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ACADEMIC STAFFS' SELF-EFFICACY AND WORK ENGAGEMENT IN NIGERIA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

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Abstract

The universities education in the past focused on producing human capital but today due to the changes of globalisation, they need to focus on infusing values and include training that can give advantages to the industry and society at large. Hence, this study examines the effect of self-efficacy on work engagement of academic staffs of public Universities in the North-West of Nigeria, with the moderating effect of perceived organisational supports (POS). The data collected were analysed using CB-SEM (via AMOS software) to test the hypothesize variables, as this software is versatile tools for conducting multivariate analysis in various field. The findings of the study revealed that self-efficacy have significant effect on work engagement of academic staffs of selected public institutions. Furthermore, the mediating effects of POS have significant effect on the relationship between organizational culture and work engagement of academic staffs in Nigeria. This study contribute to the body of knowledge by providing a deep understanding of how the various components of self-efficacy are trigger by POS and work engagement within the context of developing nations like Nigeria. As such, Nigerian authorities and policymakers are concerned about the work engagement of education sector, the findings of this study revealed that the introduction of POS enhance the effect of POS and work engagement of higher education sectors. On the recommendation notes, foreign investors, business practitioners, owners, and managers would find the study's findings extremely useful in identifying important factors that can improve work engagement of higher education institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; Perceived Organizational Support; Work Engagement; Academic Staffs; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The educational system is often regarded as the fundamental support structure of any nation. Higher education institutes (HEI) are governmental systems that play a vital role in modern societies by educating a large section of the population and generating knowledge (Basarudin et al., 2016; Adenekan and Omofowa, 2023; Abduraimi et al., 2023; Edokpolor and Oviawe, 2022). Najeemdeen et al. (2018) emphasise the significant role of academic staff in nation-building, as it is closely linked to the growth of nations. Historically, universities prioritised the development of human capital. However, in the present era of globalisation, they must shift their focus towards instilling values and providing industry-specific training that may benefit both the economy and society (Basarudin et al., 2016; Diale and Eseadi, 2022; Abduraimi et al., 2023). Therefore, in order to overcome the challenges in future, HEI's need to be prepared and train human capital that are innovative, knowledgeable and skill. It is pertinent to note that one of the utmost factor to achieving the aims and objectives of any university system is the lecturer (Ruth et al., 2015), and the academic staff performance is centered on their qualification and competence, but also psychological fulfilment which encourages them to put in their best (Esongo, 2017; Chan et al., 2017; Alkhodary, 2023).

Provided with optimal working conditions and a suitable work environment, individuals are more likely to have positive impression of their workplace and feel motivated to contribute their best effort to institutions of higher learning. The success of academic personnel is influenced not only by their qualifications and ability, but also by motivational variables that enhance productivity in areas such as knowledge delivery, research, and community service (Atuahene et al., 2019; Tengah, 2022). Alzyoud et al. (2014), debated that it is essential to have an academic staffs who are involved as it will increase efficiency and motivates the institution of higher education to a higher level. Besides, in elevating the heights of work engagement, it resolve gives an optimistic workplace an outcome like increasing worker obligation and organisational routine (Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Tian et al., 2019; Abduraimi et al., 2023). Additionally, self-efficacy has a lasting effect on job engagement, which encourages individuals to contribute to the performance of the organisation, according to El Baroudi et al. (2017). High self-efficacy employees are able to finish their responsibilities without any issues because they have already made the decision to be optimistic and self-assured (Liu et al., 2017; Lisbona Banuelos et al., 2018; Al-Hamdan and Bani Issa, 2022). Employees with high self-efficacy, according to Islam and Ahmed (2018), will be able to handle any problems at work and be eager to learn new abilities that will increase their future engagement with their jobs. In order to boost academic performance, organisations are crucial in providing training and development.

