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Mediating effect of job satisfaction on talent engagement and employees' commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service

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Abstract: The Nigerian Civil Service faces ongoing challenges in optimizing employee commitment, which is fundamental for efficient service delivery and societal progress. Hence, this paper focuses on the mediating effect of job satisfaction on talent engagement and employee commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service. The study adopted a quantitative approach, which allowed for a survey design to be adopted. A sample of 198 middle- and lower-level managers in the civil service was used. Questionnaires were used for data collection, and SmartPls 3.9 was used for data analysis. The result showed that talent engagement significantly predicts employee commitment and that job satisfaction is a good mediator in the relationship between talent engagement and employee commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service. The findings suggest that creating an engaged workforce through talent engagement can have a positive influence on employee commitment within the public sector, which can result in improved public services and contribute to overall societal development.

Keywords: job satisfaction; talent; employees; commitment; Nigeria; civil service

1. Introduction

The ever-competitive nature of the business environment has been attributed to the increased talent war in business circles (Kaleem, 2019). Talent is a set of enduring qualities and attributes that allow for long-term sustainability and growth, both for the individual and for the organisation (Bhattacharyya, 2015). It may come easier for private firms, given their access to large resources, work structure, and goodwill; the same cannot be said for public firms, given their seemingly poor ability to manage talents. Kravariti and Johnston (2020) stated that talent needs are greater in the public sector given the enormous and challenging roles and demands involved, especially for service-provider public institutions. This informs the view of Ogohi (2019), who states that a major challenge for poor public institution performance is associated with its inability to attract, retain, and maintain talent in its corporation.

Consequently, there has been varying literature on approaches towards talent attraction and retention (Lyria et al., 2017; Kehinde, 2012), and several other studies have shown that attracting and retaining talent in both the public and private sectors has a direct influence on commitment (Osaro, 2016; Kaliprasad, 2006). This has prompted efforts towards attracting, retaining, and developing the talent pool in organisations; however, while for private firms it has yielded some level of result in the employee's commitment, the reality in the public sector has rather been complex and conflicting (Boselie and Thunnissen, 2017; Poocharoen and Lee, 2013), hence making one wonder how engaging talent in the public service could drive employee

commitments.

In developing economies, most especially in Nigeria, where the civil service, like all over the world, implements government policies and programmes, there is an urgent need to understand the gap that a lack of talent engagement has posed to employees' commitment to the civil service. This is because the civil service has been characterised by poor employee attitudes to work, absenteeism, increased turnover, and delirium of duty, among other things (Osawe, 2015; Omisore and Okofu, 2014; Ishaq, 2013). These symptoms are what Osawe (2015) describes because of poor commitment to work. Hence, the question arises: how can talent engagement be advanced towards improving employee's commitment to work in the Nigerian public service?

Despite recognition of the significance of talent engagement, a gap persists in understanding the specific mechanisms through which it influences employee commitment within this context. Additionally, while job satisfaction's pivotal role is acknowledged, there remains a need to comprehensively explore its mediating impact in the relationship between talent engagement and employee commitment. This research aims to address these gaps by investigating the intricate interplay among talent engagement, job satisfaction, and employee commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service, thereby providing valuable insights for organizational enhancement and policy formulation.

Talent engagement, or interchangeably used employee engagement and commitment, have conflicting and inconsistent studies on their relationship (Friday and Sunday, 2019; Rameshkumar, 2020), especially for public sector firms (Poocharoen and Lee, 2013), thus implying that there are other factors that could help explain the relationship and provide better clarity to the relationship. Some studies have shown that job satisfaction significantly predicts commitment (Suharto et al., 2019; Valaei and Rezaei, 2016); however, how job satisfaction mediates the relationship between talent engagement and commitment remains silent in the literature.

It is this gap, among others, that this study seeks to close. Also, arguments on how talent can be engaged in public service have remained scarce, and attention seems to be focused on developed economies; the reality for developing economies remains limited, and to the best of the author's knowledge, none exists. Hence, this paper seeks to unravel the mediating effect of job satisfaction on talent engagement and employee commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service. The central objective of this study is to account for the direct effect of talent engagement on employee commitment while also accounting for the indirect effect of job satisfaction on this relationship.

