

The Effect of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance in Ghana's MSMEs Sector During Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the globe have been the major victims of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has plunged the business world into a serious crisis. However, Employee Engagement (EE) has been labeled as an essential nutrient that organizations need in order to survive in these turbulent times. This study was to examine the effect of EE on Employee Performance during the COVID-19 pandemic and how this relationship is moderated by job demands. The study used a sample size of 395 respondents who were chosen from a variety of MSMEs via a convenience sampling method. The study used a survey questionnaire approach as the main method for collecting primary data. The result of the correlation analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between EE and employee performance. It was revealed that job resources moderated the relationship between EE and employee performance. Finally, the result showed that job resources had a significant effect on EE. Thus, it can be concluded that, in the face of COVID-19, EE is a significant predictor of the performance of employees in the MSMEs sector.

INTRODUCTION

In the past, employees were seen as strategic tools by organizations. However, since the corporate environment has evolved, employees are now viewed as strategic partners (Singh, 2020). As a result, organizations face the challenge of devising strategies to purposefully position their employees in that direction. This situation has been aggravated by the advent of the global pandemic, COVID-19, plunging businesses around the world into a serious crisis (Mani & Mishra, 2020; Kumar, 2021; Atiku & Randa, 2021; Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Jung, Jung & Yoon, 2021). Among businesses, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the globe are the major victims of the pandemic (Shafi, Liu & Ren, 2020; Eggers, 2020), worsening their problems and leaving behind a gap that leaders and owners need to fill (Atiku & Randa, 2020). Besides, these organizations are finding effective ways to get the best out of their most valuable asset, human resources, since it is the effort of these resources that sustains organizational effectiveness and survival (Obuobisa-Darko & Tsedzah, 2019; Theo, Nursyamsi & Munizu, 2021). Employee Engagement (EE) is the essential nutrient that modern organizations require in order to thrive

(Dixit & Singh, 2020). Metaphorically, EE is being prescribed as the antidote to the recent crisis in the corporate business setting, and just as the world is relying on a vaccine for survival, organizations rely on EE to stay in business. Furthermore, Rao, Narayana and Niranjana (2021) asserted that EE is a powerful tool that can assist organizations in transforming their employees from strategic tools to strategic partners. Hence, organizations must go beyond employee motivational strategies and incorporate workplace practices that promote EE (Beri & Gulati, 2021). As a result, the concept of EE has become one of the most popular and extensively explored fields in human resource management for practitioners and academics alike (Rameshkumar, 2020; Buliska-Stangrecka & Iddagoda, 2020; Hameduddin & Lee, 2021), as well as in the popular press (Saks & Gruman, 2020), particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (Chanana, 2020; Kumar, 2021).

Regardless, HR managers are attempting to mitigate the consequences of the global crisis on their employees, a circumstance that is slowly but steadily lowering EE (Kumar, 2021). Dinh (2020) also showed that businesses usually face various types of challenges in their efforts to develop interaction with their employees in order to build a robust labour force. As a result, HR managers and business leaders are compelled to focus more on engaging their valuable assets, as the output and performance of these assets have a direct effect on organizational productivity (Sharma & Sharma, 2014; Taha, 2016; Dhir & Shukla, 2019). Simon and Jeromy (2018) noted that when HR managers improve EE, it leads to improved performance, lowers staff turnover, and enhances employee well-being. According to Balogun and Afolabi (2018), organizations globally have become much more aware of the importance of their human resources serving as a competitive edge over their competitors. Through their performance, employees create a competitive edge for their organizations. Therefore, organizations should find ways to embed engagement strategies into the overall organization's policies to achieve the highest possible levels of employee performance. Albrecht et al. (2015) concluded that HR managers need to make it a point to insert EE into their HRM policies and practices. Also, organizations are required to concentrate on the factors that contribute to enhancing employees' performance because their performances have a direct linkage with the goal attainment of the organization (Biddle & Evenden, 2014). The debate on EE has been going on in Africa as well. For instance, Shirin and Kleyn (2017) found that engagement among employees of a large South African bank was primarily driven by the corporate reputation perceptions of the employees. Conversely, Vittee (2015) postulated that employee empowerment and employees' participation in decision-making were the core indicators of engagement in South Africa. Moletsane, Tefera and Migiro (2019) found that the low level of productivity in a South African sugar factory was due to the high number of relatively engaged employees in the factory, and this was attributed to personal feelings of employees, work atmosphere, communication, leadership style, and devotion.