According to Kompaso and Sridevi (2010), academicians who believe they are valued by the organisation are likely to be more consistently involved and committed to their work. POS can be used to describe how an employee feels about the value that their employer places on their work and how often they are concerned about their welfare inside the company (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Okolie et al., 2021). According to Aselage and Eisenberger (2003), Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005), and Tekleab et al. (2005), this idea was first introduced by the social exchange framework. Feedback on work performance is crucial for boosting academic staff members' work engagement, claim Kiruja and Mukuru (2018). Furthermore, nothing is known about how self-efficacy affects academic staff members' degree of work engagement at Nigerian public institutions from the research that is currently available. Despite the fact that work engagement in corporate organisations is greatly influenced by culture and self-efficacy, empirical research specifically examining this link within Nigerian public universities is lacking. The unique structural and cultural characteristics of Nigerian public colleges require more investigation. Thus, this study looks at how POS mediates the relationship between academic staff members' work

engagement and self-efficacy in Nigerian public universities. This also advances our knowledge of the connection between academic staff members' work engagement and self-efficacy in Nigerian public universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Efficacy and Work Engagement
Alessandri et al. (2015) suggested that self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism could boost workplace engagement. Self-efficacious employees will actively improve their social environment, which will improve their job perspective over time. Positive emotions, self-efficacy, and work engagement inspire employees to complete their tasks (Alessandri et al., 2015).The individual's confidence in managing their work circumstance helps them become totally involved in their work and dedicated to it (Alessandri et al., 2015). They can also boost work engagement over time." Also, organisations should regularly use positive psychology treatments to boost employee self-efficacy (Van den Heuvel et al., 2015). Personal resources improve how employees see work expectations. This will boost work engagement and work- life balance." According to Johri and Misra (2014), organisations can teach and develop employees to boost their self-efficacy and work commitment. Employee self-efficacy helps companies meet performance goals and compete.

Staff engagement can also be improved by self-efficacy. Increased self-efficacy will boost employees' confidence in their ability to complete tasks and achieve goals. When given a similar task, successful employees will be more confidence than unsuccessful ones (Maden, 2015). Challenges, coaching, development, supportive leadership, and rewards for improvement promote employee self-efficacy (Wang et al., 2014). More workplace resources can boost employee self-efficacy (Mokhber et al., 2016). Employees with self-efficacy will work harder and persist in learning tough jobs. They will be more open to new experiences and tasks. In any organisation, employees are required to display particular habits that help the organization succeed. Employees with stronger self-efficacy are more confidence in their abilities (Garcia, 2015). They will be more involved in their work and have less work challenges (Ventura et al., 2015). Thus, good self-efficacy is crucial to employee engagement and perspective on difficult tasks. People with low self-efficacy are prone to give up and reduce their effort, whereas individuals with high self-efficacy will keep trying until they finish the job and master the issue. Organisations must assess and build employee self-efficacy to improve job performance and engagement (Knight et al., 2017). Workplace outcomes and assessment can boost employee self-efficacy. The above reviewed led to this study's hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Self-efficacy has a positive influence on work engagement of academic staffs of Public Universities in Nigeria

Organizational Support and Work Engagement
According to Islam et al. (2015), employee engagement is significantly impacted by perceived organisational support. Employees that receive support will be more willing to contribute and exhibit improved attitudes and actions. Accordingly, people feel empowered and given more responsibility when their beliefs align with those of the organisation (Najeemdeen, 2018). According to Rubel and Kee (2013), employee engagement improves both individual and organisational performance. The support of an organisation is also very important. Because workers' attitudes and behaviour improve when they feel supported at work (Lo and Nieh, 2015). To increase employee engagement and productivity, businesses should provide autonomous variation, training, advancement, and

supportive management in order to foster perceived organisational support (Thirapatsakun et al., 2014). Support from coworkers, managers, institutions, and infrastructure can help increase employee engagement (Naujokaitiene et al., 2015). Unmotivated employees may be encouraged via POS (Naujokaitiene et al., 2015). Employee engagement can also be increased by enhancing POS in the workplace, showing appreciation for workers' achievements, attending to their socioemotional needs, and increasing care (Kim, Eisenberger, and Baik, 2016). According to a previous study, employees who receive organisational support are more psychologically and mentally engaged and more dedicated to the organization's objectives than their own (Chan et al., 2017). When workers feel encouraged, they will participate and act appropriately. To increase both individual and organisational performance, management must therefore strengthen employee support (Akter et al., 2016). The debate above gave rise to the hypothesis for this study:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Perceived Organisational Support has a positive influence on work engagement of academic staffs of Public Universities in Nigeria..

