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Employee Engagement Dynamics in High School Education: Investigating Influential Factors Across Contexts at a Ghanaian Institution

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Abstract: Employee engagement, a key element of organisational success, is influenced by various factors. However, there is limited clarity on how these factors impact employee engagement in high schools, particularly within the Ghanaian context. Hence, this study investigated perceived influential factors of employee engagement among high school teachers at Opoku Ware School in Ghana and their varying levels of influence across contexts using a structured survey administered to teachers ($n = 75$). Data analysis involving descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically ANOVA, was conducted to examine relationships between variables and test hypotheses. Key findings indicate that the employees have moderate engagement levels ($M = 3.3$), which are significantly impacted by leadership style, organisational culture, professional development, work-life balance, and recognition and rewards, with leadership style emerging as the most influential factor ($M = 4.0$). Furthermore, the analysis revealed significant differences in engagement factors across different departments ($p < 0.05$) and levels of seniority ($p < 0.05$), indicating that targeted interventions are required to address the diverse needs of teachers. However, unique results uncovered a consistency in leadership style ($p = 0.33$) across departments, and organisational culture ($p = 0.81$) and work-life balance ($p = 0.76$) across levels of seniority, suggesting the widespread potential impact of these specific factors. The study's findings aligned with existing research and theories on employee engagement, emphasising the universal importance of the influential factors in driving engagement and offering valuable insights into ways high schools can enhance teacher engagement.

Keywords: Employee engagement; Influential factors, High school, Teachers

1. Introduction

Employee engagement is widely recognised as a critical determinant of organisational success, particularly within educational institutions where it profoundly impacts student outcomes and overall school performance (Azmy, 2019; Mansoor & Hassan, 2016; Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016). Defined as the emotional commitment and involvement of employees in their work and the organisation, engaged employees display higher levels of emotional empowerment, commitment, satisfaction, and productivity (Ryba, 2023; Akshaya et al., 2018; Machokoto, 2019). In every workplace, including educational settings, effective employee engagement strategies are essential for creating a supportive and conducive work environment (Ghani & Taylor, 2023; Azmy, 2019). As a result, various studies have identified key influential factors that significantly impact the engagement levels of teachers, emphasising the importance of addressing these factors to enhance both individual and organisational performance. Research emphasises the role of leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, in influencing employee engagement levels, as these leaders encourage their teams through vision and empowerment, leading to commitment among staff members (Sagala et al., 2022; Sundaray & Vihar, 2011; Machokoto, 2019). Similarly, Uy et al. (2024) highlighted that leadership styles that involve teachers in decision-making enhance their sense of ownership and commitment, leading to higher engagement.

Moreover, organisational culture has been indicated to play a pivotal role, as a positive culture characterised by shared values, open communication, inclusiveness, and recognition enhances employee



satisfaction and engagement and contributes to organisational success (Ghani & Taylor, 2023; Azmy, 2019). Opportunities for professional growth and development additionally significantly impact employee engagement. Providing teachers with access to training, career advancement pathways, and skill enhancement programmes enhances their skills and strengthens their commitment to the institution (Sundaray & Vihar, 2011; Ghani & Taylor, 2023). Workload and stress levels have also been identified as significant determinants of teacher engagement. Excessive workload and high levels of stress can detract from teachers' engagement by leading to burnout and job dissatisfaction (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Furthermore, recognition and reward systems are vital in influencing teacher engagement. When teachers feel their efforts and achievements are recognised and rewarded, they are more likely to be engaged (Rokeman et al., 2023; Wait, 2017). According to Akshaya et al. (2018), recognition and rewards contribute to teachers' intrinsic motivation, thereby enhancing their engagement.

Despite the recognised importance of employee engagement and the factors affecting it, there remains a gap in research specifically focusing on high school teachers within the Ghanaian context, such as at Opoku Ware School. Existing literature provides a broad understanding of employee engagement in educational settings but lacks specificity regarding the unique challenges and factors influencing engagement among high school teachers (Kilonzo et al. 2018; Gapor & Doctor, 2020; Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023). This gap impedes a thorough exploration of the factors that either promote or inhibit employee engagement, thereby hindering the formulation of targeted strategies to improve engagement and performance at specific educational institutions (Ryba, 2023). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of factors that influence employee engagement among high school teachers is crucial for enhancing school effectiveness.