In addition, Otieno, Waiganjo and Njeru (2015) found that the performance of organizations in the Kenyan horticultural sector mainly depended on EE, and in the same national jurisdiction, creativity and innovation were found to be the main antecedents of EE among librarians (Gichohi, 2014). Also, Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014) revealed that remuneration was the key driver of engagement in a co-operative bank in Kenya. Nevertheless, the study found that factors such as personal development and growth, workplace recreation, and performance management were found to have impact on engagement in the workplace. In Uganda, Sendawula et al. (2018) established that EE influences employee performance in the health sector. Moreover, Ajayi, Odusanya and Morton (2017) postulated that MSMEs in Nigeria can achieve sustained growth and survival by putting in place the appropriate organizational context for EE. Ghana has also not been left out in the EE debate in Africa, as Amoako-Asiedu and Obuobisa-Darko (2017) found out that employee performance in the public sector was directly related to engagement levels. Thus, the researchers concluded that employees in the public sector will perform at their maximum best if they are engaged. A study conducted by Agyemang and Ofei (2013) found that EE levels were higher among private sector employees than among their colleagues in the public sector. However, the study pointed out that EE in both the public and private sectors can be realized when the employees are provided with the resources needed to perform their work roles.

Also, Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) found that engagement strategies implemented by a Ghanaian telecommunications organization resulted in success. In 2020, Ohemeng, Obuobisa-Darko and Amoako-Asiedu (2020) examined the impact of EE on employee task performance in Ghanaian state-owned enterprises. The study found out that EE has a positive and significant influence on the performance of employees. Organizational culture has been found to enhance EE in the Ghanaian public sector (Prepra-Mensah & Kyeremeh, 2018). According to Turner (2020), EE is the positive and proactive workplace behaviour that is engineered by enthused and passionate employees as well as rational people management practices and compassionate managers are directed toward the realization of effectively articulated business goals. In addition, it refers to employees' involvement in their work and commitment to the organization's vision, mission, and goals (Rensburg et al., 2013).

Despite the fact that managers are responsible for ensuring EE, the managers themselves must be engaged in their work before they can effectively engage their employees (Clack, 2020). Thus, the desire to nurture effective engagement does not rest solely on the shoulders of employers and management, but both the employee and the employer have active roles to play (Tauetsile, 2016; Ouellette, 2021; Narayana & Niranjana, 2021). Ouellette (2021) stated that managers may initiate EE systems, but the ultimate decision lies with employees to make use of the systems such that everybody will own them in the organization. However, in order to achieve effective engagement in the workplace, there should be a clear distinction between organizational goals and individual roles, as well as a comprehensive performance management system that provides opportunities for goal realization (Turner, 2020). The foregoing discussions suggest that engagement does not occur by chance, but in an enabling work environment that has been strategically designed. Hence, certain elements or factors should be present in the organization to pave the way for EE.

Thus, according to Gabr and El-Shaer (2013), factors such as job characteristics, perceived organizational support, recognition and reward, perceived supervisor support, and procedural justice are antecedents of EE. The authors added that, organizational commitment, the intention to quit, employee involvement, and job satisfaction account for EE. Heerden (2015) also pointed out that a number of issues which decide work engagement include family-work related stress and personal relationships in the work setting. EE is a necessity for businesses because of its favourable impact on employee, team, and organizational outcomes (Bakker & Albrecht, 2018), and it is a way to enhance strategy implementation and decrease performance gaps and waste (Nienaber & Martins, 2020; Katili, Wibowo & Akbar, 2021) in an organization. It is also a recipe for positive overall performance of an organization (Sutisna, Fauziya & Pranoto, 2020), and can thus be a game changer in organizational performance (Mburu, Koome & Gichuhi, 2020) in this current business environment. In light of that, Jabeen and Rahim (2021) concluded that the financial and non-financial outcomes of an organization are highly dependent on the performance of its employees. However, the quality of individual performance in an organization is determined by the level of EE (Satata, 2021). This implies that it is actually EE that causes performance to influence the financial health of an organization, and not performance on its own. Thus, the engagement of employees should be of the utmost concern to every organization since it is the primary indicator of quality employee performance. This motivated the researchers to examine the impact of EE on the performance of employees in selected MSMEs in Ghana.

Scholars have published on EE as well as meta-analyses (Saks & Gruman, 2014), but only a few of these studies have simultaneously incorporated moderating effects job resources (Taha, 2016; Tauetsile, 2016). Additionally, few studies have found EE to be positively associated with employee performance (see Govender & Bussin, 2020; Tensay & Singh, 2020; Satata, 2021; Linggiallo, Riadi, Hariyadi & Adhimursandi, 2021). Even so, a study conducted by Zondo (2020) in a South African automotive assembly organization revealed that EE had an insignificant effect on employees' productivity. The mixed results indicate that more research into the relationship between the two variables is required. To this end, the researchers formulated the research questions as follows; What is the impact of Job Resources on Employee Engagement, What is the

impact of Employee Engagement on Employee Performance, Does the moderating role of job resources influence the relationship between EE and Employee Performance.