2. Theoretical reviews

The theory used to underpin this study is Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1943). In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, human desire is categorized into four namely: psychological, safety, love and esteem, and self-actualization need (Aruma and Hanachor, 2017). At a psychological level, the needs are basically food, shelter, sleep, clothes, and so on. At the safety level the concern is about security and safety of individual environment and work while at the level of love, the desire is to be loved,

a sense of belonging and affection. Lastly the self-actualization need is where the potential of an individual is recognised (Onah, 2015).

Employees newly starting out in their careers will be satisfied as long as the job they are engaged in is able to meet the basic needs of the individual such as food, clothes, and shelter, and given the high rate of unemployment in the country and the over-dependent on government job believed to have the most form of job security. Employees will commit and willingly contribute towards the achievement of organizational goals as long as they are able to meet these needs. However, human beings are complex and unpredictable, in reality, employees may be desiring needs from different levels of the hierarchical need at the same time (Richter et al., 2017), still, the theory helped to explain that, job satisfaction is not static as employees are not static. To engage talents, organizations must be able to meet needs at each level of the hierarchy as different employees desire different needs at different times and there could be a combination of the need factors to drive performance and commitment.

3. Conceptual clarification

3.1. Talent engagement

The focus of organisations in recent times is to attract and engage talented employees as it serves as a sure strategy to ensure competitive advantage and promote the success and advancement of such organization (Levinson, 2007). Talent engagement is the tactic an organization uses to create connections with prospective talented applicants through strategic communication and other mediums with the aim of gaining their interest and support for the organisation (Lori 2019). Talent engagement refers to enticing skillful workers and ensuring their dedication and commitment to the standards, objectives, and ethics of the organisation (Jakubik, 2016). The phases of talent management are all-inclusive, and commence from the point of selecting from the pool of prospective individuals, to the recruiting phase and throughout their professional advancement till departure (Bakker, 2011).

Talent engagement differs from employee engagement as the former is a segment and part of employee engagement while employee engagement is a wider and encompassing view of engagement (Jakubik, 2016; Marrelli, 2011). Employee engagement has to do with the extent to which workers relate and bond with their jobs and is dedicated to the objective of the organisation and the organisation itself (Salimath and Kavitha, 2019). Jakubik (2016) stated that the critical differentiating factor is the focus on competency in differentiating talent and employee engagement. Also, Lusa and Luukkonen (2012) stated that talent engagement is capability-focused focused that is aimed at using the individual's skill to ensure favourable results for the organisations and its employees.

Similarly, Keeble and Armitage (2014) asserted that with effective talent engagement, organisations have been able to achieve increased financial gains which can be said to be a result of employees' dedication. Also, Lopez et al. (2015) stated that to engage talents there is a need for effective and competent leadership, as there are certain attributes managers must have to successfully engage talents, and they include: the ability to clarify objectives and functions of workers, take into

consideration differences while maintaining organization fitness, honest and genuine communication, principled and honourable, understand the different array of skills of his workers and encourage their growth, and express confidence in their workers and support difference in opinions and differences in workers.

In addition, managers must be ready to receive criticism, fix sensible performance criteria for themselves and the workers, and be able to give criticism when performance is below the bar set (Goriup and Šoba, 2015). Talent engagement underscores the necessity of integrating mentoring practices to enhance the competence and efficacy of employees, ensuring the successful attraction and sustained retention of skilled individuals (Dickson et al., 2013). Although talent engagement has received considerable attention within the public service domain, there exists a scarcity of studies examining talent engagement specifically through the lens of public service, thus serving as a pivotal motivation for this research endeavour.

3.2. Job satisfaction

In every organization, human resources is one of the essential factors determining the extent of organizational performance and the edge the organization will have over its closest rival (Malik and Kanwal, 2016). Human resources are among the prized resources necessary for the survival of the organisation; hence, job satisfaction is one of the determinants of how they rate their work which consequently affects their attitude toward the job (Mohammd et al., 2019). Employees with high job satisfaction perform better and are more committed to their jobs compared to those with low job satisfaction (Qasim and Syed, 2012), which makes the concept of job satisfaction a common topic of discussion for managers.

The concept of job satisfaction is among the highly researched concepts and a major focus of leaders and scholars (Wann-Yin and Htaik, 2011; Qasim and Syed, 2012; Kim et al., 2017). Job satisfaction refers to the state of mind of a worker towards work, and it is seen as the favourable and unfavourable disposition towards work (Ucar and Otken, 2010). Miao (2011) stated that job satisfaction deals with the complete health, safety, and welfare of a worker in an organization, it is an innate examination of the work and everything associated with the work in terms of its positivity or negativity.

