



EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ENGAGEMENTS IN RELATION TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN POLYTECHNICS: EVIDENCE FROM KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance in selected Polytechnics of Kwara State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by concerns over declining staff commitment, weak administrative practices, and inadequate employee engagement in public tertiary institutions. A descriptive survey research design was adopted with a quantitative approach. The population comprised 3,983 academic and non-academic staff from Federal Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin, and Lens Polytechnic Offa. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 363 respondents was utilized with 314 valid questionnaires analyzed. Data were collected using a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using Smart PLS 4 were employed at a 0.05 significance level. Results revealed that administrative engagement significantly and positively influences employee performance ($\beta = 0.536$, $t = 12.993$, $p = 0.000$), explaining 28.7% of performance variance ($R^2 = 0.287$) with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.403$). The study concluded that effective administrative communication, recognition of ethical conducts, transparent leadership, and staff involvement in decision-making largely enhance employee commitment and productivity. It recommended, among others, that constituted authorities should endeavor to strengthen internal communication systems, establish formal recognition programs, encourage and promote participatory decision-making, and map out ethical leadership training for administrators.

Keywords: Administrative engagement, Employee performance, Work ethics, Polytechnics



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept of administrative engagement has gained significant recognition as a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness and employee performance in contemporary workplaces. Administrative engagement refers to the extent to which organizational leadership actively communicates with staff, recognizes ethical conduct, demonstrates fairness and transparency, and involves employees in decision-making processes (Nwachuku, *et al* 2022). In their submission, Wang & Abdul Rahman (2024) posited that higher educational institutions, especially Polytechnics and Colleges of Technology, where it becomes instructive for academic and administrative functions to operate efficiently with a view to achieving institutional goals, the quality of administrative engagement directly influences employee motivation, commitment, and performance outcomes.

Research efforts had consistently revealed that effective administrative practices, including supportive leadership, open communication, and participatory management, could significantly enhance employee performance in educational settings (Henderson, 2022; Liu *et al* (2024) In a related vein, studies conducted by Lim and Kuah, (2024) in advanced and well-structured countries such as Singapore, Finland, and Australia had shown that institutions with strong administrative engagement frameworks tend to report higher levels of employee satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. In these contexts, administrators are viewed not merely as supervisors but as facilitators who are obliged to create enabling environments for staff to excel in their respective official chores. Situating this premise within the African context, and particularly in Nigeria, the role of administrative engagement in shaping employee behavior and performance has gained higher level of attention from researchers as well as human resource management (HRM) practitioners. Accordingly, Akindele *et al* (2022) submitted that many public institutions in Nigeria consistently face challenges relating to poor communication, inadequate recognition systems, lack of transparency, and limited staff involvement in decision-making. The delirious effect of these deficiencies is manifested in potential contribution to low morale, reduced commitment, and sub-optimal performance among employees. Indeed, Adekeye (2024) led credence to the foregoing submission in the finding which asserted that seeming administrative inefficiency in tertiary institutions, including polytechnics, had strong correlation with irregular attendance, low dedication to duties, and poor adherence to institutional guidelines.



Therefore, drawing inferences from the preceding paragraphs, it becomes important to state that Polytechnics in Kwara State situated within the North Central geographical zone in Nigeria are presumably obliged to play vital roles in the process of developing local technical and vocational workforce. Nevertheless, an evaluation spanning 2 years between 2022 and 2024 conducted by Olorunfemi and Lawal (2024) clearly highlighted concerns regarding employee performance, work commitment, and administrative efficiency. Similarly, issues such as inconsistent communication from management, weak recognition of staff contributions, deliberate indifference to team-spirit, limited transparency in administrative decisions, and inadequate staff participation in policy formulation were reported by Salami (2024). These concerns have thus, tended to underscore the imperative to examine how administrative engagement influences employee performance in these institutions of higher learning.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Administrative engagement encompasses the practices and behaviors through which organizational leadership interacts with employees to foster a supportive and productive work environment. It includes dimensions such as communication effectiveness, recognition and reward systems, leadership transparency and fairness, and employee participation in decision-making (Nwachuku *et al.*, 2022). In polytechnic settings, administrative engagement is particularly crucial because it directly affects how employees perceive their work environment, their commitment to institutional goals, and their willingness to exert effort beyond minimum requirements.