METHOD

Research design details the plan for addressing research objectives or hypotheses (McDaniel and Gates, 2012), in terms of how data will be collected and analysed (Bryman, 2012). Research design exists in different shades, and different authors provide different classifications of research design. Common types of designs identified by Bryman (2012) include cross-sectional design (sometimes referred to as survey design), longitudinal design, experimental design, comparative design, and case study design. Different designs offer myriad choices, each with certain strengths and weaknesses (McDaniel and Gates, 2012). Though it is often asserted that there is no single best research design (McDaniel and Gates, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007), under certain circumstances, some designs may be more appropriate. As emphasised by Cohen et al. (2007), "fitness for purpose" is a key governing principle in the choice of design. The research purpose (and the quality of information required) and the cost of implementing the study (e.g., time and finance) play instrumental roles in deciding on a particular design (McDaniel and Gates, 2012). The study adopted a cross-sectional design. A cross-sectional survey design is adequate for explanatory research (Malhotra and Grover, 1998; Rindfleisch et al., 2008). However, the argument has been that compared to experimental and longitudinal designs, cross-sectional survey design is less suitable for investigating "cause-and-effect" questions (Bryman, 2012) since the probability that it will encounter common method variance problem is high (Lindell & Whitney, 2001; Rindfleisch et al., 2008). The questions were "closed-ended," with a predetermined set of response options from which respondents could select. Respondents were asked questions on a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 to 5: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Closed-ended questions were used because they reduce the time and effort required to code responses for information passages and examinations, as well as increase their capacity and proficiency in eliminating non-response rates (Ruane, 2016).

Population refers to all people or items that is of interest to a researcher (Rahi, 2017; Geoffrey, 2019). It is the total universe of people from which a sample is chosen. It also denotes all persons or items of interest to a researcher (Rahi, 2017; Geoffrey, 2019). According to Alvi (2016) all members who match the specific criteria set for a research study are known as the target population. The study's population was made up of employees from a few selected MSMEs in Ghana's second capital, Kumasi. The study used a survey questionnaire approach as the main method for collecting primary data. Secondary information sources, including published and unpublished works, journals, and other internet source relating to the subject, were also used predominately in the literature review and in supporting the research findings. The study used convenience sampling technique to select 395 respondents. Convenience sampling is a method of gathering data from a population that is close and easily accessible to the researcher (Rahi, 2017). This sampling technique allows researchers to conduct interviews or collect responses at a low cost (Rahi, 2017). In this study, the convenience sampling was used during the sample selection and questionnaire distribution stages. That is, any employee from the selected MSMEs within the Kumasi metropolis who was readily available at the time of distributing the questionnaires had opportunity to be included in the sample. Data was coded, and analysed using Smart PLS 3.0 statistical software, which was based on the partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique, in accordance with the aims of the study and conceptual model. Following that, the data was presented in tabular, graphical, and narrative formats.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents included: age of respondents; gender of respondents; number of children; marital status of the respondents; the position of respondents;

qualifications of respondents; years spent in the current organization by respondents; and types of employment of respondents. The results of the demographic characteristics of respondents are shown on Table 4.1.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic		Frequency(395)	Percentage(100%)
Gender of respondents	Male	182	46.1
	Female	213	53.9
	Total	395	100
Age of respondents	20-29	127	32.2
	30-39	141	35.7
	40-49	99	25.1
	50-60	16	4
	60 and above	12	3
	Total	395	100
Number of children	None	124	31.4
	1	98	24.8
	2	83	21
	3	42	10.6
	4 and above	48	12.2
	Total	395	100
Marital status of respondents	Single	179	45.3
	Married	142	36
	Divorced	36	9.1
	Widowed	38	9.6
	Total	395	100
Position of respondents	Operative/Non-Manager	214	54.2
	Supervisor	129	32.6
	Manager	52	13.2
	Total	395	100
Qualification of respondents	Certificate	146	37
	Diploma	119	30.1
	Degree	98	24.8
	Masters	32	8.1
	Total	395	100
Years spent current in organization	1 year or less	69	17.5
	2 years	92	23.3
	3 years	112	28.3
	4 years and above	122	30.9
	Total	395	100
Type of employment	Full time	184	46.6
	Part time	88	22.3
	Temporary	59	14.9
	Casual	43	10.8
	Contract	21	5.4
	Total	395	100

Source: field survey, 2022

From table 1, out of the 395 respondents, 213 of the respondents, representing 53.9%, were females, while 182 of the respondents, representing 46.1%, were males. This has the implication that MSMEs in the Kumasi metropolis basically employ more females than males. Regarding the age bracket of the respondents, it was found out that 141 of the respondents representing 35.7% were between 30-39 years of age, and 127 of the respondents representing