Job satisfaction is about favourable and unfavourable emotions of an employee towards their job (Luthans, 2011). It is clear that job satisfaction has to do with the feelings employees have towards their job. However, job satisfaction is affected by certain factors. Certain factors at work and in the job will make an employee to have a positive and favourable disposition about their jobs and vice versa. Hakkak et al. (2014), opined that job satisfaction is either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Elements influencing intrinsic satisfaction include ethics, societal ranking, and expertise while elements affecting extrinsic satisfaction include wages, advancement, esteem, and communication.

Mishra (2013) held that factors affecting job satisfaction can be categorized into personal factors, job factors, and managerial factors. Under the personal factor, gender, and academic qualification are elements affecting job satisfaction. He posited that women enjoyed higher job satisfaction than men, age has little influence on job

satisfaction, and that highly trained employees are likely to experience low job satisfaction compared to others. For the job factor, the nature of the job, requisite talent, job ranking, and duty are elements under this factor. He believed the nature of the job contributes largely to job satisfaction as factory workers are mostly less satisfied compared to other staff in an organization, those with talents and considerable expertise experience high job satisfaction, and those with higher ranking have favourable job satisfaction than those at the lower rank. Lastly, the managerial factors have elements such as pay, job environment, and welfare package. He asserted that organizations that pay higher, have a favourable working environment and higher welfare package will lead to high and favourable job satisfaction.

3.3. Employee commitment

Another important element responsible for the success of any organisation, particularly with the intense struggle to attract and retain talent is employee commitment. Commitment is the level of a person's participation and involvement in an organisation (Ramalho Luz et al., 2018). It refers to a situation where a worker is voluntarily, continually, and dedicated to the accomplishment of organizational goals (Febriansyah, 2010). He further opined that it is natural for a worker to be dedicated to an organization when it is meeting their primary desire and affirming their relevance. Invariably, the features of commitment are trust and reliance on corporate objectives and ethics, readiness to contribute meaningfully towards the success of the organisation, and readiness to continually be part of the organisation. Saks (2006) stated that commitment has the ability to influence attitude as it leads employees to regulate behaviour in alignment with what they are dedicated to. Moreover, when employees are involved in resolutions, their commitment level will be heightened.

A committed employee will continue working with an organisation, readily contribute, and willingly put in more effort even in good and bad times (Ayandele and Isichei, 2013). Employees who are committed desire to have pleasure in doing their job, and have a sense of being valued and recognized for their efforts toward achieving corporate goals (Vance, 2006). Hence, factors responsible for employee commitment are gratification, impartiality, and attention to workers. It is worth noting that employee commitment affects corporate performance (Ivancevich, 2010).

Organisations are beginning to understand that committed personnel is crucial for continuous achievement and performance. Commitment reduces the loss of competent employees to rival organizations, especially with the present desire for organizations to attract and retain their skillful and competent and with the recognition that the continuous accomplishment of organisation relies largely on workers who are steady and dedicated to organizational success (Ramsay and Finney, 2006). Lockwood (2007) stated that the essential component that influences commitment is the connection between the supervisor and the worker. Therefore, the supervisor needs to establish cordial and quality relationships with the workers to create an enabling environment that can foster employee commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualised commitment into affective, normative, and continuance. The first mentioned deals with workers having an emotive relationship with the organisation while the second mentioned are when the worker

feels indebted to the organisation and the last typology happens as a result of the inability of the worker to get employed in another organisation (Madi et al., 2012). Therefore, to ensure employee's commitment, organisation need to identify the importance of their workers and the efforts they exert towards the progress of their organisation. This means organisation should have regard and value their workers beyond the outdated style of seeing employees as just part of the mix but by ensuring their efforts are recognized and are treated fairly so that they effortlessly contribute towards the success of the organisation (Madi et al., 2012). In this paper, the effective form of commitment is the focus and the choice of this commitment is because it will be more relevant for the public service, as despite its offering little there is a willingness to continue with the service.

3.4. Relationship between talent engagement and employee commitment

Talent engagement is crucial for employee commitment, and the extent of organizational success depends on the perfect usage and practises of both concepts. Friday and Sunday (2019) found that the extent of an employee's commitment is the degree the worker obtains gratification and motivation from doing their work and identifying with the organisation, commitment is the bond an employee has with an organization, participation, and dedication towards corporate objectives while talent engagement is the process of attracting and retaining skillful and qualified candidates while ensuring they are committed to the organization. Oladapo (2014) found that talent engagement ensures there is continuous supply and maximization of needed competent and expert workers to achieve the organization's goals and value.