Employee performance refers to the extent to which employees fulfill their assigned duties efficiently and effectively while demonstrating professional behaviors that support organizational objectives (Bakare *et al* 2023). In educational institutions, performance encompasses not only task completion but also quality of work, timeliness, reliability, cooperation, initiative, and adherence to ethical standards. With particular reference to polytechnic staff, performance includes effective teaching, responsive student support, administrative reliability, research contributions, and continuous professional development.



2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This study was anchored on Organizational Justice Theory, which posits that employees' perceptions of fairness in workplace processes significantly influence their attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. Elamin and Ahmed (2025). In clearly instinctive terms, the theory differentiates between distributive justice (fairness in outcome allocation), procedural justice (fairness in decision-making processes), interpersonal justice (respectful treatment by authorities), and informational justice (adequate explanation of decisions). Colquitt *et al* (2001) expressed the view that whenever a crop of employees perceive that their organization treats them fairly, provides transparent communication, recognizes their contributions, and involves them in decisions, such category of employees tends to reciprocate with higher commitment, ethical behavior, and enhanced performance. In the context of Polytechnics in Kwara State, Organizational Justice Theory suggests that administrative engagement practices that promote fairness, transparency, recognition, and participation will positively influence employee performance. It thus provides a framework for understanding how and why administrative engagement should be considered paramount as inevitable input for employee productivity and institutional effectiveness.

2.3 Empirical Evidence

Empirical research had consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance across various organizational contexts. (Nwachuku et al., 2022). Adebayo & Salami, (2024) found that administrative engagement, including supervision, communication, and staff participation, significantly enhances organizational performance in the Nigerian public service. Their study revealed that employees who perceived their administrators as communicative, supportive, and fair exhibited higher levels of productivity and commitment compared to those who experienced poor administrative practices. Similarly, Wang and Abdul Rahman (2024).reported that administrative efficiency and supportive leadership significantly improve non-academic staff performance in Nigerian polytechnics. These findings indicate that clear communication of expectations, timely feedback, and recognition of achievements motivated employees to perform beyond minimum requirements. It further emphasized that administrative



engagement creates a positive work climate characterized by trust, mutual respect, and shared commitment to institutional goals.

On the global landscape, Nielsen and Kjaer (2023) examined administrative engagement in Scandinavian educational institutions and found that institutions with effective administrative practices through supportive leadership, transparent communication, and staff involvement recorded significantly higher employee performance levels. It was argued that such practices reinforce ethical behavior, promote organizational commitment, and create enabling environments for professional excellence. The research showed that employees who felt valued, respected, and included in decision-making processes demonstrated greater initiative, innovation, and dedication to their work. In similar vein, Akinlade et al. (2022) investigated work ethics and service delivery in the Nigerian public service and identified administrative engagement as a critical factor in promoting ethical behavior and enhancing organizational performance. They found that when administrators actively communicated organizational values, recognized ethical conduct, and involved employees in policy formulation, staff members were more likely to internalize ethical standards and translate them into improved work performance.