32.2% were between 20–29 years of age. This was followed by the age group 40–49 years, where there were 99 respondents representing 25.1%. The brackets of 50-59 and 60 and above had 4% and 3%, in that order. This result shows that a significant number of the respondents are young, which means that their energy levels are high, which is likely to have an impact on their performance. According to the results, 124 of the 395 respondents did not have a child, 98 of the respondents representing 24.8% had one child, 83 of the respondents representing 21% had two children, 42 of the respondents representing 10.6% had three children, and 48 of the respondents representing 12.2% had four or more children, in that order. This implies that more than half of the respondents have one or no child, which also impacts on their work and family lives. This also has an effect on their engagement levels at work. On the issue of marital status, 179 out of the 395 respondents representing 45.3% were single, 142 of the respondents representing 36% were married, 36 of the respondents representing 9.1% were divorced, and 38 of the respondents representing 9.6% were widowed. This result established that a large number of respondents were not married, which means it is possible to have a positive balance between work and family life, and this is likely to increase engagement levels. With respect to the positions of respondents, more than half (214) of the respondents representing 54.2% were operatives or non-managers, 129 of the respondents representing 32.6% were supervisors, and 32 of the respondents representing 13.2% held managerial positions. The respondents were further asked to indicate their academic qualification.

The result shows that out of 395 respondents, 146 of the respondents representing 37% were certificate holders, 119 of the respondents representing 30.1% were diploma holders, 98 of the respondents representing 24.8% were degree holders, and 32 of the respondents representing 8.1% were master’s degree holders, in that order. This suggests that the majority of the respondents in the selected MSMEs have low levels of education. Also, respondents were asked about the length of service in their respective organizations. In ascending order, 122 out of the 395 respondents representing 30.9% have spent at least four years working in their organizations. This is followed by respondents who have spent 3 years. There were 112 of the respondents representing 28.3%, 92 of the respondents representing 23.3% had worked for a period of 2 years, and 69 of the respondents representing 17.5% had been with their organizations for a period of 1 year or less. The results show that more than 80% of the respondents had been with their organizations from the inception of COVID-19 in Ghana, and thus they were in a good position to tell how they felt during this period. Lastly, out of the 395 respondents, 184 representing 46.6% were full-time workers, 88 of the respondents representing 22.3% were part-time workers, 59 of the respondents representing 14.9% were temporary workers, 43 of the respondents representing 10.9% were casual workers, and 21 of the respondents representing 5.4% were contract workers. This implies that MSMEs in the metropolis mostly employ workers on a full-time basis.

Measurement Issues

Table 2 Model Fit

Model 1	CFA	Chi-Square	SRMR	CMIN/DF	CFI	PClose	RMSEA
Suggested Cut-off values	0.747	387.903	<.0098	<.973	<.758	<.000	<.113
CFA Measurement model	0.861	398.541	.0075	14.126	1.000	.0000	.532

Source: field survey, 2022

Cronbach alpha

The Cronbach alpha test is used to determine whether multiple-question Likert scale surveys are reliable. The questions are designed to assess latent variables. The following is a rule

of thumb for interpreting alpha for dichotomous questions or explaining internal consistency: $\alpha \geq 0.9$ as excellent, $0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$ as good, $0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$ as acceptable, $0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$ as questionable, $0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$ as poor, and $0.5 > \alpha$ as unacceptable (DeVellis, 2012). The Cronbach alpha estimates for the variables in the study are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Cronbach Alpha

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Engagement	10	0.815
Employee Performance	17	0.720
Job Resources	10	0.710

Source: field survey, 2022

Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

The Fornell and Larcker test was used to investigate discriminant validity. The square root of AVE, according to Fornell & Larcker (1981), should be more than 0.5.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

	Age	Gender	Number of children	Marital status	Employee engagement	Employee performance	Job resources	Job demands
Age	*0.791							
Gender	- 0.074	*0.703						
Number of children	0.096	-0.27	*0.692					
Marital status	-0.010	-0.067	0.013	*0.652				
Employee engagement	0.125	0.039	0.014	0.062	*0.852			
Employee performance	0.030	0.037	0.026	0.010	0.617	*0.715		
Job resources	0.051	-0.090	-0.034	0.063	0.537	0.375	*0.719	

*Diagonals are square roots of the AVEs

Source: field survey, 2022

Having discriminant validity means that each construct captures a distinct phenomenon that is not reflected by any other construct in the model (Hair et al., 2017). Discriminant validity examines how distinct one construct is from another (Amoako-Asiedu & Obuobisa-Darko, 2017). The results presented in table 4.5 show that the control and latent variables in this study are distinct from each other as each of them recorded a value greater than 0.5.

Job Resources and EE

The results show that job resources are positively and significantly linked to EE ($r = .537$, $p < .01$). This implies that EE will increase once employees have the necessary job resources. As a result, financial incentives, tools and materials, social support, training and development, autonomy, and flexibility have the potential to increase EE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

EE and Employee Performance

Finally, the results of the correlation analysis show that there is a positive relation between EE and employee performance. ($r = .617$, $p < .05$). This suggests that an increase in EE will result in an increase in employee performance.