Invariably, talent engagement and commitment will to favourable outcomes for an organisation, therefore, to enjoy the advantages of these practices there is a need to have a clear and systematic strategy for attracting and recruiting talents into the organization, creating and executing policies that aid quality attraction and retention of workers, practise effective staffing, performance management and develop an assessment and feedback tool for effective communication to foster engagement (Vance, 2006). Lockwood (2007) stated that the crucial element that affects commitment is the connection between the supervisor and the worker. Therefore, the supervisor needs to establish cordial and quality relationships with the workers to facilitate commitment. Hence, we propose that:

H_1: Talent engagement has a positive and significant effect on employee's commitment to the Nigeria civil service.

3.5. Relationship between talent engagement, job satisfaction, and employee commitment

Job satisfaction is an integral component ensuring employee commitment necessary for the advancement and lucrativeness of an organisation (Ahmed et al., 2010). According to the research carried out by Feinstein and Vondrasek (2001), job satisfaction and employee commitment have a basis and outcome connection and job satisfaction will lead to employee commitment. Job satisfaction is the basis while commitment is the outcome. Rastgoo (2016) found a link between talent engagement and job satisfaction. Meanwhile, job satisfaction affects employee's behaviour and

defines the degree an employee is satisfied with the benefits derived from the job (Statt, 2004). Desirable behaviour and undesirable behaviour towards work affect the effectiveness of the workers, turnover, and commitment (Armstrong, 2006).

Samwel (2018) observed that job satisfaction favourably influences the commitment and success of an organisation and supervisors should highly regard the issues surrounding the dedication and commitment of their staff as the outcome will be unfavourable to any organisation experiencing a low level of commitment. Furthermore, the study carried out by Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) revealed there is a substantial connection between job satisfaction and commitment which is in line with the summation of Dirani and Kuchinke (2011) who added that job satisfaction forecast commitment. Consequently, when employees are satisfied with their jobs, they easily commit to the organization, it is necessary for managers to create a working environment that ensures their employees are fulfilled while engaging in activities that contribute to the success of the organization. Hence, we propose that:

H_2: Talent engagement has a significant and positive effect on job satisfaction

We argue that a satisfied workforce tends to exhibit higher levels of commitment, which is a notion underpinning the assumption that contented employees are more likely to demonstrate dedication, loyalty, and a willingness to go beyond their formal duties, thus contributing significantly to the achievement of organizational goals. Consequently, the assertion of job satisfaction as a primary influencer of employee commitment within the Nigerian Civil Service underscores the imperative for fostering workplace contentment as a strategic means to cultivate a committed and engaged workforce. Moreover, workers who are highly committed are effective, dedicated with a high sense of accountability are highly valuable and cost-effective to such organisation (Demirel and Goc, 2013).

Invariably, organization should ensure satisfaction at every level of activities while taking into consideration the job factor and managerial factors. Under the job factor, the nature of the job, requisite talent, job ranking, and duty are elements under this factor. The nature of the job should be made attractive and honourable, there are cases where job titles are changed in organizations so that employees will have pride in what they do. For example, changing the job title from "Messenger" to Office Assistant", from "Cleaner" to "Office Support Officer" has an effect on the intrinsic nature of satisfaction. Moreover, when employees understand they can advance from the lower ladder to the top hierarchy of the organization, this adds to the satisfaction they have in the job. Lastly, in managerial factors, we have elements such as pay, job environment, and welfare package. The more attractive the pay and benefits an employee derives working for an organization has a positive effect on their satisfaction level, moreover, when the working environment and supervision are conducive, supportive, and cordial, there will be increased job satisfaction. Hence, we propose that:

H_3: Job satisfaction significantly affects employee's commitment to the Nigeria civil service.

H_4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between talent engagement and employee's commitment in the Nigeria civil service.