In spite of the high scale of academic evidence in support of relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance, a higher quantum of research efforts had been concentrated on Universities or general public sector at the expense of Polytechnics. This study addresses this gap by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance among academic and non-academic staff in Polytechnics situated in Kwara State

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a quantitative approach. The population comprised all academic and non-academic staff of three Polytechnics in Kwara State, namely Federal Polytechnic Offa, Kwara State Polytechnic Ilorin, and Lens Polytechnic Offa, totaling 3,983 employees. Using the Taro Yamane formula at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample size of 363 respondents was determined. Stratified random sampling was



employed to ensure proportional representation of staff categories across the three institutions. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire capture demographic information and extent of administrative engagement in terms of recognition of ethical conduct(s), communication, fairness, transparency, and staff involvement in decision-making. Out of the 363 questionnaires distributed, 314 valid responses were retrieved, representing an 86.5% response rate. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4. The analysis examined path coefficients (β), t-statistics, p-values, coefficient of determination (R^2), and effect sizes (f^2) to assess the influence of administrative engagement on employee performance at a 0.05 significance level.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	181	57.6
Female	133	42.4
Total	314	100.0

Table 2: Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
30 years or below	57	18.2
31-40 years	121	38.5
41-50 years	111	35.4
51 years and above	25	7.9
Total	314	100.0



Table 3: Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	85	27.1
Married	229	72.9
Total	314	100.0

Table 4: Highest Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
HND/NCE	58	18.5
Bachelor's Degree	129	41.1
Master's Degree	108	34.4
Doctoral Degree	19	6.0
Total	314	100.0

Table 5: Years of Working Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5 years or less	68	21.7
6-10 years	107	34.1
11-15 years	94	29.9
More than 15 years	45	14.3
Total	314	100.0

Table 6: Category of Staff

Staff Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic Staff	164	52.2
Non-Academic Staff	150	47.8
Total	314	100.0

Tables 1-6 presents the demographic characteristics of the 314 respondents. The gender distribution (Table 1) shows that 57.6% of respondents were male while 42.4% were female,



indicating relatively balanced gender representation. The age distribution (Table 2) reveals that the majority of respondents were between 31-40 years (38.5%) and 41-50 years (35.4%), suggesting a predominantly middle-aged workforce with substantial professional experience. Table 3 shows that 72.9% of respondents were married, while 27.1% were single. The educational qualification data (Table 4) indicates that 41.1% held Bachelor's degrees, 34.4% had Master's degrees, 18.5% possessed HND/NCE qualifications, and 6.0% held doctoral degrees, reflecting a highly educated workforce. Work experience (Table 5) shows that 34.1% had 6-10 years of experience, 29.9% had 11-15 years, 21.7% had 5 years or less, and 14.3% had more than 15 years. Finally, Table 6 reveals that 52.2% of respondents were academic staff and 47.8% were non-academic staff, ensuring balanced representation of both employee categories.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Administrative Engagement

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for administrative engagement items. The results indicate generally positive perceptions of administrative engagement among Polytechnic employees, though with notable variations across specific dimensions.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for Administrative Engagement (n = 314)

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Rank
AE1	The administration recognizes and rewards good ethical conduct among employees.	3.82	1.08	1 st
AE2	Administrative communication in my institution promotes accountability and transparency.	3.71	1.12	2 nd
AE3	My institution's leaders demonstrate fairness and transparency in decision-making.	3.65	1.15	3 rd
AE4	Employees in my institution are actively involved in decision-making processes.	3.38	1.21	4 th
Grand Mean		3.64	1.14	

Table 7 shows that the grand mean score for administrative engagement was 3.64 (SD = 1.14), indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents. The highest-rated item was recognition and reward of ethical conduct (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.08), suggesting that employees perceive their institutions as acknowledging good ethical behavior. Administrative communication



promoting accountability and transparency ranked second (Mean = 3.71, SD = 1.12), followed by leadership fairness and transparency (Mean = 3.65, SD = 1.15). However, employee involvement in decision-making processes received the lowest rating (Mean = 3.38, SD = 1.21), indicating that participatory management practices may require strengthening in these institutions.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between administrative engagement and employees' performance of Polytechnics in Kwara State.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4 was employed to test the hypothesis. Table 8 presents the path analysis results examining the influence of administrative engagement on employee performance.

