

**ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE SUDANESE
BANKING SECTOR**

by

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBOS	Central Bank of Sudan
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
EC	Employee Communication
POS	Perceived Organizational Support
PSS	Perceived Supervisor Support
RT	Rational Transparency
IMP	Internal Moral Perspective
BPI	Balanced Processing of Information
SA	Self Awareness
RR	Rewards and Recognition
TCD	Training and Career Development
DJ	Distributive Justice
PJ	Procedural Justice
JE	Job Engagement
OE	Organization Engagement
TP	Task Performance
CP	Contextual Performance
EI	Exchange Ideology
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
CMV	Common Method Variance
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

ANTESEDEN DAN KONSEKUEN KETERLIBATAN PEKERJA DALAM SEKTOR PERBANKAN DI SUDAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan bertujuan untuk mengkaji secara sistematik anteseden kepada keterlibatan pekerja, iaitu komunikasi pekerja, tanggapan sokongan organisasi dan penyelia, kepimpinan autentik, ganjaran dan pengiktirafan, latihan dan pembangunan kerjaya, dan keadilan organisasi terhadap konsekuen (prestasi kerja) dalam sektor perbankan di Sudan. Selain itu, kajian ini juga berhasrat untuk mengetahui peranan pertukaran ideologi sebagai moderator dalam hubungan antara anteseden dan keterlibatan pekerja dalam kalangan pekerja barisan hadapan kaunter. Data diperolehi dengan menggunakan kaedah "*self-administered survey*". Data yang dikumpul dianalisis menggunakan analisis prinsip faktor komponen, statistik deskriptif, korelasi *Pearson*, dan hipotesis diuji menggunakan analisis "*Hierarchical Multiple Regression*". Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa komunikasi pekerja, tanggapan sokongan organisasi, tanggapan sokongan penyelia, kesedaran diri pemimpin, ganjaran dan pengiktirafan, latihan dan pembangunan kerjaya, dan keadilan prosedur mempunyai kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap keterlibatan kerja. Di samping itu, tanggapan sokongan organisasi, kepimpinan autentik (ketelusan rasional, perspektif moral dalaman, pemprosesan maklumat yang seimbang, dan kesedaran diri), ganjaran dan pengiktirafan, latihan dan pembangunan kerjaya, keadilan distributif dan prosedur menunjukkan kesan positif yang signifikan terhadap keterlibatan organisasi. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa dua dimensi keterlibatan pekerja (keterlibatan kerja dan keterlibatan organisasi) mempunyai perkaitan yang positif dengan prestasi tugas dan kontekstual. Selain itu, pertukaran

ideologi bertindak sebagai moderator yang signifikan di antara perkaitan antara kesedaran diri pemimpin dan keterlibatan kerja. Tambahan juga, dapatan menunjukkan pertukaran ideologi berperanan sebagai moderator yang signifikan di antara hubungan tanggapan sokongan penyelia dan keterlibatan organisasi.

Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, implikasi teori dan praktikal turut dibincangkan. Batasan kajian dijelaskan dan cadangan bagi penyelidikan pada masa hadapan juga turut disertakan.

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE SUDANESE BANKING SECTOR

ABSTRACT

This study investigates systematically the antecedents of employee engagement, namely, employee communication, perceived organizational and supervisor support, authentic leadership, rewards and recognition, training and career development and organizational justice and consequence (job performance) in the Sudanese banking sector. This study also examines the exchange ideology as a moderator in the relationship between the antecedents and engagement of frontline employee. The data were obtained by using a self-administered survey. Data collected were analyzed using principle components factor analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlations, and hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The findings indicate that employee communication, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, leader's self-awareness, rewards and recognition, training and career development, and procedural justice had significant positive effects on job engagement. Additionally perceived organizational support, authentic leadership (rational transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and self-awareness), rewards and recognition, training and career development, distributive justice, and procedural justice had significant positive effects on organization engagement. Results of this study showed that the two dimensions of employee engagement (job engagement and organization engagement) had a positive relationship with task performance and contextual performance. Further, the results indicate that the exchange ideology significantly moderates the relationship between self-awareness of the leaders and job

engagement. In addition, it was found a moderating effect of exchange ideology on the relationship between perceived supervisor support and organization engagement. Based on the findings, theoretical and practical implications of the study were discussed. Limitations of the research were explained and suggestions for future research were also presented.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Human Capital is considered to be a crucial asset because the effort and performance of employees ultimately decides the success of any business (Handa & Gulati, 2014). Recently, engagement of employees has become more critical to the ultimate effectiveness of organizations, and the engagement of employees has gained popularity as because it affects employee outcomes significantly (Alvi, Abbasi, & Haider, 2014a; Gostautaite & Buciuniene, 2015; Rasheed, Khan, & Ramzan, 2013; Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi, & Nimon, 2013).