4. Methodology

Cross-sectional survey design was adopted and was informed by the nature of the study which requires that information should be gathered across a cross-section of participants to make informed conclusions about the study of interest. A sample of 212 employees was drawn from employees in three Federal Civil Service, which are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Defence. The choice of these ministries is because they are the major engine room of governance in the country. Participants in the survey are employees from grade level 8 to 15. The choice of the sample range was because they form the lower and middle-level managers and given time and strength on their part retaining them is always difficult compared to management staff in the service. The sampling technique was a mix of purposive and simple sampling techniques and permission was obtained from the Head of service of the federation for the distribution of the instrument, however, the most critical was the willingness to take part in the survey. G-power analysis showed the required sample was 108 to achieve high statistical power, however, given the sample is above, the sample will be retained. Internal consistency and construct and criterion measures was used for reliability and validity respectively. Partial least square was used for data analysis and this was done with the aid of SmartPLSv3.9. See **Figure 1** for the theoretical model.
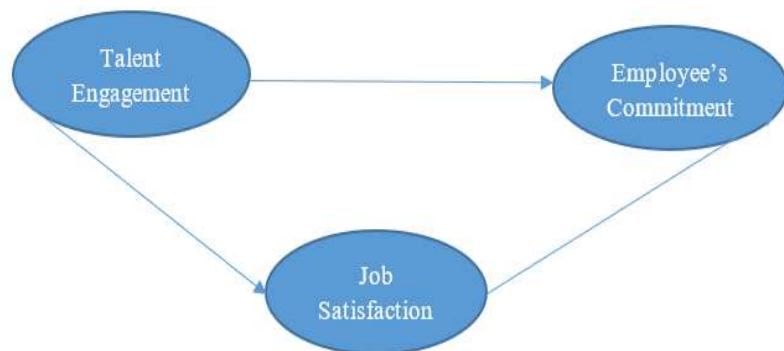

Figure 1. Conceptual diagram showing the mediating effect of job satisfaction on talent engagement and employee's commitment.

5. Measures

5.1. Talent engagement

Talent engagement was measured using a self-designed instrument, however, some of the items the scale of were adapted from the conceptualization of Jakubik (2016), Men (2015), and the scale of Sendawula et al. (2018). The instrument has 12 items and the scale format is Likert that designed from strongly agree to strongly disagreed. Sample of the scale is "I am actively involved in any activity in the organisation that leads to greater performance", and "I have a strong sense of dedication given my competence on the job assigned to me". Factor analysis from the pilot study of 35 samples in the private sector, specifically, two telecommunication firms in FCT, showed that the KMO and Sphericity test were significant (0.701, <0.001), and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was 0.754. The result of the factor

analysis showed that 5 items were dropped, and 7 items were retained given the factor scores were within the threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Pallant (2011).

5.2. Employees commitment

Employee commitment was measured with 8 items adapted from the study of Mahmood et al. (2019), Meyer et al. (1993), and Chen (2006). The instrument was designed in a Likert scale format of strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. The instrument item samples are "I work beyond the actual expected since it will lead to improving the performance of the civil service"; "I ensure that the services rendered to the public are placed above my personal interest and comfort". Factor analysis from the pilot study of 35 samples in the private sector, specifically, two telecommunication firms in FCT, showed that the KMO and Sphericity test were significant (0.819, <0.001), and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was at 0.831. The result of the factor analysis showed that 3 items were dropped, and 5 items were retained given the factor scores were within the threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Pallant (2011).

5.3. Job satisfaction

The instrument for measuring job satisfaction in this study was adapted from the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Chen, 2006) and the scale of Price (1977). The instrument has 15 items all designed in a Likert scale format of strongly agreed to strongly disagreed, designed in a Likert scale format of strongly agreed to strongly disagreed. Factor analysis from the pilot study of 35 samples in the private sector, specifically, two telecommunication firms in FCT, showed that KMO and Sphericity test were significant (0.741, <0.001), and the Cronbach alpha coefficient was at 0.764. The result of the factor analysis showed that 8 items were dropped, and 7 items were retained given the factor scores were within the threshold of 0.70 as recommended by Pallant (2011).

6. Result and discussions

The usable instrument from the sample distribution of 212 instruments was 198 (93%) out of the retrieved total of 200. The demographic distribution of the respondents showed male respondents were 97 (49%) and female are 101 (51%). The age bracket from the data shows respondents between 20–30 years are 16 (8%), 31–40 years are 79 (40%), 41–50 years are 68 (34%) and 51 years and above are 35 (18%). Current grade levels of respondents show that levels 6–8 are 76 (38%), levels 9–12 are 58 (29%), and grade levels 12–15 are 64 (33%). The result shows a balance in the distribution of the various cadre of respondents who took part in the survey.

