manuscripts that did not address 'limitations' and 'areas for future investigation' were excluded to improve the reliability of selected articles. Finally, sixteen articles were included in the study. The flow diagram illustrating the included studies is presented in Figure 1.

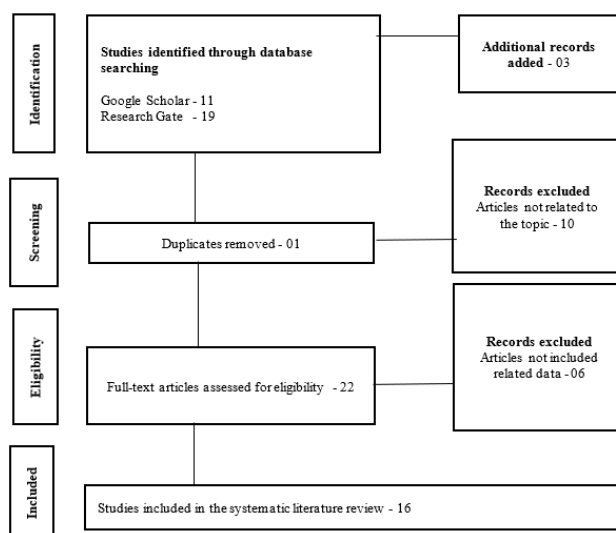


Fig.1. A flow diagram of the included studies

Webster and Watson (2002) stressed the significance of utilizing tables and figures to effectively convey critical findings in academic research. Following this principle, tables were strategically integrated into this study for multiple purposes. They served as concise summaries of key findings regarding the impact of work engagement on job performance, facilitating quick comprehension and comparison of various studies. Additionally, tables delineate research methodologies employed across different studies, offering insights into diverse approaches taken by researchers. Furthermore, tables are used to identify and elucidate research gaps within the literature, aiding in the discernment of areas lacking empirical evidence or consistency. This comprehensive approach leverages tables as both information conveyors and tools for advancing scholarly understanding. Table 3 highlights key studies on the impact of work engagement on job performance, aligning with Miles's (2017) research gap classification model.

III. Results

This methodological framework aligns with Miles's (2017) classification, which systematically identifies and analyses limitations and areas necessitating additional research. Following Miles' (2017) research gap classification model, four gaps were identified and summarized in Table 3: empirical gap, knowledge gap, methodological gap, and population gap.

Table 3 Key Studies on the Impact of Work Engagement on Job Performance

Author(s) and Year	Description	Field	Country	Research Type	Gaps for future research
1. (Nkansah <i>et al.</i> , 2023)	Analysed how employee engagement impacts performance results.	Micro, small and medium enterprises	Ghana	Cross-section study	Population gap Methodological gap Empirical gap
2. (Özbezek & Ege, 2022)	Investigated the function of work engagement as a mediator between the impact of member-leader exchange and job performance.	Textile sector	Turkey	Cross-sectional study	Methodological gap
3. (Ton <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	Employee engagement has a significantly positive impact on job performance.	Aviation industry	Vietnam	Survey method	Empirical gap Knowledge gap
4. (Ngwenya & Pelsier, 2020)	Investigated the impact of work engagement on job performance.	Employees in manufacturing firms	Zimbabwe	Quantitative approach	Methodological gap Population gap
5. (Wang & Chen, 2020)	Explored the impact of co-worker and customer incivility on the work engagement and job performance of frontline employees.	Frontline employees from tourist hotels	Taiwan	Empirical study	Knowledge gap
6. (Arıkan & Çankır, 2019)	Work engagement proved to be a more powerful predictor of employee performance.	Participants in the education sector	Turkey	Cross-sectional	Empirical gap
7. (Ismail <i>et al.</i> , 2019)	For employee engagement to affect job performance, it must foster employee creativity.	Respondents working in firms	Lebanon	Cross-sectional study	Methodological gap Empirical gap
8. (Perera & Wijewardene, 2019)	Improved job performance is a direct result of more employee engagement.	Non-managerial employees in Licenced Commercial Banks	Sri Lanka	Explanatory study	Empirical gap
9. (Pongton & Suntrayuth, 2019)	Examined the influence of communication satisfaction, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and job performance.	Faculty members and staff who work in public and private universities	Thailand	Quantitative study	Empirical gap
10. (Memon <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	Work engagement and high-performance work practices influenced employee performance.	Banking sector	Pakistan	Quantitative method	Empirical gap
11. (Sendawula <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	Explored the effects of employee engagement	Respondents from four Catholic-founded hospitals	Uganda	Cross-sectional	Methodological gap