Organisational Support as a moderator between Self-Efficacy and work engagement
Employee performance depends on the quality of the work environment. Personal characteristics, organisational systems, and job-related outcomes interact, according to the work environment model. According to VanWingerden et al. (2017), the organisational system aids the company in achieving its goals, such as improving organisational performance. On the other hand, POS is crucial for both work-related and personal results (Islam and Ahmed, 2018). POS, which was developed from Kurtessis et al. (2017)'s organisational support theory, is the employees' perception of their own well-being and support of their company (Gupta et al., 2016). The significance of POS is evident from the literature since it has a favourable impact on employees' attitudes and behaviours (Islam and Ahmed, 2018). Numerous meta-analyses have also discovered that POS affects outcomes at the individual level (Islam and Ahmed, 2018); nevertheless, there is a dearth of research on the connection between POS and subjective well-being (Caesens et al., 2019). Specifically, there is a dearth of research on the connection between POS and subjective well-being (Rozkwitalska, 2017). Employee emotions, moods, and assessments are all part of subjective well-being, according to Joo and Lee (2017). Self-efficacy is a crucial component of subjective well-being (Caesens et al., 2019). A recent study that was published in the Academy of Management suggests that POS may have a favourable impact on an individual's sense of self-efficacy (Meintjes and Hofmeyr, 2018).This could be further explained by the social cognitive theory of Deci et al. (2017), which holds that employees form their beliefs based on their perceptions and will begin to believe in themselves when they perceive a supportive environment. In a similar vein, Islam and Ahmed (2018) contended that POS strengthens workers' self-efficacy, or belief in themselves. Thus, we put up the following hypothesis in light of Arneguy et al. (2018)'s conceptual framework and social cognitive theory:

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Perceived organizational support has a positive influence between self-efficacy and work engagement of academic staffs of Public Universities in Nigeria.

Research Framework
All constructs that align with the stated study aims and the elaboration approach of social exchange theory were incorporated into the research framework (Hartberg, 2018). The current study was motivated by the fact that previous research has shown a strong correlation between public university employees' work engagement and their sense of self-efficacy, particularly in industrialised nations. Research on the relationship between academic

staff members' work engagement and self-efficacy in public universities in developing nations like Nigeria is scarce. In Nigeria, however, self-efficacy has been employed in relatively few studies. As a result, the study has gained significance in Nigeria. As shown in Figure 1, the study is therefore one of the first to look at how organisational supports mediate the relationship between staff members' self-efficacy and work engagement at Nigerian public universities.
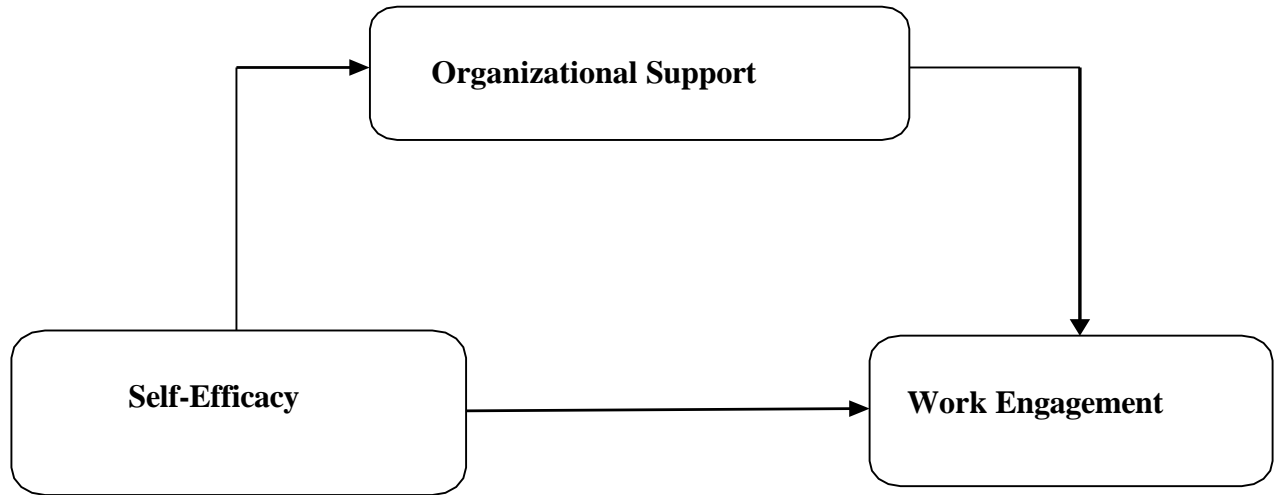