Employee Performance at selected MSMEs

Using a Likert scale of 0-never, 1-seldom, 2-sometimes, 3-often, and 4-always to the following statement that measures employee performance. Employee performance includes three dimensions, which include contextual performance, task performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Table 5 Descriptive results of Employee Performance

Employee Performance	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std. Dev.
Task performance				
I plan my work such that it is done on time.	2.00	5.00	4.6329	1.65546
I keep in mind the results that I have to achieve in my work.	2.00	5.00	4.5316	1.26887
I am able to separate main issues from side issues at work.	1.00	5.00	4.6076	1.24037
I am able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort.	2.00	5.00	4.5772	1.24264
Contextual Performance				
I usually take on extra responsibilities.	1.00	5.00	4.5772	1.24264
I have initiative of task performance.	1.00	5.00	4.6127	1.25619
I take challenging work tasks, when available.	1.00	5.00	4.6506	1.22556
I work at keeping my job knowledge up-to-date.	1.00	5.00	4.7823	2.01219
I work at keeping my job skills up-to-date.	1.00	5.00	4.5696	1.26535
I come up with creative solutions to new problems.	1.00	5.00	3.5975	1.31469
I keep looking for new challenges in my job.	1.00	5.00	4.5342	1.23844
I actively participate in work meetings.	1.00	5.00	3.5089	1.21822

Table 6 Cont'd. Descriptive results of Employee Performance

Counter productive work behaviour				
I complain about unimportant matters at work.	1.00	5.00	2.5797	1.27673
I make problems greater than they were at work.	1.00	5.00	1.5468	1.21802
I focus on the negative aspects of a work situation, instead of on the positive aspects.	1.00	5.00	1.5696	1.22457
I speak with colleagues about the negative aspects of my work.	1.00	5.00	2.5964	1.30456
I speak with people from outside the organization about the negative aspects of my work.	1.00	5.00	2.5949	1.26771

Source: field survey, 2022

With task performance, the majority of the respondents always plan their work such that it is done on time (mean = 4.63, SD = 1.65). Furthermore, a higher proportion of respondents agreed that they always keep in mind the outcome that they need to achieve in their organizations (mean = 4.53, SD = 1.26). Again, the (mean = 4.60, SD = 1.24) revealed that the respondents could always separate the main issues from side issues in their organizations. The (mean = 4.57, SD = 1.24) show that a significant number of the respondents agreed that they can perform their work well with minimal time and effort. Regarding contextual performance, the (mean = 4.57, SD = 1.24) show that the majority of the respondents always take on extra responsibilities in their organizations. The (mean = 4.61, SD = 1.24) revealed that a greater number of the respondents always have the initiative for task performance in their organizations. The (mean = 4.65, SD = 1.22) show that a significant number of the respondents always take on the challenging tasks when available in their organizations. Also, the (mean = 4.78, SD = 2.01) show that the majority of the respondents always work to keep their job knowledge up-to-date in their organizations. Likewise, the (mean = 4.56, SD = 1.26) show that the respondents always work

at keeping their job skills up-to-date in their organizations. The (mean = 3.59, SD = 1.31) revealed that the majority of the respondents often come up with creative solutions to new problems in their organizations. The (mean = 4.53, SD = 1.23) revealed that a significant number of the respondents always keep looking for new challenges in their jobs. The (mean = 3.50, SD = 1.21) show that most of the respondents often actively participate in a work setting. With regard to counterproductive work behaviour, the (mean = 2.57, SD = 1.26) revealed that a significant number of the respondents sometimes complain about unimportant matters at work. The (mean = 1.54, SD = 1.23) revealed that the majority of the respondents seldom had problems greater than they were at work. The (mean = 1.56, SD = 1.22) revealed that the majority of the respondents seldom focus on the negative aspects of a work situation instead of the positive aspects in their organizations. The (mean = 2.59, SD = 1.30) show that a greater number of the respondents sometimes speak with colleagues about the negative aspect of their work in their organizations. The (mean = 2.59, SD = 1.26) implies that most of the respondents sometimes speak with colleagues about the negative aspect of their work. Also, the (mean = 2.59, SD = 1.26) revealed that a vast majority of the respondents sometimes speak with people from outside their organizations about negative aspects of their work.

Job Resources at selected MSMEs

Using a Likert scale of 1-5, 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree to the following statements that measure job resources in the organization.

Table 7 Descriptive results of Job Resources

Job Resources	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std. Dev.
I get my job done on time.	1.00	5.00	4.6354	1.25797
I have the knowledge, skills and abilities to get my job done properly.	1.00	5.00	4.5367	1.23836
I have the flexibility in the execution of my job.	1.00	5.00	4.5494	1.27429
I have the autonomy and control over the execution of my job.	1.00	5.00	4.6709	1.27173
I have the opportunity of learning new things through my work.	1.00	5.00	3.6937	1.27245
I get the help and support needed from my colleagues.	1.00	5.00	4.4746	1.23997
I am given the needed tools to perform my work.	1.00	5.00	4.5924	1.22927
I am paid enough for the work I do.	1.00	5.00	2.7349	1.12717
I receive sufficient information about the purpose of my work.	1.00	5.00	4.5722	1.22650
I am allowed to attend training courses.	1.00	5.00	2.5646	1.26162

Source: Fieldwork, 2021.