	and training on employee performance.			and correlational	
12. (Sekhar <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	Examined how work engagement affected job performance through the implementation of flexible human resource management strategies.	Information Technology industry	India	Explorative study	Empirical gap Methodological gap Knowledge gap
13. (Omar <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	Concluded that personal engagement significantly influences employee performance.	Manufacturing, education, hospitality and health	Malaysia	Quantitative study	Empirical gap, Methodological gap
14. (Dajani, 2015)	Unlike organizational commitment, employee engagement has a significant impact on job performance.	Bank employees from private and public banks	Egypt	Quantitative approach	Empirical gap, Methodological gap
15. (Perera & Shashiranga, 2015)	By enhancing employee engagement, a company can boost job performance.	Executives in a selected five-star hotel	Sri Lanka	Analytical study	Empirical gap, Methodological gap
16. (Yalabik <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	The effect of work engagement on job performance is positive and significant.	Clerical employees in the lending division of a bank	UK	Cross-lagged research design	Methodological gap

Source: Developed by the researchers based on literature

Next, a meta-analysis was conducted. The findings were synthesized to provide a coherent overview of the evidence. Table 4 presents a summary of the article count, the proportion of articles comprising the total, the identities of the authors who contributed to the articles, and the publication years associated with the gaps in the data. Finally, the synthesized evidence was interpreted to identify patterns, inconsistencies, and gaps in the literature. Identification of research gaps focused on specific contexts, types of applied research methods, theories utilized, and designated areas for future investigation. This procedure enhanced efficiency in identifying gaps, aligning with Miles's (2017) categorization.

The systematic presentation provides a concise overview of the current state of research, facilitating the recognition of prominent authors and publication patterns linked to particular areas of research gaps.

Table 4 An Overview of Identified Research Gaps and The Details of the Articles

Research Gap	No. of Articles	Gap %	Author(s) & Year
Empirical Gap	11	68.75%	(Nkansah <i>et al.</i> , 2023), (Ton <i>et al.</i> , 2021), (Arıkan & Çankır, 2019), (Ismail <i>et al.</i> , 2019), (Perera & Wijewardene, 2019), (Pongton & Suntrayuth, 2019), (Memon <i>et al.</i> , 2018), (Sekhar <i>et al.</i> , 2017), (Dajani, 2015), (Omar <i>et al.</i> , 2015), (Perera & Shashiranga, 2015)
Knowledge Gap	03	18.75%	(Ton <i>et al.</i> , 2021), (Wang & Chen, 2020), (Sekhar <i>et al.</i> , 2017)
Methodological Gap	10	62.5%	(Nkansah <i>et al.</i> , 2023), (Özbezek & Ege, 2022), (Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020), (Ismail <i>et al.</i> , 2019), (Sendawula <i>et al.</i> , 2018), (Sekhar <i>et al.</i> , 2017), (Dajani, 2015), (Omar <i>et al.</i> , 2015), (Perera & Shashiranga, 2015), (Yalabik <i>et al.</i> , 2013)
Population Gap	02	12.5%	(Nkansah <i>et al.</i> , 2023), (Ngwenya & Pelser, 2020)

Source: Developed by the researchers based on data

The bar chart illustrates the proportion of publications that are pertinent to each of the research gaps that have been emphasized. The visual depiction provides a concise and unambiguous synopsis of the allocation of research emphasis among various gaps, facilitating prompt discernment of domains that receive greater or lesser scholarly interest.