Today, employee engagement has become a critical aspect of understanding and enhancing not only an individual's performance but also the organization's performance as a whole (Miller, 2014; Singh, 2015). In the contemporary business world, organizations demand high performance and productivity from every employee compared to a few decades ago (Sahoo & Mishra, 2012). Rashid, Asad, and Ashraf (2011) believe that employee engagement is a key concept for business practitioners and academicians because proper engagement is relevant to modern-day business practices. Effective employee engagement is seen as a tool to gain a competitive edge over rival companies (Anitha, 2014; Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014). Furthermore, proper employee engagement produces benefits such as increased consumer satisfaction, rising

productivity and profits and decreased attrition rates (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2012; Chat-Uthai, 2013; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Yalabik, Popaitoon, Chowne, & Rayton, 2013).

Saks (2006) defined engagement as a distinct, unique concept comprising cognition, emotion and behaviour, all of which are linked to individual role performance. In addition, engagement is distinguishable from other aspects such as organizational citizenship behaviour, involvement, and commitment.

Almost all organizations today recognise that employee engagement provides their company with a competitive advantage (Anitha, 2014; Rodriguez & Shaw, 2014; Saks & Gruman, 2014). They are also aware that good employee engagement leads to increased performance, productive and profits and such outcomes are highly valued, especially during an economic decline (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Macey, Schneider, Barbera, & Young, 2009; Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013). Thus, high-quality employee engagement has been accepted as necessary condition worldwide and is regarded as positive factor in producing employee motivation (Kahn, 2010).

1.1 Background

The positive connection between employee engagement and business outcomes has been demonstrated in many studies (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Leeds & Nierle, 2014; Sahoo & Mishra, 2012). Those companies that are able to motivate, inspire and engage their employees produce world-class outcomes, breakthroughs and top-level performance that provides them with a competitive edge over their competition

(Albrecht et al., 2015; Anitha, 2014; Ncube & Jerie, 2012; Sharma & Kaur, 2014; Mohd Razli, Seng, & Sum, 2015).

Many researchers have successfully shown the correlation between employee engagement and performance outcomes that eventually leads to a unique competitive edge (Banhwa, Chipunza, & Chamisa, 2014; Rasheed et al., 2013; Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010; Taneja, Sewell, & Odom, 2015; Indhira & Shani, 2014; Priya, 2014). Furthermore, employee engagement impacts attrition and absenteeism, and research has also shown the link with productivity in the individual, group and organizational levels of analysis (Albrecht et al., 2015; Sundaray & Mohapatra, 2014). The success of engagement can be quantified through quality of experience reports by customers and the level of customer loyalty, especially in service-centred organizations (Agarwal, Datta, Blake-Beard, & Bhargava, 2012; Brunetto et al., 2012; Chat-Uthai, 2013; Soane, Truss, Alfes, Shantz, Rees, & Gatenby, 2012).

According to Perrin Global Workforce Study (2007) of approximately 88,600 employees in 18 different countries, employees who were more engaged with their work were reported as feeling that they had contributed to product quality, customer satisfaction, increasing revenue and decreasing costs. The study also advocates the fact that those organizations with more engaged employees achieve higher revenues and profits and also are more successful in retaining valuable employees. Clearly, then, employee engagement is crucial for both productivity and financial success; therefore, an organization must have a thorough understanding of how to engage its employees because retaining the correct people is critical.

Other researchers have also emphasized the remarkably high costs a company could incur due to employee disengagement in terms of low production and employee turnover (Sange & Srivasatava, 2012; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Furthermore, studies have shown that the higher the percentage of engaged employees in the company, the higher the profit margins (Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Ketter, 2008). Sufficient evidence exists to prove that low employee engagement is financially harmful for companies all around the world. Saradha and Patrick (2011) defined disengaged workers as those who are uninterested in their jobs or the performance of the organization. This lack of engagement results in decreased productivity, increased negativity or poor attitude that can spread like a wildfire throughout the organization. Conversely, those organization that manage to engage their employees successfully tend to achieve higher benefits in terms of finances, retention rates, productivity, profit and customer engagement (Burke, Koyuncu, Fiksenbaum, & Tekin, 2013; Sarangi, 2012; Shuck, 2010).