Figure 1: Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative methodology with data from primary sources. Based on a cross-sectional study with a positivist study attitude, the deductive reasoning of analysis was used. Questionnaire surveys were also used to get data from the target respondents. The current study included eight questions that were modified from Chen et al. (2001) to operationalise academic staff self-efficacy. Additionally, nine items that were modified from Schaufeli et al. (2006) were used to measure work engagement. Lastly, the study used nine questions that were modified from Eisenberger (1986), Maertz Jr. et al. (2007), and Neves and Eisenberger (2014) to operationalise the mediating influence of perceived organisational support. Based on the average answer of the ordinal values for all three variables as shown in Table 1, each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table1: Variables Measurement with Sources

Constructs	Items	Sources
Self-Efficacy		Lucas et al., (1997) and Chen et al. (2001)
	SE8	
Work Engagement	WE9	Schaufeli et al., (2006)
Perceived Organisational Support	POS9	Eisenberger (1986); MaertzJr et al. (2007); Neves and Eisenberger, (2014)

The target population of the study comprised of academic staffs working in the public Universities in the North-west of Nigeria. Since the numbers of academic staffs involved in the various higher institutions in the north-west are unequal, online questionnaires were distributed to academic staffs of public Universities as target respondents. As a result, 365 questionnaires were collected from the target respondents, and the sample size of 365 was deemed adequate, as recommended by Awang (2018). The study used structural equation modeling (SEM) for the major analysis using AMOS software. SEM is a multivariate statistical technique that allows the testing of a series of causal relationships between variables (Hair et al., 2018) to provide statistical efficiency that can be measured directly. The adoption of the CB-EM approach is grounded in its suitability for comprehensively examining the mediating effect of POS on the relationship between self- efficacy and work engagement of academic staff of public universities in Nigeria. This method allows for both quantitative and qualitative data collection, ensuring a holistic understanding of the subject matter. The analysis models are categorized into measurement models and structural models. Thereby, the measurement model tests the validity and reliability of the construct, while the structural model was used to test the hypotheses for both direct and indirect effects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

This study analyzed the mediating effect of POS on the relationship self- efficacy and work engagement of academic staffs of public universities in Nigeria. The study analysed the data collected from the respondents and commenced with the codified of the data collected into SPSS. Thus, the analysis used is inferential statistics. Thereby, the inferential statistics include the measurement model and structural model (via CB-SEM). The instrument's reliability, validity, and unidimensionality are evaluated using confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Saunders et al., 2009; Awang et al., 2015; Raza and Awang, 2020). Factor loadings below the rule of thumb wer eliminated and objects were broken down in to their constituent parts. In addition, the data from the field research was utilised to verify the measurement model for the constructs. Convergent and discriminant validity are the primary validity measures in CFA, with composite reliability index serving as the primary tool for assessing instrument reliability (Raza and Awang, 2020). This study is to examine the role of self-efficacy as predicting variables, and perceived organizational support as a mediator, influencing work engagement. Convergence validity and composite reliability of the measurement model were evaluated in Table 2 and Figure 2.

The factor loading, AVE, and composite reliability results suggest that all items have appropriate factor loadings (above the threshold value of 0.6). The findings of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) suggested that the model was suitable for further analysis with measurement variable like Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Normed Fit Index (NFI) and 2/degree of freedom (2/df). RMSEA = (0.049, .079), GFI = (0.910, 0.945), CFI = (0.915, 0.904), TLI = (0.827, 0.826), NFI= (0.738; 0.18), and 2/df= (4.160, 4.376) are the findings of a CFA. Only RMSEA, GFI, CFI, NFI, and 2/df attained the minimal thresholds, however TLI did not. These findings demonstrated that the absolute fit index and incremental fit index for the pooled constructs met the specified thresholds, indicating that model fit indices were achieved. The research instrument was accepted as valid and trustworthy, and could be utilized to test empirical hypotheses, despite the fact that the majority of model-fitting characteristics were not satisfied (Refer Table 3).