The study investigated the influential factors of employee engagement among high school teachers at Opoku Ware School in Ghana and varying level of these factors across contexts, with specific focus on departments and levels of seniority. By exploring how various factors impact teacher engagement across different departments and levels of seniority, this study sought to uncover actionable insights that can inform strategies to enhance engagement and school performance. The study specifically sought answers to the following questions: What are the key perceived factors influencing employee engagement among teachers (RQ1)? How do the influential factors affecting employee engagement vary across different departments and levels of seniority among teachers (RQ2)?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings

This study is anchored in pivotal theories that provide a framework for examining employee engagement in educational settings. The research leverages the Job Demands-Resources Model, Self-Determination Theory, Conservation of Resources Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Equity Theory, to explore how various influential factors impact engagement across departments and levels of seniority.

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model is central to this study. The JD-R Model posits that the balance between job demands (those aspects of a job that require consistent physical and mental effort) and job resources (those that accomplish work goals, reduce demands, and foster professional and personal growth) determines employee engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Radic et al., 2020; Schaufeli, 2017). Within this framework, the influential factors (leadership, organisational culture, professional development, work-life balance, and recognition) are seen as critical resources that can enhance engagement by offsetting job demands. This study extends the JD-R Model by exploring how these resources influence engagement across different contexts within a school, particularly concerning varying departmental demands and levels of seniority.

In addition, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) played a key role in this study. SDT emphasises the importance of fulfilling intrinsic needs including autonomy, competence, and relatedness, to foster wellbeing, motivation, and engagement (Wiedemann, 2016). This theory is particularly relevant in examining how professional development, recognition, and rewards impact engagement, as these factors directly relate to the intrinsic need for competence. As such, the study explores how the significance of the factors varies across different career contexts and stages, providing insights into how SDT can be applied to diverse employee populations within educational settings. Also, the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory offered another crucial perspective for this research. COR Theory posits that individuals endeavour to acquire, retain, and protect the



resources they generally value including health, time, energy, and well-being (Hobfoll et al. 2018). In the context of this study, work-life balance and professional development opportunities are viewed as vital resources that employees seek to conserve. The research examines how the availability and conservation of these resources influence engagement, particularly in how employees across different levels of seniority manage their resources to maintain or enhance engagement.

Furthermore, Social Exchange and Equity theories provided an additional theoretical lens, focusing on the reciprocal relationships between employees and their organisations. These theories suggest that when employees perceive a high level of support and fairness from their organisation, they are more likely to reciprocate with higher engagement and commitment (Yin, 2018; Ahmad, 2023; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019). This study investigates how organisational culture, recognition and rewards, and leadership style affect engagement levels, especially how these effects vary across departments with different dynamics and levels of seniority. By integrating these theories, the study aimed to provide an understanding of the factors that drive employee engagement in a high school context. The research not only tested the applicability of these theories in the specific context of a high school in Ghana but also sought to contribute to their refinement by exploring how these factors interact and vary across different organisational contexts.

2.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Based on the theoretical underpinnings, a conceptual framework (Figure 1) was developed to explore how these influential factors impact employee engagement across different departments and levels of seniority. The framework hypothesises that leadership styles, organisational culture, professional development opportunities, work-life balance, and recognition and rewards, are key predictors of engagement, with variations expected across departments and levels of seniority.

The conceptual model visualised in this study (Figure 1) outlines the relationships among key variables. It examines how Leadership, Culture, Professional Development, Work-life balance, and Recognition and Reward (independent variables) impact Employee Engagement Level (dependent variable). Additionally, the framework investigates how Departments (Science, Mathematics, Visual Art, General Art, Business, English, and Language) and Levels of Seniority (Junior Teacher, Senior Teacher, and Leadership position) influence these perceived factors. The arrows in the model indicate the hypothesised relationships, offering a comprehensive framework for analysing the impact of demographic and perceived factors on employee engagement.