The financial impact of engagement seems clear. The Hay Group (2010) reported that organizations with high engagement levels showed profit growth 2.5 times greater than those for organizations at the lowest level of engagement (Bridger, 2014). Those organizations with engaged employees earn 40% more profits than organizations with disengaged employees. Also, the revenue per employee is relatively high for those employees who are engaged as compared to those who are disengaged (Fleming & Asplund, 2007).

Workers who are more engaged also tend to provide better service to customers, have low absenteeism and attrition and also do not engage in counterproductive behaviour in comparison to their disengaged counterparts. In turn, good employee

engagement also increases the engagement of customers and triggers innovation in the employees (Byrne, 2014; Monesson, 2013; Sarangi & Srivastava, 2012).

Coffman (2000) researched engagement and provided empirical evidence that engaged employees were 15 times more likely to recommend their workplace and 16 times more probable to believe that their organizations utilized their individual strengths. Engaged employees are 3 times more likely to be satisfied with their existing jobs and pay and to remain with organization until the end of their careers. Furthermore, engaged employees are 11 times more likely than their disengaged colleagues to express their desire and satisfaction to work for the organization.

Johnson (2004) stated that one of the greatest challenges in the next decade would be to engage employees and retain them in the firm. Because good employee engagement practices aid organizations, studying the variables that create and maintain engagement of the employees in developing nations such as Sudan is vital.

1.2 Sudanese Banking System

The Central Bank of Sudan's (CBOS) 2013 annual report stated that the Sudanese banking sector comprised the Central Bank of Sudan and around 36 banks with different ownership. In total the banks have 600 branches spread over the various states of the country with a majority in the urban areas. Of the branches, only 3 are in other countries, namely, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Chad. In terms of activity and ownership, the banks are classified as follows:

- 4 are specialized state-owned banks;
- 26 are joint-venture banks comprising a mixture of private banks, public national banks and also foreign banks of which only is an investment bank; and
- 6 foreign bank branches.

The Central Bank of Sudan is the authorized regulatory body that supervises financial institutions and carries out activities like investment funds, pension funds, foreign exchange, banking services and Sudan Financial Services Company. The evolution of the Sudanese Banking system had 6 stages culminating in the above-mentioned structure. Each stage was important in helping to individually shape the system. The stages are shown below.

1. The pre-nationalization period that started in 1903 and lasted until the 1970 nationalization.
2. The after-nationalization period, that began from 1971 and lasted until 1974, the year of the initiation of the so-called open-door policy.
3. The Open-Door policy period that began in 1975 and continued until 1983, known as the year of comprehensive Islamisation orientation. During this period, foreign banks were allowed once again to operate in Sudan.
4. The Islamisation period, which started in 1984 and lasted until 1992.
5. The liberalization period, spanning from 1992 up to 2011.

During the liberalization period in July 2011, South Sudan voted and won their plea for secession from the rest of the nation, thereby forming a separate state. The banking system of Sudan currently follows the Islamic banking system (CBOS, 2013).

1.3 Engagement of Frontline Employees in Human Resource Management

Studies have shown that actions of the frontline employees greatly influence the success of operations (Ellinger, Elmadag, & Ellinger, 2007). The service literature suggests that frontline employees play an indispensable role, especially in service encounters (Manandhar & Tang, 2002). Khwaja and Yang (2014) indicated that engaged employees who actually interact with customers and are focused upon customer-centric issues have a markedly larger effect on sales productivity than those employees who are not. A large number of reported defects and dissatisfaction of customers is a clear indicator that organizations are perhaps not emphasising the development and training of frontline employees for their interactions with the customers enough (Ellinger et al., 2007).

Kumar and Pansari (2014) stated employee engagement is much more seen in service industry wherein employees are representatives of the company to the public and deal with clients in all matters relating to work. In the contemporary service industry, production and consumption tend to take place simultaneously (Rust, Stewart, Miller, & Pielack, 1996). Hence, the portrayal of the organisation in a positive light by frontline employees through their interactions with the customers is critical for increasing customer satisfaction, loyalty and profitability of the firm. Because of these interactions,

frontline employees often display higher levels of emotional fatigue as compared to other employees in their service sector (Boles, Johnston, & Hair, 1997).