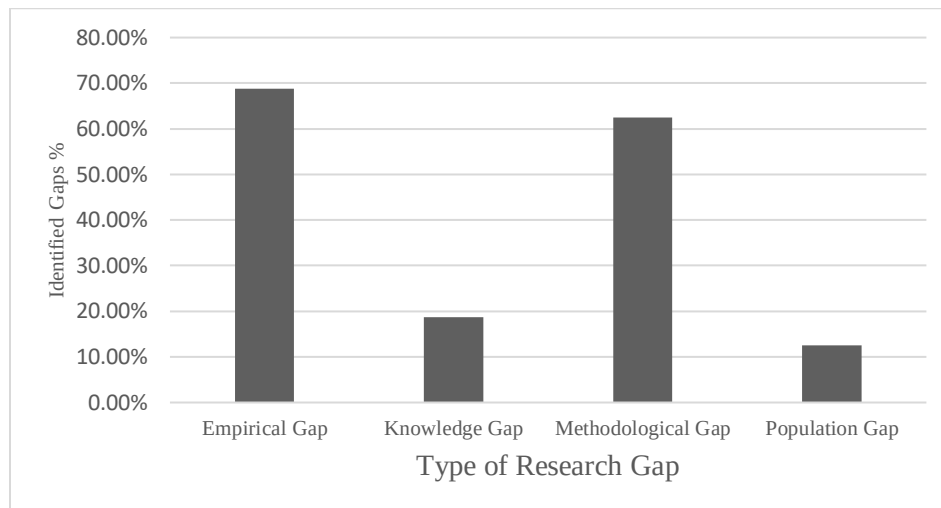


Fig. 2 Bar chart of the identified types of gaps and their percentages

This systematic approach was applied ensuring a comprehensive examination of research gaps in the current knowledge on the impact of work engagement on job performance. Moreover, it provided insights for researchers and practitioners.

IV. Discussion

Empirical gap

The research studies listed in Table 4 were conducted in various contexts, each offering unique insights. Considering the study by Nkansah and team (2023) was carried out amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it is advisable for future research to explore diverse countries or cultures, particularly in developing nations. Additionally, for a more comprehensive comprehension, future research should expand its scope to encompass other sectors of the country's economy, as the study exclusively concentrated on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Ghana. By broadening the scope of the research to include a more diverse array of industries and business sizes, significant insights could be gained regarding the determinants that impact the performance and sustainability of organizations in multiple sectors.

Similarly, the study by Ton and team (2021) regarding work engagement, job performance, and best practices could benefit from expansion by replicating the research and engaging respondents from multiple sources. Additionally, while researchers like Arıkan and Çankır (2019), Perera and Wijewardene (2019), Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019), and Memon and Team (2018) have emphasized the significance of undertaking comparable research across various industries and organizations to obtain a more profound understanding. Subsequent investigations ought to adhere to this suggestion to enhance the comprehension of their results. Through the investigation of a wide range of contexts and environments, scholars are able to reveal intricate patterns and dynamics that enhance the overall comprehension of organizational phenomena and provide valuable insights for the development of evidence-based practices in diverse sectors.

Sekhar with the team (2017) found that work engagement impacts job performance through flexible human resource management within the Information and Technology industry in India. The significance of expanding comparable inquiries to encompass additional service-oriented sectors, including education, hospitality, and telecommunications, was underscored in order to facilitate further scholarly inquiry. Through an examination of these varied sectors, scholars can acquire a more comprehensive comprehension of how organizational dynamics, leadership methodologies, and performance indicators differ among service-oriented contexts. Broadening the focus of research, would not only contribute to the existing body of literature but also offer practical and policy-oriented practitioners and decision-makers in the service sector valuable insights into improving organizational efficacy and sustainability.

Perera and Shashiranga (2015) suggest that moderating and mediating variables must be investigated to comprehend the relationship between work engagement and job performance. Further investigation is warranted to identify potential mediating or influencing factors that could affect the correlation between work engagement and job performance. Such research would enhance our comprehension of the intricate workings of organizations and the results that employees achieve. This type of investigation can provide valuable insights for the creation of customized interventions and approaches aimed at improving work engagement and maximizing productivity in a variety of settings. Similarly, Dajani (2015) emphasized the substantial impact that employee engagement has on the job performance of personnel in the banking industry in Egypt. This implies that similar inquiries should be conducted across various sectors in Egypt. This recommendation emphasizes the significance of comprehending the ways in which

the dynamics of employee engagement differ among organizations and industries. Through the implementation of analogous inquiries across diverse industries, scholars can reveal sector-specific variables that might impact the correlation between employee engagement and job performance. This, in turn, could pave the way for more precise and efficacious interventions aimed at augmenting organizational efficiency and employee welfare.

Finding an empirical gap, in accordance with Miles (2017), is essential to guarantee the validity of research and emphasizes the need to be assessed for confirmation. The prevalence of empirical gaps in the body of current research is demonstrated in Figure 2, which displays a high percentage of reviewed studies that require further investigation or validation assessment. This graphic illustration emphasizes how urgently research is needed to close them. In addition, acknowledging this gap can facilitate the process of persuading funding agencies and academic committees of the significance of the study.