Table 8: Path Coefficients for Administrative Engagement and Employee Performance

Path	β	t-value	p-value	R ²	<i>vf</i> ²
Admin. Engagement → Performance	0.536	12.993	0.000	0.287	0.403

Table 8 reveals that administrative engagement demonstrated a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.536$, $t = 12.993$, $p = 0.000$). The positive path coefficient indicates that improvements in administrative engagement practices are associated with enhanced employee performance. The t-value of 12.993, which far exceeds the critical value of 1.96 at $\alpha = 0.05$, and the p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance threshold, provide strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted, confirming that administrative engagement significantly influences employee performance of Polytechnics in Kwara State.

The coefficient of determination (R²) value of 0.287 indicates that administrative engagement explains 28.7% of the variance in employee performance. While this reflects weak-to-moderate explanatory power, it suggests that administrative engagement is an important predictor of performance outcomes, though other factors also contribute to employee productivity. The effect size ($f^2 = 0.403$) confirms a large practical contribution of administrative engagement to

performance outcomes, according to Cohen's (1988) guidelines (f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 represent small, medium, and large effects, respectively).

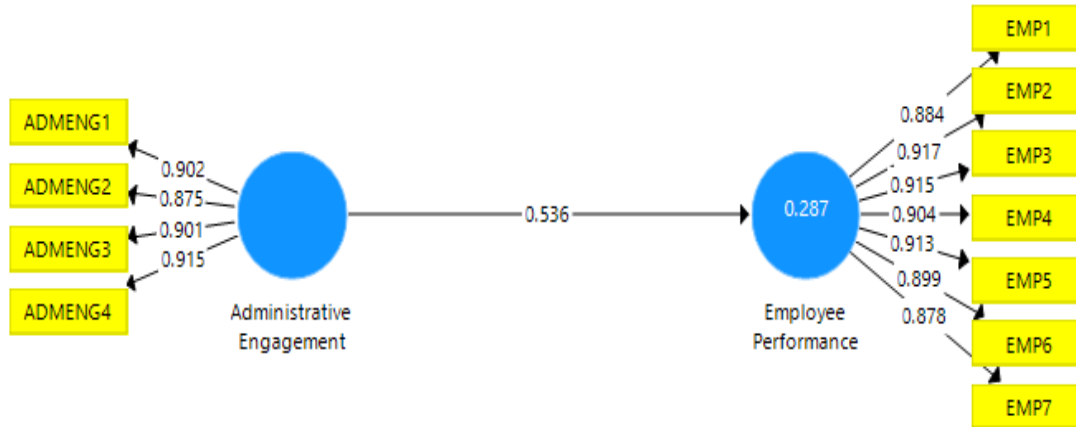


Figure 1: Structural Equation Model (SEM) Path Diagram

Note: The SEM path diagram above illustrates the direct relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance. The diagram shows the path coefficient ($\beta = 0.536$), indicating a strong positive relationship. The model demonstrates that as administrative engagement increases, employee performance correspondingly improves.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The research finding which indicated that administrative engagement significantly and positively influence employee performance aligns with existing empirical evidence emphasizing the critical role of leadership practices, communication effectiveness, and staff involvement in organizational success. The positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.536$) was an indication that employee performance could be enhanced as administrative engagement improves through better communication, recognition of ethical conduct, transparent leadership, and participatory decision-making.

This finding is consistent with Nwachuku *et al.* (2022), who found that administrative engagement, including supervision, communication, and staff participation, significantly enhances organizational performance in the Nigerian public service. The study demonstrated that employees who experienced supportive administrative practices exhibited higher levels of productivity, commitment, and job satisfaction compared to those who perceived their administrators as distant or unsupportive. Similarly, Ibrahim and Adebayo (2021) reported that administrative efficiency



and supportive leadership significantly improve non-academic staff performance in Nigerian polytechnics, emphasizing that clear communication of expectations, timely feedback, and recognition of achievements motivate employees to exceed minimum performance standards. In another dimension, the findings provided additional insights into specific dimensions of administrative engagement. Respondents acknowledged that their institutions recognize and reward good ethical conduct (Mean = 3.82), that administrative communication promotes accountability and transparency (Mean = 3.71), and that leaders demonstrate fairness and transparency in decision-making (Mean = 3.65). These positive perceptions suggest that authorities of Polytechnics in Kwara State have risen to the obvious challenge in making deliberate efforts at establishing a conducive and supportive work environments. However, the relatively lower rating for employee involvement in decision-making (Mean = 3.38), coupled with higher standard deviations across all items, indicates that administrative engagement experiences may vary across departments, staff categories, or institutions.