Table 2: Assessment of the Measurement Model (Validity and Reliability Test)

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	CR(>0.6)	AVE(>0.5)
	WE1	0.69		
	WE2	0.73		
	WE3	0.70		
Work engagement	WE4	0.81	0.905	0.577
	WE5	0.74		
	WE6	0.83		
	WE7	0.82		
	SE1	0.60		
	SE2	0.78		
Self-efficacy	SE3	0.85	0.906	0.620
	SE4	0.75		
	SE5	0.90		
	SE6	0.81		
	POS1	0.80		0.625
	POS2	0.88		
Perceived Organisational support	POS3	0.81		
	POS4	0.78	0.930	
	POS5	0.83		
	POS6	0.78		
	POS7	0.76		
	POS8	0.67		

Table 3: Model Fits of Model

S/N	Name of Category	Index Value	Threshold	Remarks
1	Absolute fit	RMSEA=.079	RMSE<.08	The required level is achieved
		GFI=.945	GFI>.90	The required level is achieved
2	Incremental fit	CFI=.902	CFI>.90	The required level is achieved
		TLI= .826	TLI>.95	The required level is not achieved
		NFI=.818	NFI<.90	The required level is achieved
3	Parsimonious fit	X^2/df= 4.376	X^2/df <5	The required level is achieved

Structural model Assessment

Having been satisfied with the assessment of measurement model, Figure 3 presents the path diagram structural model, which illustrates the direct and indirect effect of self-efficacy variables on the endogenous construct (work engagement).The suggested model was shown to explain a highly significant proportion of the variance in work engagement (R^2= 62 percent) and perceived organisational supports (R^2= 73 percent). Cohen (1988) asserts that in a causal model, R^2 greater than 36% is deemed to have a significant influence. Therefore, the existing model for measuring the degree of work engagement is relevant and adequate. The structural model is shown in Figure 3.
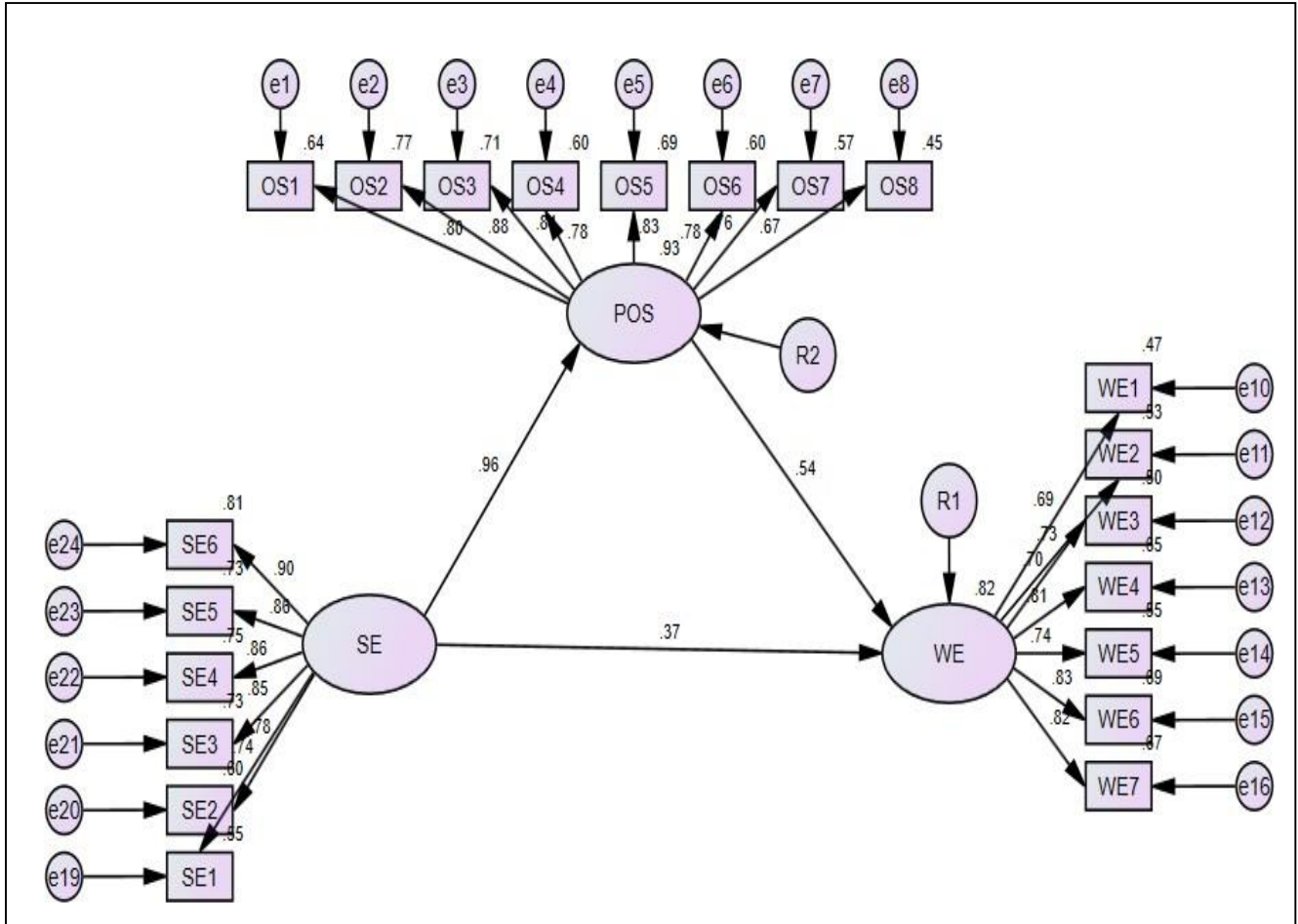