From table 7, the majority of the respondents agreed that they get their jobs done on time in their respective workplaces, with a (mean = 4.63, SD = 1.25). Also, the majority of the respondents agreed that they have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to get their job done properly in their workplaces (mean = 4.53, SD = 1.23). As well, the (mean = 4.54, SD = 1.27) revealed that most of the respondents agreed that they have flexibility in the execution of their job. In addition, the (mean = 4.67, SD = 1.27) revealed that most of the respondents agreed that they have autonomy and control over the execution of their jobs in their organizations. The (mean = 3.69, SD = 1.27) show that most of the respondents were neutral in their responses on whether they have the opportunity to learn new things through their work. The (mean = 4.47, SD = 1.23) show that the majority of the respondents agreed that they get the help and support needed for their colleagues. Also, the (mean = 4.59, SD = 1.22) show that most of the respondents agreed that they were given the needed tools to perform their work. The (mean = 2.73, SD = 1.12) show that the majority of the respondents disagreed that they are paid enough

for the work that they do in their organizations. Likewise, the (mean = 4.57, SD = 1.22) show that the majority of the respondents agreed that they have received sufficient information about the purpose of their work in their organizations. Also, the (mean = 2.56, SD = 1.26) revealed that a significant number of the respondents disagreed that they should be allowed to attend training courses. The implication is that the majority of the respondents were in agreement with all the above statements, with the exception of the statements on training and salary. A majority of the respondents disagreed with the statements "I am paid enough for the work I do" and "I am allowed to attend training courses."

Table 8 Model Fit

Model 1	CFA	Chi-Square	SRMR	CMIN/DF	CFI	PClose	RMS EA
Suggested Cut-off values	0.761	352.515	<.0012	<3.415	<.745	<.000	<.113
CFA Measurement model	0.843	365.438	.00764	15.127	1.098	.0054	.431

Source: field survey, 2022

Effect of Job Resources on EE

Path A studied the link between job resources and EE in the selected MSMEs. The results ($\beta = 1.548, p = 0.001$) showed that job resources significantly predicted EE in the selected MSMEs. Thus, once employees are provided with the needed resources, engagement levels will increase.

Effect of EE on Employee Performance

Path C ($\beta = 1.550, p = 0.000$) showing that there was a positive and significant relationship between EE and employee performance in the selected MSMEs. This means that when EE levels go high, performance of employees will also increase, and vice-versa.

The moderating role of Job Resources on the relationship between EE and Employee Performance

The fifth and final hypothesis investigated the moderating role of job demands on EE and performance in the selected MSMEs.