6.1. Measurement model

The assessment of the models led to the removal of some items that failed to meet the threshold of 0.70 Latan and Noonan, (2017) recommended. This led to the removal of 4 items for talent engagement, 3 items for employee commitment, and 4 items for job satisfaction. The PLS algorithm converged after iteration five. The variance inflation factor (VIF) result shows the absence of a collinearity problem given the values are below the thresholds recommended (Latan and Noonan, 2017). The

Cronbach alpha, rho_A, composite reliability result, and average variance extracted (AVE) were within the threshold recommended (Hair et al., 2019) (see **Table 1**). Fornell-larcker criterion for convergent and discriminant validity was satisfied, the AVE was greater than the correlations and the HTMT inference ratio was less than 1 (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 1. Factor loadings.

Constructs	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Talent engagement		0.708	0.715	0.835	0.628
TE1	0.805				
TE2	0.790				
TE3	0.782				
Employee's commitment		0.841	0.842	0.926	0.863
EC1	0.811				
EC2	0.752				
Job satisfaction		0.799	0.834	0.879	0.708
JS1	0.846				
JS2	0.814				
JS3	0.862				

Source: Authors computation using SmartPlsv3.9.

6.2. Structural path model

The structural paths show all the paths are positive, which implies that talent engagement directly influences employee's commitment and the relationship is mediated by job satisfaction. Talent engagement explains about 36.8% of changes in employee's commitment and when mediated with job satisfaction, it accounts for 23.8% of changes in employee's commitment (see **Figure 2**), thus, implying a moderate coefficient of determination (Henseler & Chin, 2010). The result shows that talent engagement directly predicts job satisfaction and employee's commitment, while job satisfaction also predicts employee's commitment. Hair et al. (2019) recommended that path coefficients above 0.2 imply the relationship is strong, thus is on this basis that the study that there is a positive strong relationship between talent engagement and employee's commitment and job satisfaction has strongly mediated the relationship between talent engagement and employee's commitment.
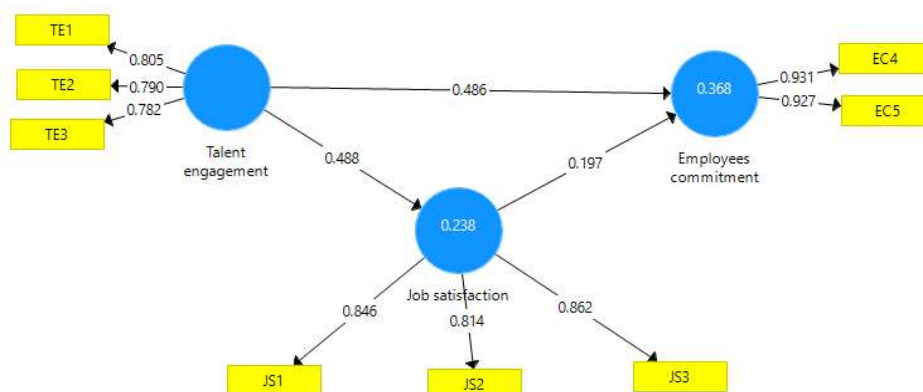

Figure 2. The structural path on talent engagement, job satisfaction, and employee's commitment.

The significance of the relationships was assessed using the *p*-value. The output shows that not all the paths are significant, given that not all the paths are above the *t*-value of 1.96 recommended by Streukens and Leroi-Werelds (2016) for path significance using the *t*-value. Not all the *p*-values are less than 0.05, as seen in **Table 2** and **Figure 3** below.

Table 2. Path significance.

	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Hypothesis decision
Talent engagement -> Employee's commitment	0.085	5.686	0.000	Accept H_1
Talent engagement -> Job satisfaction	0.075	6.538	0.000	Accept H_2
Job satisfaction -> Employee's commitment	0.106	1.860	0.063	Reject H_3
Talent engagement -> Employee's commitment -> Job satisfaction	0.194	2.052	0.000	Accept H_4