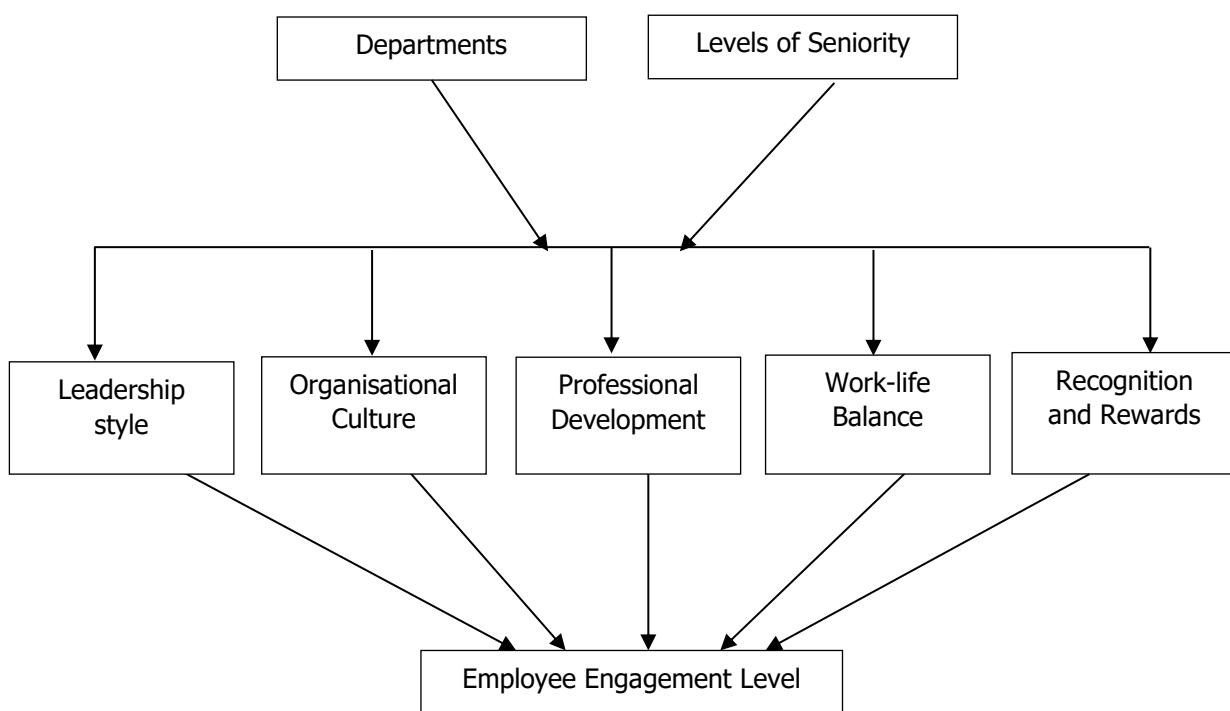


Figure 1. Employee Engagement Conceptual Model

The impact of the influential factors, grounded in the theories and conceptual model of the study, forms the basis for exploring hypotheses regarding the differences in engagement levels across contexts within the school. Accordingly, the study at a 0.05 significance level with a 95% confidence level hypothesised that: there is a significant difference in the factors influencing employee engagement across different departments (H_1); there is a significant difference in the factors influencing employee engagement across different levels of seniority (H_2). The corresponding null hypothesis (H_0) is that there is no significant difference in factors influencing employee engagement across different departments and levels of seniority among teachers.

3. Methodology

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships outlined in the conceptual framework. This research design involved collecting and analysing the quantitative data through a structured survey at a specific point in time, targeting employees, specifically the teachers, across various departments and levels of seniority within the educational institution. This choice of a survey design is consistent with the conceptual framework, requiring a broad examination of employee engagement factors across diverse contexts within the high school setting. This allows for the collection of a diverse sample, facilitating the testing of hypotheses related to the impact of department contexts and levels of seniority on employee engagement. In this design, as a result, the dependent variable for the first analysis (RQ1) is Employee Engagement Level, and the independent variables are the Perceived Factors of Leadership, Organisational Culture, Professional Development, Work-life Balance, and Recognition and Rewards. For the second analysis (RQ2), the Perceived Factors are the dependent variables, with Departments and Levels of Seniority as the independent variables. This structure allowed for a holistic analysis of how these factors influence engagement and vary across different demographic segments.

3.1 Research Instrument

Data was gathered through a questionnaire designed based on the conceptual framework by the researchers and administered to the participants. The questionnaire, consisting of 15 items, was structured into three sections of closed-ended questions. Each item was evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (SD), "Disagree" (D), "Neutral" (N), "Agree" (A), to "Strongly Agree" (SA), which represents the level of agreement or disagreement (Apeadido et al., 2024). The first section involving five items focused on the participants' demographics including departments, levels of seniority and years of experience. The second and third sections with five items for both sections measured the participants' engagement level and factors influencing their engagement, respectively. Each section was scored separately with a score between 1 and 5, with a higher number indicating a higher level of agreement with a statement. Before data collection, the survey instrument was carefully validated by three experts in the field of research, each with over 10 years of experience in teacher education research. Their expertise ensured the questionnaire was of high quality. Furthermore, a reliability analysis was conducted to establish the robustness of the instrument. The reliability coefficient, measured using Cronbach's alpha, was found to be 0.87 for the questionnaire, surpassing the recommended 0.7 threshold (Adeniran, 2019), indicating internal consistency and ensuring that the questionnaire provided dependable and consistent results.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study focused on the teaching staff at Opoku Ware School in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. At the time of study in 2024, the school comprised around 200 teachers across various departments. Predominantly oriented towards science education, the school encompasses seven departments, including Science, Mathematics, English, Language, Business Studies, General Art, and Visual Art. With a 5% margin of error, 95% confidence level, and an assumed population proportion of 0.50, the sample size was determined as 132 per Krejcie and Morgan Table (Bukhari, 2021). To ensure a representative sample, a proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed to distribute the questionnaire, aiming to include teachers from each department. Despite initially inviting 132 teachers to participate, the final sample for the study consisted of 75 teachers who voluntarily



completed the questionnaire effectively as expected; thus, the response rate was 56.8%. Data was collected from January 2024 to February 2024.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis for this study was conducted using MS Excel 2019 and SPSS 25 to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean, were generated to identify patterns and trends in the data, summarising the distributions of responses. Inferential statistical analysis, specifically Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), was used to investigate relationships between variables and test hypotheses derived from the research questions.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic information of participants