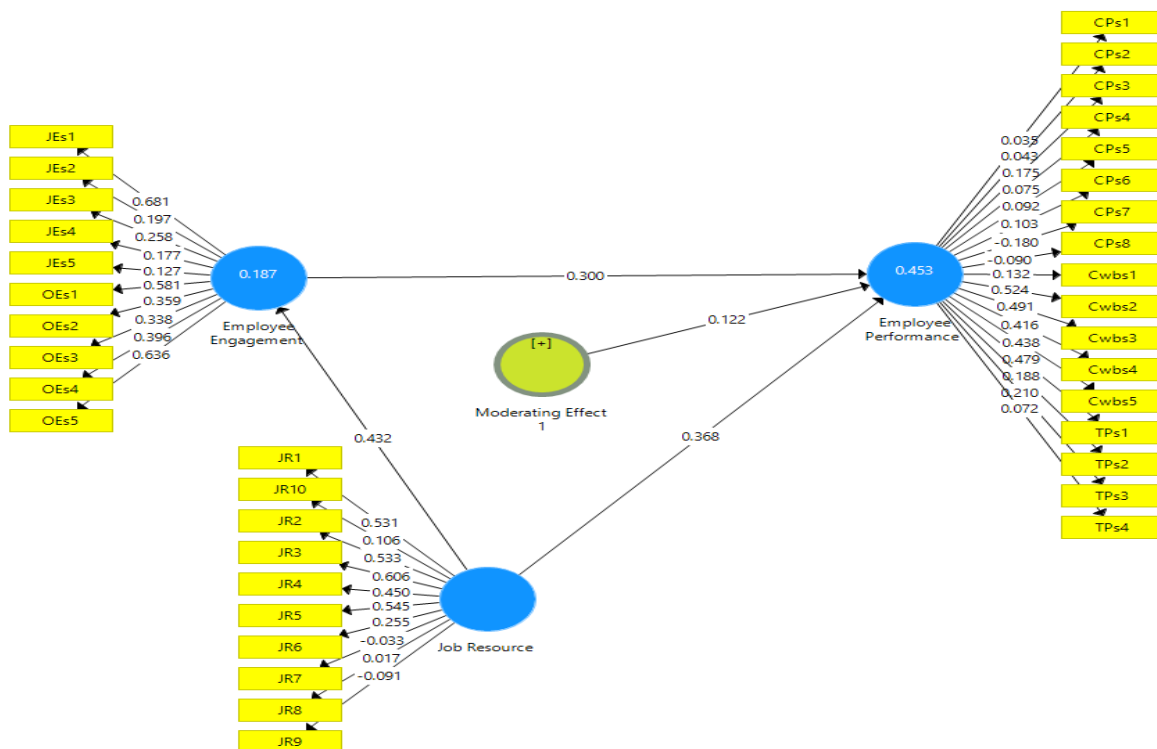


Table 9 Moderation effect results for Job resources

Path	Beta coefficient	Standard error	t-statistics	p-value
EE -> Employee performance	0.300	0.028	11.584	0.000
Job resources _ -> EE	0.432	0.041	9.494	0.001
Job resources _ -> Employee Perf.	0.368	0.024	7.061	0.000
Moderating Effect 1	0.122	0.039	9.371	0.003

Source: field survey, 2022

Based on the findings in Table 4.10 above, the results ($\beta = 0.300$, p -value = 0.000) indicated that EE and employee performance have a positive and significant relationship in the selected MSMEs. Similarly, EE contributes to employee performance in the selected MSMEs. The following step investigated the link between job resources and employee engagement; the resultant ($\beta = 0.432$, p -value = 0.001) demonstrated that job resources significantly predicted EE in the selected MSMEs. In step two, job resources were included in the equation, and the results show that job resources can predict EE significantly in the selected MSMEs. In step three, the relationship between job resources and employee performance was also investigated. The results ($\beta = 0.368$, p -value = 0.000) revealed that there is a positive and significant link between job resources and employee performance in the selected MSMEs. Therefore, providing employees with the resources they require will influence them to improve their performance in the organization. Finally, the moderating effect is investigated. The results ($\beta = 0.122$, p -value = 0.003) showed that job resources moderated the correlation between EE and employee performance in the MSMEs sector during the pandemic.

Discussions

Employees are essentially an organization's true representatives and brand ambassadors; as a result, their dedication to the company and their performance within it add value to the organization. However, the private and work lives of employees have been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn has led to employee anxiety, frustration, and burnout (Aditama & Setyo Riyanto, 2020). Schaufeli (2017) found out that employees who are going through these psychological stresses are also associated with occupational injuries and accidents, poor work performance, and reduced productivity, which also affect the overall organizational performance. With regard to the JD-R theory, job (and personal) resources reduce burnout and psychological stress and also boost EE (Schaufeli, 2017). Thus, the current study was conducted to examine the impact of EE on employee performance, with job demands as a moderator, using MSMEs in Ghana as evidence. According to the regression analysis model, job demands were found to have insignificant effects on employee engagement. The study proposed three hypotheses, and data was collected and analysed using the questionnaire and PLS-SEM techniques, respectively, to test the hypotheses. The empirical findings did not significantly support all of the suggested research hypotheses. The findings are extensively discussed below, based on each objective of the study.

The Effect of Job Resources on EE

The first objective of this study was to examine the effect of job resources on EE. The study's results supported the positive and significant link between job resources and EE in the selected MSMEs as hypothesized. This result is empirically supported. For instance, In the context of South Sudan, Kenyi & John (2020) investigated the relationships that exist between job demands, job resources, and EE. The findings revealed that job resources have a positive influence on EE. Similarly, Jauhari & Yulianti (2020) discovered that job resources have a significant positive influence on EE & that EE also mediates the association between job resources and turnover intentions. In a study of 163 employees, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009) used SEM analyses to study the longitudinal relationship between job resources,

personal resources, and EE. The study's findings revealed that job resources were positively related to work engagement. Furthermore, Bakker et al. (2007) discovered that increased job resources have a significant positive impact on work engagement. Albrecht and Marty (2020) investigated the impact of self-efficacy and job resources on EE, affective commitment, and intention to leave. According to the findings, job resources had both direct and indirect effects on engagement. Chavararria et al. (2016) investigated EE and exhaustion and how it was influenced by the correlation between job resources, personal resources, and job demands, with a focus on juvenile probation and parole officers. The findings revealed that both job resources and job demands had a statistically significant effect on employee exhaustion, but only job resources had a statistically significant effect on EE. Job resources clearly have a positive relationship with engagement, as empirical evidence from several studies in different professions and countries confirms (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

According to Farndale and Murrer (2015), job resources like team climate, financial rewards, and participation in decisions impact EE in MSMEs. Again, results from a study conducted by Albrecht and Marty (2020) found a strong and significant association between job resources and EE. Christian et al. (2011) stated that job resources such as feedback, social support from supervisors, healthy relationships, and transformational leadership predictors increase EE. In this study, though majority of the respondents reported that training and financial rewards were inadequate during this period of Covid-19, however, this did not greatly affect their engagement levels. This may be that employees are much aware of the global economic distress and its attendant job losses as a result of the pandemic, and thus, they are willing and ready to work, giving the available job resources so as to help their enterprises thrive, and also secure their jobs. This is not to say that during this period of pandemic, certain job resources (e.g. financial incentives) are less important in enhancing EE; but, since most of the organizations in the sector are experiencing financial difficulties, focusing on other job resources such as providing employees with flexibility and autonomy, tools and materials, and social support are key to boost EE. Indeed, job resources have an inherent motivating quality; they energize employees and make them feel engaged (Schaufeli 2017). Similarly, this research postulates that during the Covid-19 pandemic, job resources drive EE.