Knowledge gap

Ton et al., (2021) investigated employee engagement and effective internal public relations techniques to improve job performance. Highlighting a new direction, they (2021) expressed that it would be innovative to use quasi-experiments to investigate internal public relations of the aviation industry in Vietnam. The study (Hendrik *et al.*, 2021) can be furthered by future researchers looking at other factors like skill, knowledge, motivation, leadership, job happiness, and stress that affect employee performance. These elements add to a thorough knowledge of the intricate interactions of organizational, environmental, and human elements that affect the results of employee performance. Through investigation of these characteristics, scholars can produce fresh insights and further the body of knowledge in the area, which will eventually result in better methods and plans for maximizing employee performance and organizational success.

In 2020, Wang and Chen examined how rudeness from customers and coworkers affects frontline employees' job performance and work engagement. As stated in the article, this study is the first to provide empirical support for the idea that workplace engagement mediates the association between rude customers and job performance. The identification of work engagement as a mediator provides important insights for organizations seeking to mitigate the detrimental consequences of customer mistreatment on job performance and well-being. It also sheds light on the underlying mechanisms via which consumer incivility influences employee outcomes. Therefore, this study contributes novel insights to the current body of literature by revealing how work engagement acts as a mediator between job performance and consumer incivility. According to Gui *et al.*, (2022), more investigation is needed to investigate additional mediating mechanisms and moderating effects related to incivility. Future research should therefore examine whether work passion or social support significantly moderates the impacts of workplace incivility on frontline employees' job performance and work engagement. Hence adds new knowledge.

Figure 2 demonstrates that a knowledge gap is present in 18.75% of the reviewed articles. This implies that there is insufficient or incomplete knowledge in some areas of the field. Researchers can expand the breadth and depth of knowledge in their field and gain a more thorough understanding of complex issues by identifying and examining these understudied areas. Furthermore, filling in knowledge gaps keeps research efforts from becoming redundant.

Methodological gap

According to Table 4, empirical (Wang & Chen, 2020), exploratory (Sekhar *et al.*, 2017), explanatory (Perera & Wijewardene, 2019), and quantitative (Ngwenya & Pelsier, 2020; Omar *et al.*, 2015; Dajani, 2015) research types were applied to investigate the impact of work engagement on job performance. In 2023, Nkansah and colleagues examined the impact of work engagement on job performance through a cross-sectional study. They also stressed the significance of employing longitudinal and mixed methods study designs to improve comprehension in this domain. This proposal emphasizes the importance of thorough and meticulous research methods that accurately reflect the ever-changing nature of employee experiences over time. It also suggests the inclusion of many data sources and analytical tools to ensure a full analysis. Longitudinal studies enable researchers to monitor shifts in employee engagement, work performance, and other pertinent factors over various time intervals. This facilitates a more thorough investigation of cause-and-effect linkages and temporal patterns. Incorporating mixed methods approaches allows researchers to synthesize findings from both quantitative and qualitative data, resulting in a more thorough and nuanced comprehension of intricate phenomena, such as work engagement and its influence on job performance.

Many of the studies listed in Table 4 were conducted using a cross-sectional approach. However, among them, five studies (Yalabik *et al.*, 2013; Dajani, 2015; Perera & Shashiranga, 2015; Ismail et al., 2019; Ngwenya & Pelsier, 2020; Özbezek & Ege, 2022) recommended future investigations utilizing a longitudinal framework. Nonetheless, for a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand, Sendawula and team (2018) advocated for a mixed methods approach when examining the impact of work engagement on job performance within the health sector, particularly across four mission hospitals in Uganda. Perera and Shashiranga (2015) also emphasized the importance of employing a mixed methods approach over a purely quantitative one in their analytical study on the impact of employee engagement on job performance. Thus, longitudinal and mixed methods investigations are becoming increasingly necessary in future studies. Longitudinal and mixed methods studies can answer complex research questions, reveal causal linkages, and shed light on employee engagement, job performance, and organizational outcomes.

Nkansah *et al.*, (2023) proposed using a bigger sample size in future research to improve reliability. Research findings should have strong statistical power and generalizability. A greater sample size reduces random variability and improves study dependability,

boosting validity and trustworthiness. A larger, more diversified sample improves representativeness, allowing researchers to derive more significant conclusions and practice implications. In addition, Sekhar and the team (2017) proposed that by increasing the sample size and narrowing the focus to specific industries, more generalized conclusions might be drawn. In research design, balancing sample size and specificity may be beneficial. Özbezek and Ege (2022) echoed this sentiment, recommending the collection of additional samples and replication of outcomes to improve generalizability. They further suggested that research should encompass samples from various sectors to extend the applicability of the findings.