One way that some organizations develop frontline employees is by treating them as customers in order to gain mutual benefit; however, limited research on this topic exists in contemporary management literature. Although Human Resource Development (HRD) and its effectiveness in enhancing employee performance is well known, limited research is present regarding the HRD with respect to frontline employees (Ellinger et al., 2007). Frontline employees, especially those in service or sales positions, are likely to face unscripted and challenging situations with different customers, which could contribute to disengagement (Zablah, Franke, Brown, & Bartholomew, 2012). In the long run, the impact of these negative interactions with customers will result in high employee turnover and poor performance and therefore higher costs for an organization (Zablah et al., 2012). These employees directly influence the perceptions of customers, especially customer perceptions regarding the brand, which can be enhanced with proper employee engagement.

Moreover, few empirical studies support the importance of employee engagement for frontline employees (e.g., Albdour & Altarawneh, 2012; Ali & Altarawneh, 2014; Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Aqsa, Amir, & Waqar, 2015; Burke et al., 2013; Handa & Gulati, 2014; Karatepe, 2011, 2013a, 2014; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Rigg et al., 2014; Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011; Valeri, 2015; Yeh, 2013; Pimapunsri, 2015) given the importance of frontline employees in delivering a quality services to the customers organizations must give more consideration to the engagement of their frontline employees, given the fact that, organizations, particularly in the service

sector, coming the realization that not much gain exists in hiring people if the company is unable to make them want to give their best to the organization. But, not all companies operate or think in this manner, and even if they do, implementing this practice in the real business world is difficult (Crawford, 2015; Woodruffe, 2006).

1.4 The Problem Statement

1.4.1 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement has become an issue for business, as several studies have noted. In 2011, SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) conducted a survey among HR leaders and found that 99% of them believed that employee engagement would be one of the major business challenges in the years to come. Wollard and Shuck (2011) noted that between 50% and 70% of employees were not engaged with their jobs. Gallup's (2013) study reported a staggering 3:1 ratio of disengaged-to-engaged employees in organizations. It is also found that across 142 nations, 87 percent of the employees were disengaged (Monesson, 2013).

Dale and Carnegie (2007) said that managers should pay attention to employee engagement because (a) the greater the level of engagement the higher the employee retention, (b) engaged employees are more productive and (c) an organization with engaged workers will attract more potential employees who desire to work hard for the success of the organization (Byrne, 2014). Tower Watson's 2012 Global Workforce study indicated that organizations with high and sustained levels of engagement had an average one-year operating profit margin that was three times higher than organizations with lower levels of engagement (Bridger, 2014).

These reports as well as many others have all agree that organizations must give great consideration to employee engagement in order to tackle to business challenges of the 21st century. Disengagement has many related implications such as low profitability, poor productivity, and erosion of mental health, employee attrition and also employee theft (Bridger, 2014; Sange & Srivasatava, 2012; Wollard & Shuck, 2011).

Globalization, liberalization and technological innovations and diverse technological expectations among customers pose a challenging scenario with global competition levels in business increasing (Arabi, 2013). This is especially critical in the Sudan because banks in Sudan have faced a challenging business atmosphere driven by technological forces having no limits globally. To properly serve their customers, these banks require serious, widespread research of the best techniques to be followed for their development and survival in an inconsistent market place (Mahfoz, 2010).

In the country, the banking sector experiences some significant variations with respect to its management and functioning over the past ten years. Hence, it is appropriate to note that the banks should differentiate themselves from one another. They must hire engaged employees who are enthusiastic about their jobs and strive to take their organization to greater heights.

An Omdurman National Bank analytical study on job satisfaction in March 2012 found various reasons for job dissatisfaction among employees. These included: absence of proper correspondence, ineffectively imparted data, absence of guidance and evaluation, absence of development opportunities, unauthentic leadership, absence of rewards and appreciation and a lack of sufficient training. Researchers in Sudan have shown that these variables have tremendous effects on work satisfaction, productivity,

worker turnover and performance in the Sudanese banking sector (Ali, 2008; Altahir, 2006; Ismail, 2000; Mahfoz, 2010; Mohammed, 2008; Musa, 2005; Myrgani, 2012) and also most important the reserachers indicate that the current HRM practices are unable to affect employee attitudes and behaviours to promote higher satisfaction, productivity and performance of employees in Sudanese banking sector (Ali, 2008; Myrgani, 2012) Local reserchers indactes a need currently exists for studies on employee engagement that bring about an increased level of mindfulness among managers of banks to upgrade the levels of their employee engagement (Myrgani, 2012; Omar, 2013). According to Omar (2013) Human resource managers should work to develop effective employee engagement because it ultimately decides the success of the bank, and because employee engagement is a critical aspect to gain competitive advantage. The employee dissatisfaction and ineffective of HRM practices and the need of engaged employees who perform at consistently high level to bring their banks forward and the importance of Sudanese banking sector in the overall development of the country has inspired the interest of this study to open up new productive avenues to enhanced the levels of employee engagement leading to better job performance.