The Effect of EE on Employee Performance

The results of the current study indicate that EE is a significant predictor of employee performance in the MSMEs sector during the Covid-19 as presented in the regression model. Also, correlation analysis results indicate that EE is positively related to employee performance. The second hypothesis (H2) is therefore supported. This means that a positive change in job and organization engagement would result in a positive change in task, contextual, and counterproductive performance of employees, and vice versa. The result is consistent with previous studies. For instance, Tanwar (2017) conducted a study to evaluate the effect of EE on employee and performance. The study found a positive and significant effect of EE on employee performance. In addition, Ismail, Iqbal, & Nasr (2019) explored the link between EE and job performance in Lebanon. According to the findings, EE has a significant positive effect on job performance, which is consistent with the findings of this study. Anitha (2014) also looked at the major factors of EE and how they affect performance. The findings indicated that all of the listed characteristics were determinants of EE, with the working environment and team and co-worker relationships having the greatest influence. Similarly, Novitasari, Asbari & Purwanto (2020) found out that EE contributes significantly to improve employee performance. This result is in line with a study done by Kasimu et al., (2018), which revealed that through training and development, employees are engaged leading to employee performance. Also, Jepkorir (2014), studied the link between EE and performance in an organization. It was concluded that EE influences the quality work in the organization. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, EE has a significant effect on employee performance in Ghana's MSMEs sector. EE was primarily explained by organizational and job factors. Aside from organizational and job factors, respondents' demographics: age, gender, marital status, and number of children were strongly related to EE. The findings are in

agreement with those of a study conducted by Khodakarami and Dirani (2020), who discovered that age and gender have an impact on the level of EE. According to the study, women were more engaged than men. Furthermore, younger employees were more engaged than older employees. Likewise, in this study, EE may have been influenced by these demographics, because data on the demographic characteristics of respondents showed that majority of the employees in the selected MSMEs were female, and also these MSMEs had youthful population. In summary, the findings of the study indicate that EE is a driver of positive employee performance in Ghana's MSMEs sector.

Job Resources moderate the relationship between Employee Engagement and Employee Performance

Additionally, the regression analysis results show that job resources significantly moderate the link between EE and employee performance in the selected MSMEs during COVID-19. This means that the fourth hypothesis (H4) is supported. The result is in line with a study conducted by Van Wingerden, Derks and Bakker (2017) which examined the influence of organizational interventions on work engagement and performance. The study adopted the job demands–resources model, and postulated that a personal resources intervention would have a positive effect on EE and performance. The personal resources initiative had a favourable measurable impact on work engagement and job performance, according to the findings. Work and personal resources, such as motivation for public service, are associated with EE in a positive way. Schaufeli (2017) found out that job resources (the "good things") have an intrinsic motivating quality; they boost employees' morale and make them feel engaged, which leads to better outcomes, such as improved employee performance. Therefore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the five job resources (financial rewards, training and development, social support, tools and materials, and flexibility and autonomy) proposed in the study are key drivers of employee engagement which in turn improve employee performance. The implication is that, the performances of employees of the selected MSMEs in Ghana during the pandemic are enhanced via job and organizational engagement, which are also directly caused by these job resources.

Table 10 Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	p-values	Decision
H1	Job Resources -> EE	0.001	Supported
H2	EE -> Employee Performance	0.000	Supported
H3	Job Resources* EE-> Employee Performance	0.003	Supported

Source: field survey, 2022

CONCLUSION

The aims of the study were: to examine the effect of employee engagement on employee performance; to investigate the moderating role of job demands on the link between EE and employee performance in selected MSMEs in Ghana. EE, as previously said, is the most important aspect in improving employee performance. However, Aditama & Setyo Riyanto (2020) found out that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on employees' private and professional lives, resulting in employee anxiety, frustration, and burnout. In the same way, Kansal (2021) discovered that job insecurity, work-life imbalance, psychological stress, and collaboration and communication issues are some of the related workplace challenges of the pandemic. The study also stated that if these factors are not addressed, they can have a negative impact on employee performance, affecting an organization's ability to survive. According to Dixit & Singh (2020), EE is the necessary nutrient for modern organizations to thrive. As a result, increasing EE among employees during a pandemic is critical for organizations to ensure the sustainability of their businesses (Shortland, 2021). Thus, a study on EE and the impact it has on employee performance in the MSMEs sector is important in this period.

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