Figure 3: Path Diagram of Structural Equation Model

Table 4: The Result for Testing of Hypotheses: Direct and Mediating Effects on Work Engagement

Hypotheses			Beta	se	CR	Sig.
Work Engagement	<---	Self-efficacy	.301	.205	1.969	.046
Organisational Support	<---	Self-efficacy	.445	.206	2.160	.031
Work Engagement	<---	Organisational Support	.969	.084	11.577	***

After confirming the measurement model, evaluation of hypotheses was conducted using structural equation modelling. The analysis seeks to determine whether there is a substantial correlation between self-efficacy, perceive organizational support and work engagement. The path coefficients, standard error, and p-values of the link between self-efficacy and work engagement model components are provided in Table 4. The findings given in Table 4 supported Hypothesis H1($t= 1.969$, $P <.05$), which claimed that self-efficacy has a substantial impact on work engagement of academic staffs in the higher education institutions in Nigeria. The results also confirmed Hypothesis H2($t= 2.160$, $P <.05$), which found that self-efficacy had a substantial impact on perceived organisational support of academic staffs in Nigeria. With regards to the relationship between perceived organisational support and work engagement of academic staffs, the results confirmed H4 ($t=11.577$, $P<.01$), which was read as perceived organisational support having a substantial impact on work engagement of academic staffs of public higher institution in Nigeria.

Mediating Effect of Perceived Organisational Support

Maximum Likelihood Estimator (MLE) bootstrapping was utilized using 1000 bootstrap samples, a 95% bootstrap confidence interval, and a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval. The result of bootstrapping is shown in Table 4 to test the indirect association; bootstrapping is performed twice. The first bootstrapping is performed without the existence of the mediation variable, whereas the second is performed with the variable present. If the direct path is not substantial, it is assumed that there would be no mediating impact of perceived organisational support. Moreover, the interpretation of the mediation effect in this study is based on the premise of Zhao et al. (2010). The findings from Table 4 demonstrates that the direct relationships between self-efficacy ($\beta=301$, $P=0.46$) is significant with work engagement. The initial bootstrapping is performed with the mediation variable present. Table 4 demonstrates that the introduction of POS as a mediating effect on the indirect association between self-efficacy and work engagement is somewhat mediated. Specifically, since the direct impact of assistive technology on work engagement is substantial, this conclusion may be derived from the fact that both standardised direct effects with mediation ($\beta= .192$, $P < .01$) were statistically significant with partial mediation. Table 4 displays the results of bootstrapping perceived organisational support as a mediator in the link between self-efficacy and work engagement.