1.4.2 Lack of Empirical Studies on Employee Engagement, Job Performance, and Frontline Employees in Service Sector

The study of employee engagement has begun moving from professional to scholastic writing, although a quickly growing enthusiasm exists amongst HRM researchers for studying the problem, the concept is only starting to be considered as an important issue in HRM (Guest, 2013; Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Keenoy, 2013; Purcell, 2013; Truss,

2013; Shuck & Rose, 2013). In addition, the connections among possible antecedents as well as outcomes of engagement have not been fully established (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Crawford, Rich, Buckman, Bergeron, Truss, Delbridge, Alfes, Shantz, & Soane, 2014; Gupta & Kumar, 2012; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Experts have asserted the field of employee engagement is still in transition and is being explored as only a few comprehensive studies have been carried out for this subject (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015). This gap produces an opportunity for research experts and likewise presents a critical open door for comprehending engagement, its potential antecedents and its consequences (Shuck & Rose, 2013; Shuck, Rocco, & Alborno, 2011; Truss, Delbridge, Alfes, Shantz, & Soane, 2014). Plainly, space remains for fundamental academic investigation, development, and dialog of employee engagement as a topic of import.

In addition, Truss, Shantz, Soane, Alfes, and Delbridge (2013) stated that the connection between employee engagement and performance at individual level is unmistakably a productive avenue for future exploration attempt, especially because engagement may be related to enhanced levels of performance as well as to improved prosperity. Previous studies have analyzed the relationship between elements of employee engagement such as job engagement and organization engagement and organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, intention to quit and firm performance (e.g., Andrew & Sofian, 2011, 2012; Bhatnagar & Biswas, 2010; Moussa, 2013; Rasheed et al., 2013; Saks, 2006). To date and to the knowledge of this researcher none of the previous studies (e.g., Amira, 2014; Anitha,

2014; Bal & De Lange, 2015; Fachrunnisa, Adhiatma, & Mutamimah, 2014; Idris, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2015; Mbae, 2014; Mishra, 2014; Saxena & Srivastava, 2015) have inspected the impact of employee engagement elements such as job engagement, organization engagement on job performance factors such as task performance and contextual performance of frontline employees in the banking sector

In addition, frontline employees who serve as boundary spanners in enabling the banking sector to provide quality services are critical employees. Nonetheless, empirical studies relating to the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in frontline employees in service industries are still rare (e.g., Ali & Altarawneh, 2014; Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Aqsa, Amir, & Waqar, 2015s; Handa & Gulati, 2014; Karatepe, 2011, 2013a, 2014; Rigg et al., 2014; Valeri, 2015; Pimapunsri, 2015).

In view of the present context of Sudanese banking sector and the dire need to fill in the theoretical gaps in the literature regarding the study variables, this researcher seeks to examine the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement in the frontline employees in banking sector by developing and testing a model. This model integrates seven antecedent variables, namely, employee communication, perceived organizational and supervisor support, authentic leadership, rewards and recognition, training and career development and organizational justice and dependent variable of employee engagement (job engagement, organization engagement) and outcome variable of job performance (task performance, contextual performance).

In addition, this study examines the moderating effect of a new variable (exchange ideology of a frontline employee) on the relationship between the antecedent variables and employee engagement. As previous studies by Saks (2006) and Memon et

al. (2014) indicated that future research should test exchange ideology as moderator between antecedents and engagement to strengthen the relationship between the antecedent variables and employee engagement. In addition, Given the paucity of previous studies inspecting both job engagement and organization engagement (e.g., Andrew & Sofian, 2011, 2012; Ghosh, Rai, & Sinha, 2014; Moussa, 2013; Saks, 2006; Sharma & Raina, 2013; Srivastava, Ramachandran, & Suresh, 2014; Tucker, 2014), this model, which uses Saks's (2006) and Kahn's (1990) conceptualizations of engagement, will add to the literature.