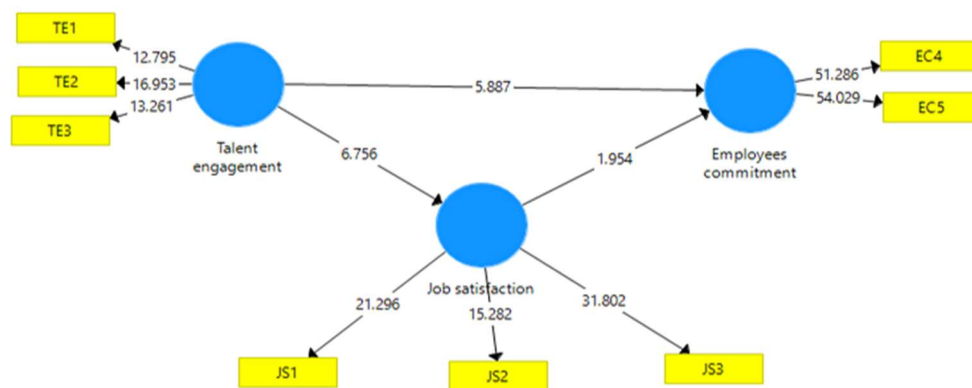Source: Author's computation, 2022.

Figure 3. Significance model on the relationship between lean management practices, workplace structure, and performance of telecommunications firms.

The result shows that talent engagement has a significant effect on employee's commitment given the *t*-value (5.686) is above 1.96 and the *p*-value is less than 0.05. This is consistent with the findings of Oladapo (2014) and Friday and Sunday (2019), which also found that talent engagement has a significant influence on employees' commitment. **Table 2** also shows that talent engagement has a significant influence on job satisfaction as the *t*-value (6.538) is greater than 1.96 and the *p*-value is less than 0.05. The result finding agrees with the study of Rastgoo, (2016) who also found that talent engagement significantly influences job satisfaction. Findings from **Table 2** indicate that employee's commitment does not influence job satisfaction, however, while this does not conform so much with existing literature such as Almansour (2012), and Altinoz et al. (2012); it is also worth observing that these studies were even carried out in the private sector; therefore, the result could be because the study was carried out in the public sector. Thus, conclusions could be drawn that employees' commitment to the public service quite differs in the private sector, as the emphasis on individual commitment could be based on internal or personal factors not relative to the satisfaction derived or the motivation associated with the job. The result

confirms that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between talent engagement and employee's commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service. This is given the *t*-value (2.052) is greater than 1.96 and the *p*-value is less than 0.05, which is the major contribution of this study. The fit of the model was assessed using the chi-square. The chi-square value (117.908) is greater than 0.05 as Benitez et al. (2020) recommended.

7. Conclusion and implications

The study concludes that talent engagement significantly affects employee commitment in the Nigerian Civil Service and it also concludes that talent engagement has a significant impact on job satisfaction among civil service employees. Lastly, the study concludes that job satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between talent engagement and employee commitment within the Nigerian Civil Service.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the mediating role of job satisfaction between talent engagement and employee commitment in the context of the Nigerian Civil Service. This finding underscores the importance of considering job satisfaction as a mechanism through which talent engagement can be advanced in driving employee commitment. Hence, the Nigerian Civil Service should focus on enhancing talent engagement initiatives to increase employee commitment. Efforts to improve job satisfaction can serve as a pathway to strengthen this relationship.

It is imperative for the civil service commission in the country to invest in training and development programmes that promote talent engagement and skills enhancement, which can positively impact both employee commitment and job satisfaction. There is a need for the civil service of the federation to consider implementing effective performance management systems that recognize and reward talent and can contribute to increased talent engagement, thereby leading to higher levels of employee commitment and job satisfaction. As a policy implication, strategic policies should be framed that would be aimed at fostering talent engagement and addressing job satisfaction, as it will be useful in deriving a more committed and motivated public workforce.

This study makes a distinctive contribution to knowledge as it advances job satisfaction as an intervening variable that talent engagement could be channelled towards improving employee commitment in the public sector. Further, this research enhances our understanding of how talent engagement practices influence employee commitment in public sector settings. These findings not only offer actionable insights for organizational strategies but also fill a significant gap in the literature, providing a nuanced understanding of factors crucial for enhancing workforce commitment in public service contexts, and ultimately contributing to the broader discourse on organizational behaviour and public sector management.

8. Limitations and suggestions for future studies

The study was limited to only three federal ministries in Nigeria; future studies should capture a broad spectrum of federal ministries to see if the same result will likely be obtained. Also, the study was limited to a quantitative approach; future studies should consider a longitudinal, qualitative, or mixed-method approach.

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