Table 4: The Bootstrapping Result for Testing Perceived Organisational Support as a Mediator

Indirect Hypotheses	Direct Effect(c)			Indirect Effect (ab)		
	Beta	Sig.	Result	Beta	Sig.	Result
SE-> POS->Work Engagement	.301	.046	Significant	.192	.023	significant

Note: SE– self-efficacy; POS– Perceived organizational support; WE –work engagement.

Discussion of Findings

This study examines the mediating effect of POS on the relationship between self efficacy and work engagement of academic staffs of higher education institutions in the North-west of Nigeria. Thus, the overall findings indicate that self-efficacy have predictive factor and positive influence on the work engagement of academic staffs of public higher institution in Nigeria, specifically in the area of POS and self-efficacy. The findings indicate that the introduction of POS as a mediating effect on the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement of academic staffs is effective. The findings of this study is consistence with the previous studies Chan et al. (2019);

Insan and Masmarulan (2021); Fu et al. (2022); Adenekan and Omofowa (2023). This result indicates the deeper understanding of the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement among academic staffs. The findings also highlighted that the intervention of POS towards self-efficacy have been demonstrated to be related to the achievement of the work engagement; however, no previous research has explored the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement from the perspective of stakeholder organisations working in the field of education sector, most especially in the Nigeria.

Limitations and Recommendations

The current research was carried out in the context of higher education institutions in the north-west of Nigeria. Thus, thorough grasp of the perceived organisational culture, self-efficacy and perceived organisational support impact may open up new possibilities for more sustainable and long-lasting tourist approaches. Furthermore, the study may give a different perspective on complicated phenomena and illuminate the complex decision-making process in times of policies formulations.

The findings of the study will be helpful to the Nigeria ministry of education as it will elaborate on regions that essential to be improved in influencing the academic and administrative perception of work engagement. Also, the study will be useful for decision making and reference point deliberate fully well that education is an important sector in the economy because it provides a large number of job opportunities, contributes and serves as foundation for national development. Thus, perception of academic staffs will improve positively in order to motivate them in steering the affairs of the university. Even though, Nigerian authorities and policymakers are concerned about the work engagement of education sector, the findings of this study revealed that the introduction of perceived organisational support enhance the effect of perceived organizational culture and work engagement of higher education sectors. On the recommendation notes, foreign investors, business practitioners, owners, and managers would find the study's findings extremely useful in identifying important factors that can improve work engagement of higher education institutions in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

In this research, a model has been formulated and tested to examine the effect of self-efficacy on work engagement of academic staffs in the Nigeria. The impacts of self-efficacy on work engagement have also been investigated under the mediating effect of POS towards work engagement of academic staffs in the Nigeria. Thus, questionnaires were distributed to the academic staffs in the selected public universities in the north-west of Nigeria as the target respondents. The data collected were analysed with structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS software. The findings of the study revealed that all direct hypotheses were significantly related. As predicted, it has been observed that self-efficacy empower academic staffs to perform better in making their working condition better and have more opportunities in public Universities in Nigeria. Therefore, academic staffs with self-efficacy and POS will enhance the better work engagement in Nigeria and around beyond. In general, this study verify the results from previous studies Adenekan and Omofowa (2023); Fu et al. (2022); Insan and Masmarulan (2021); Chan et al. (2019).

The findings of the indirect hypotheses also revealed that the intervention of POS for academic staffs enhance self-efficacy to strive better towards work engagement. Indirect effects also predicted perceived organisational support as a mediating effect on the relationship between self-efficacy and work engagement.

Furthermore, the social exchange theory describes the connection between perceived organisational culture and work engagement within the academic setting in developing countries like Nigeria.

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