This study seeks to empower banks managers and human resource field to move ahead by providing a concrete discussion supported by theory helping them to actualize employee engagement practices in their banks. By finding the best ways to do so, they will be able to upgrade the level of employee engagement at their bank.

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives are to examine:

1. To determine the level of employee engagement of frontline employee
2. The effect of employee communication on engagement of frontline employee;
3. The relationship between perceived organizational and supervisor support and engagement of frontline employee;
4. The relationship between the four dimensions of authentic leadership and engagement of frontline employee;
5. The effect of rewards and recognition on engagement of frontline employee;

6. The effect of training and career development on engagement of frontline employee;
7. The effect of the two dimensions of organizational justice on engagement of frontline employee;
8. The effect of engagement of a frontline employee on job performance; and
9. The moderating effect of exchange ideology of frontline employee on the relationship between the antecedents and engagement of frontline employee.

1.6 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, a number of key research questions are addressed. They include:

1. What is the level of employee engagement of frontline employee?
2. What is the relationship between employee communication and the engagement of frontline employee?
3. Is perceived organizational and supervisor support driving the engagement of frontline employee?
4. What are the relationships between the four dimensions of authentic leadership and the engagement of frontline employee?
5. Are rewards and recognition driving the engagement of frontline employee?
6. Is training and career development driving the engagement of frontline employee?
7. What are the relationships between the two dimensions of organizational justice and the engagement of frontline employee?

8. Is engagement of a frontline employee related to job performance?
9. Does the exchange ideology of a frontline employee moderate the relationship between antecedents and engagement of that frontline employee?

1.7 Scope of the Study

For achieving the objectives of this research, a survey was done using questionnaires with in banking sector in Sudan. The survey focused on employee communication, perceived organizational and supervisor support, authentic leadership, rewards and recognition, training and career development and organizational justice as antecedents' variables of employee engagement and job performance as consequence of it. In addition, this study also examined a moderator variable (exchange ideology of frontline employee) in the relationship between the antecedents and engagement of a frontline employee.

Data were collected from frontline employees in all banks in Sudan and the unit of analysis used was individual frontline staff including frontline customer services representatives and sales/ credit staff. Data was gained from those employees, and every subject was considered to be a single data source. Responses were collected only from frontline employee who works at front counter and having face to face interaction with customers and with at least one colleague.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This research expects to broaden the assortment of information relating to the potential antecedents and consequences of employee engagement in the banking sector and provides insights into the practical implications of creating and enhancing employee engagement with in Sudanese banking sector. The practical contribution of this study incorporates a better comprehension of the antecedents and consequences of frontline employee engagement, a zone in which empirical studies are rare, particularly in the Sudanese context. Also, this study offers theoretical contribution to help researchers develop an understanding of employee engagement and job performance in banking sector. Moreover, this study likewise offers contributions that are beneficial to professionals and policy makers who may wish to improve employee engagement to enhance the performance of their workers.

1.8.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study examines a model of frontline employees in the banking sector in Sudan. Exploring the antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of engagement of frontline employees has broadened the understanding of these variables. Previous literature has contained few empirical studies examining the antecedents and consequences of employee engagement (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015; Saks & Gruman, 2014; Truss et al., 2014). Because of this lack of studies, this current research attempts to bridge the theoretical gap through the lens SET.

Heeding the call of Memon, Salleh, Harun, Rashid, and Bakar (2014); Saks (2006), this study introduces exchange ideology as a moderator variable and investigates

its effect on the relationship between the antecedent variables and employee engagement. Thus, this study adds empirical evidence to support the importance of exchange ideology as a moderating variable.

This study is also among the few that distinguish between job engagement and organization engagement (e.g., Andrew & Sofian, 2011, 2012; Bhatnagar & Biswas, 2010; Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013; Ghosh et al., 2014; Moussa, 2013; Rasheed et al., 2013; Saks, 2006; Sharma & Raina, 2013; Srivastava et al., 2014; Tucker, 2014).

This study offers empirical proof to confirm the linkage between authentic leadership (self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency) of leaders working with frontline employees on engagement and the impact of engagement on job performance. Previous studies indicated a dire need to fill this gap in literature (e.g., Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012; Peterson, Walumbwa, Avolio, & Hannah, 2012; Rego, Sousa, Marques, & Cunha, 2012; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2011; Xu & Thomas, 2011). In addition, these four dimensions of authentic leadership have routinely been examined as separate constructs with relatively little research considering them as part of a common core construct (Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, & Avolio, 2010). Shuck and Herd (2012) stated very few studies could be spotted that investigated the relationship, between leadership and employee engagement in the human resource literature base.