As shown in Figure 2, a significant 62.5% of the studies under examination exhibit a methodological gap. According to Miles's (2017) definition of Methodological Gap, enhancing the precision of research designs and methodologies can yield outcomes that are more applicable to a wide range of populations and contexts. Through methodological optimization, scholars can enhance the efficiency of data collection, interpretation, and analysis. Scholars can enhance the reliability, validity, and applicability of their findings and thereby contribute to the advancement and improvement of their respective disciplines through the enhancement of research methods.

Population gap

The study conducted by Nkansah *et al.*, (2023) focused on selected micro, small, and medium enterprises in Kumasi, Ghana's second-largest city. Due to this, it is therefore possible that the results may differ in various regions of the nation. Therefore, it is suggested that further research be conducted in other regions of Ghana to ensure a more extensive applicability. By broadening the geographical range of the investigation, regional variations can be more effectively captured, leading to a more comprehensive comprehension of the determinants that impact the phenomena being examined. By adopting this methodology, the results will be more applicable and substantial in a variety of domestic contexts, thereby bolstering their generalizability.

Similarly, the research on the impact of work engagement on job performance by Perera and Shashiranga (2015) was conducted among executives at a specific five-star hotel in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka. As a result, they emphasize the need to extend the research to include other employees in the hotel sector. Additionally, future studies could select hotel sector organizations to further enhance the generalizability of the results.

The study conducted by Ngwenya and Pelser, (2020) on the effects of psychological capital on job satisfaction, employee engagement, and employee performance in Zimbabwe's industrial sector concluded that higher levels of engagement result in increased employee performance. However, to ensure the generalizability of these findings, the study suggests examining populations with a broader reach and more diverse characteristics. Therefore, the study emphasizes that the population gap is an important factor to be taken into account in future research. To address this gap, it is important to ensure that future research incorporates a wide range of participants that accurately represent the population. This will improve the capacity to apply the findings to a larger context. By directing their attention towards a wider demographic, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the diverse effects and interactions within different groups, resulting in more thorough findings.

According to Figure 2, 12.5% of the reviewed studies show a population gap. Understanding these gaps allows researchers to more effectively generalize events. Addressing population gaps ensures that study findings are comprehensive and reflective of the full population, rather than simply a subset.

V. Conclusions

By examining the scholarly literature regarding the definitions of work engagement and job performance, it becomes evident that both concepts have undergone significant evolution. The concept of work engagement has evolved from a limited emphasis on individual identity and congruence with occupational responsibilities to a more comprehensive and nuanced perception distinguished by its multifaceted character. This modern perspective encompasses elements such as enthusiasm, commitment, integration, and congruence with the goals of the organization, which are indicative of cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects. In the same way, job performance evaluation has transformed its previous paradigm, which predominantly focused on the output's quantity and quality, to a more modernized approach. This transition underscores the intricate and diverse characteristics of work engagement and job performance, acknowledging their pivotal significance in attaining success for the organization.

According to Miles (2017), a comprehensive review of the current literature has revealed four distinct gaps: empirical gap, knowledge gap, methodological gap, and population gap, all related to the impact of work engagement on job performance. This framework furnishes guiding principles for interdisciplinary investigations of addressing research gaps. By employing an interdisciplinary framework, a multitude of factors and dimensions are taken into account, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive comprehension and rigorous examination of these concepts across a range of contexts.

Subsequent researchers may be inspired by the findings of this study to resolve the aforementioned research gaps and carry out beneficial surveys. As a result, the article functions as a significant point of reference for scholars, offering valuable perspectives and direction for prospective inquiries. Furthermore, this investigation serves as a practical demonstration of how Miles' (2017) framework can be employed to categorize deficiencies in research. This model facilitates the methodical identification and classification of gaps in current research, providing a structured framework for subsequent investigations to expand upon and make significant contributions to the existing wealth of knowledge.

VI. Limitations

The ongoing inquiry involves certain constraints that require recognition. The main goal of this study is to investigate the impact of work engagement on job performance, utilizing Miles's (2017) research gap categorization approach. Further research could improve the comprehensiveness of the study by examining the potential mediating and moderating effects on the correlation between work engagement and job performance. In addition, the study was limited in scope as it only used two databases to find relevant publications and focused on a narrow time period of 10 years, especially from 2013 to 2023. In order to enhance efficacy and encompass a wider range of research, forthcoming studies could augment the number of databases consulted and prolong the duration under examination. Implementing these modifications would enable a more comprehensive analysis of the subject and enhance the comprehension of the impact of work engagement on job performance.

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Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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