The moderate R^2 value (0.287) suggests that while administrative engagement is an important predictor of employee performance, other factors also contribute significantly to performance outcomes. These may include individual motivation, work conditions, peer relationships, compensation, job security, and personal characteristics. Nonetheless, the large effect size ($f^2 = 0.403$) confirms that administrative engagement has substantial practical importance in enhancing employee productivity and institutional effectiveness. This finding underscores the need for polytechnic management to prioritize administrative practices that promote communication, recognition, transparency, and participation as strategic interventions for improving employee performance.

The relatively lower rating for employee involvement in decision-making (Mean = 3.38) compared to other dimensions of administrative engagement highlights a potential area for improvement. Participatory management practices, where employees are consulted and involved in decisions that affect their work, have been shown to increase organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and performance (Nwachuku *et al.*, 2022). Polytechnic management in Kwara State should therefore strengthen mechanisms for staff participation in institutional governance, policy formulation, and strategic planning to maximize the benefits of administrative engagement on employee performance.



5.0

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of administrative engagement on employee performance in polytechnics in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings provided veritable empirical evidence that administrative engagement has strong relationship with employee performance. Specifically, the study averred that effective administrative communication, recognition of ethical conduct, transparent and fair leadership, and staff involvement in decision-making are critical determinants of employee productivity and institutional effectiveness.

The study confirmed that Polytechnic administrators could spur employee towards greater commitment and improved work outcomes when actively engaged through viable channels of communication, acknowledging and rewarding good performance, demonstrating fairness and transparency, and involving staff in corporate decision making process. In summary, administrative engagement should be deemed not merely as a desirable management practice but as a strategic imperative for enhancing employee performance and achieving institutional goals in Polytechnic settings.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommended among others that;

- (i)** Polytechnic management should endeavor to establish formal and systematic communication channels that would ensure regular, clear, and transparent information flow between administrators and employees, such as to assure a means of veritable feedback through either placement of suggestion boxes in strategic locations, publication of newsletters, or digital communication platforms capable of facilitating timely dissemination of information and encouraging a two-way communication system;
- (ii)** Authorities should consciously develop and implement structured programs that acknowledge and celebrate employees with track record of strong work ethics and high performance;



(iii) Moreover, management is obliged to consider investing in training and capacity-building programs for all categories of employees in critical areas of ethical leadership, effective communication, conflict resolution, and employee engagement strategies. Such training equips leaders with skills to manage staff effectively, promote fairness, and create supportive work environments that would translate to enhanced employee performance, and

(iv) Polytechnic management should periodically assess employee perceptions of administrative practices through surveys, focus groups, and feedback sessions. Regular assessments enable management to identify areas of strength and weakness, address concerns promptly, and continuously improve administrative engagement practices to optimize employee performance and institutional effectiveness.

5.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study attempted to make several important contributions to knowledge and practice. First, it provides context-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between administrative engagement and employee performance in polytechnics in Kwara State, filling a notable gap in the literature. Second, the combined focus on both academic and non-academic employees across three polytechnics provides a comprehensive understanding of administrative influence on institutional productivity. Third, the application of Structural Equation Modelling offers robust statistical evidence of the magnitude and significance of the relationship between administrative engagement and performance. Finally, the study provides actionable insights for polytechnic management and policymakers on strategies to enhance employee performance through strengthened administrative practices.

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