This study contributes to the search for the antecedents leading to employee engagement and hence for better job performance. The present study adds to the literature on employee engagement via exploring the relationship between two

dimensions of employee engagement (job engagement and organization engagement) and two dimensions of job performance (task performance and contextual performance). Truss et al. (2013) expressed a connection between employee engagement and performance at individual level that unmistakably lead to an open door for future studies. Christian et al. (2011) believed a need exists to research whether engagement leads to task and contextual performance simultaneously, or engaged employees give priority to role tasks.

A few studies have investigated engagement of frontline employees specifically with in banking sector (e.g., Ali & Altarawneh, 2014; Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Aqsa et al., 2015; Burke et al., 2013; Handa & Gulati, 2014; Karatepe, 2011; Karatepe, 2013a, 2014; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Lee & Ok, 2015; Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2014; Rigg et al., 2014; Slatten & Mehmetoglu, 2011; Valeri, 2015; Yeh, 2013; Pimapunsri, 2015).

In addition, previous studies have stated that the diverse responsibilities frontline employees perform in organizations typically has been disregarded in academic studies. In addition, frontline employees, especially those in service or sales positions, are likely to face unscripted and challenging situations with different customers, which could contribute to disengagement (Anaza & Rutherford, 2012; Zablah et al., 2012). This current study is among few studies investigates the engagement of frontline employees in the service sector. Hence, it adds noteworthy evidence to the literature.

This study extends the literature of employee engagement beyond the realm of the Western world's developed economies. Few studies have been conducted in developing countries as supported by Karatepe and Olugbade (2009) and Rigg et al. (2014), and as demonstrated in Table 1.1 below. Hence, this study aims to extend the

body of knowledge by conducting this study among frontline employees in banking sector in Sudan.

Table 1.1

Representative Sample of Published Studies on Employee Engagement in Developing Countries

Country	Published Studies
Egypt	(Ronald & Ghada, 2010).
Nigeria	(Karatepe & Olugbade, 2009; Nwinyokpugi, 2015; Potgieter, 2014; Ugwu, Onyishi, & Rodríguez-Sánchez, 2014).
Pakistan	(Danish, Ahmad, Ramzan, & Khan, 2014a; Danish, Saeed, Mehreen, Aslam, & Shahid, 2014b; Rasheed et al., 2013; Rashid et al., 2011; Sardar, Rehman, Yousaf, & Aijaz, 2011).
Jordan	(Albdour & Altarawneh, 2012; Ali & Altarawneh, 2014; Alzyoud, Othman, & Isa, 2014).
Zimbabwe	(Ncube & Jerie, 2012; Sibanda, Muchena, & Ncube, 2014).
Tanzania	(Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014).
Kenya	(Datche & Mukulu, 2015; Evelyn & Hazel, 2015; Gichohi, 2014; James, 2014; Jepkorir, 2014; Mbae, 2014; Otieno, Waiganjo, & Njeru, 2015; Sang, Guyo, & Odhiambo, 2014; Jilani & Juma, 2015).
Malaysia	(Abu Bakri, 2009; Rahman, 2015; Alias, Noor, & Hassan, 2014; Andrew & Sofian, 2011, 2012; Hussain, Wahab, & Arif, 2015; Jiony, Tanakinjal, Gom, & Sigamul, 2015; Krishnan, Ismail, Ismail, Muhammed, Muthusamy, & Kanchymalay, 2015; Latib, Bolong, & Ghazali, 2014; Mohd Soieb, Othman, & D'Silva, 2013; Ola, 2011; Othman, 2012; Soon, 2006; Teh, Tong, & Rasiyah, 2014; Esther, 2015).
Taiwan	(Chen & Chen, 2012; Yeh, 2012; Yuan, Lin, Shieh, & Li, 2012).
Indonesia	(Agung, 2014; Ariani, 2013; Bhattachaya & Mukherjee, 2009; Fachrunnisa et al., 2014; Permana, Tjakraatmadja, D. Larso, & Wicaksono, 2015; Permana, Tjakraatmadja, Larso, & Wicaksono, 2015).
India	(Ahuja & Modi, 2015; Bhattachaya & Mukherjee, 2009; D'Souza & Mulla, 2011; Gaan & Bhoon, 2012; Goud, Kumar, & Goud, 2014; Gupta, Kumar, Steane, & Steane, 2015; Pati, 2012; Rani & Punitha, 2015; Sharma & Kaur, 2014; Sundaray & Mohapatra, 2014).
South Africa	(Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2006; Imandin, Bisschoff, & Botha, 2015; Sibiya, Buitendach, Kanengoni, & Bobat, 2014; Storm & Rothmann, 2003; Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009).
Ghana	(Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2015).
Vietnam	(Ehambaranathan, Samie, & Murugasu, 2015).

Ethiopia	(Gurmessa & Bayissa, 2015).
Yemen	(Ahmed, Alabsi, & Aamer, 2014).
Iran	(Esmaelinezhad, Boerhannoeddin, & Singaravelloo, 2015; Gholami, Tavakoli, & Salagegheh, 2014).
United Arab Emirates	(Ibrahim & Alfalasi, 2014).

1.8.2 Practical Significance

Studying employee engagement in detail is advantageous for service sector managers, especially bank managers and human resource professionals, to understand and to practice in their respective banks. Mindful of the end goal of upgrading the level of employment, comprehending the ways to improve engagement is necessary.

This research shows the antecedent variables that are related fundamentally to employee engagement and job performance. Good employee engagement practices may prompt higher employees engagement leading in turn to higher task and contextual performance. This recommends that banks managers in Sudan give careful consideration to the antecedent variables that bring about more prominent levels of engagement and job performance in employees.

The study's results also provide more information to bank managers in Sudan with regard to the significance of proper social exchange between banks managers and employees.

This study adds to literature regarding the degree to which the banking sector, especially in developing countries takes part in the adoption of employee engagement practices.

The present study also contributes to an examination of employee engagement on job performance of frontline employees. Hence, it provides useful information for bank managers on how to develop and enhancing the engagement and performance of their

frontline employees. Business pioneers, professionals and specialist make take advantage of what has been found.

The findings have crucial implications for implementing employee engagement activities in Sudan's banking sector. Such implementation is crucial as Sudan is a developing country and its banks have an important role to play in its economic development. The link between the study variables will highlight the critical areas to be focused upon by bank management in order to raise the employee engagement levels at workplace.

Although different parties have conducted studies in Sudan, all of them have concentrated on job satisfaction (Ali, 2008; Omar, 2013). Hence, this current study is ground breaking because it focuses on employee engagement of frontline employees and provides empirical support of the antecedents and outcomes of employee engagement from the employee's perspective.

1.9 Definitions of Key Terms

Employee Communication. Is “the communications transactions among individuals and or set of individuals at different levels and in varying specialized areas which are intended for designing and re-designing firms for implementing designs as well as to co-ordinate everyday activities” (Frank & Brownell, 1989).

Perceived Organizational and Supervisor Support

Perceived organizational support. POS is defined as the extent to which the organization's employees perceive that their contributions to the organizations are

considered valuable by the organization and that the organization takes care of their wellbeing (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).

Perceived Supervisor Support. PSS is the extent to which the supervisor values the employee's contributions (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002).

Authentic Leadership. Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) wrote that authentic leadership is “a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self development” (p. 94).

Self-awareness. Self-awareness refers to demonstrating behaviours indicating that leaders are aware of personal needs, preferences, motivations, and wants (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Relational transparency. Relational transparency refers to presenting the leaders' authentic self, their true feelings, and thoughts to followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Balanced processing. Balanced processing is defined as the behaviour of the leader which indicates that the leaders analyze significant data before making a decision and that the leaders are never afraid of soliciting opposing views from their own followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Internalized moral perspective. It refers to the self-regulation, which is directed by internal moral standards as well as values that lead to behaviours as well as decisions consistent with these internalized values (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Rewards and Recognition. Rewards can be defined as a structured formal manner for rewarding considerable achievements that support the core values of the company and its business goals (Gostick & Elton, 2007).

Recognition. Recognition refers to the day-to-day, low cost, high touch pats on the back, handwritten notes, team lunches, on the spot awards certificates, gifts of thanks, and other ways one regularly praises and expresses gratitude to employees (Gostick & Elton, 2007).

Training and Career Development. *Training.* Training refers to the set of activities that teach employees how to do their jobs better; it stresses immediate enhancements for job performance via the specific skill sets' procurement (Stone, 2009). .

Career development. Career development refers to an employee following his chosen career paths based on goal setting and achievement motivation to gain greater control over their professional future (Brown & Harvey, 2006).

Organizational Justice. Organizational justice refers to perceptions of fairness within an organizational setting (Greenberg, 1990).