As presented in Table 1, the demographic information of the 75 teachers provides a foundational understanding of the sample population. The departmental distribution indicates that the Science department has the highest representation among the teachers (34.6%), followed by Mathematics (21.3%) and General Art (16.0%). This distribution indicates a strong emphasis on science and mathematics education. Differences in engagement levels across departments provide insights into how subject matter impacts teacher engagement, potentially highlighting areas where additional support or resources are needed. Regarding the level of seniority, a significant portion of the teachers are at the senior teacher level (48.0%), followed by junior teachers (33.3%). The presence of unit heads (14.6%) and heads of departments (2.6%) indicates a structured hierarchy. In terms of years of experience, most teachers have between 11 and 20 years of experience (59.9%), with relatively few having more than 21 years (6.6%). Analysing factors that impact engagement levels across different seniority levels reveals whether leadership positions and experience levels correlate with higher or lower engagement, informing strategies to boost engagement at various career stages.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Teachers

Demographic Variables	Categories	Number	Percentage (%)
Department	Science	26	34.6
	Mathematics	16	21.3
	Visual Art	4	5.3
	General Art	12	16.0
	Business Studies	3	4.0
	English	10	13.3
	Language	4	5.3
Level of Seniority	Junior Teacher	25	33.3
	Senior Teacher	36	48.0
	Unit Head	11	14.6
	Head of Department	2	2.6
	Administrative Staff	1	1.3
Years of Experience	0 – 5 years	12	16.0
	6 – 10 years	13	17.3
	11 – 15 years	23	30.6
	16 – 20 years	22	29.3



4.2 Engagement level and perceived factors affecting employee engagement levels

The data presented in Table 2 provides insights into the engagement levels of teachers measured across five key items.

Table 2. Teacher Engagement Level

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (M)
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	
1. I feel enthusiastic and passionate about my teaching job	3 (4.0)	24 (32.0)	34 (45.3)	12 (16.0)	2 (2.6%)	2.8
2. I am committed to going above and beyond in my teaching duties	9 (12.0)	19 (25.3)	33 (44.0)	11 (14.6)	3 (4.0)	2.7
3. I find my work as a teacher meaningful and rewarding	0(0.0)	4 (5.3)	21 (28.0)	32 (42.6)	18 (24.0)	3.8
4. I feel energised and motivated when working with my students	4 (5.3)	22 (29.3)	14 (18.6)	23 (30.6)	12 (16.0)	3.2
5. I often reflect on and seek ways to improve my teaching practices	0 (0.0)	1 (1.3)	12 (16.0)	41 (54.6)	21 (28.0)	4.0
Total Mean Score						3.3

The first item has a mean score of 2.8. The majority of teachers (45.3%) responded neutrally, with a significant portion (32.0%) disagreeing, and only a small percentage (2.6%) strongly agreeing. This suggests a relatively low level of enthusiasm and passion among the teachers, indicating potential areas for improvement in fostering a more engaging work environment. The second item has a mean score of 2.7. Similar to the first item, the responses are largely neutral (44.0%), with a notable percentage disagreeing (25.3%) and only a small fraction strongly agreeing (4.0%). This further highlights a moderate level of commitment among the teachers, suggesting that many may feel constrained in their ability to exceed basic teaching expectations. The third item stands out with a higher mean score of 3.8. A significant majority of teachers agree (42.6%) or strongly agree (24.0%) with this statement, indicating that despite challenges, most teachers find intrinsic value and satisfaction in their roles. This positive perception is crucial as it can act as a motivational factor for teachers, contributing to overall job satisfaction and engagement. The fourth item has a mean score of 3.2, with responses more evenly distributed, with a notable percentage agreeing (30.6%) or strongly agreeing (16.0%). However, a significant portion of teachers (29.3%) disagree, suggesting that while some teachers feel motivated by student interactions, others may experience challenges that reduce their motivation levels. The fifth item has the highest mean score of 4.0. The majority of teachers agree (54.6%) or strongly agree (28.0%) with this statement, indicating a strong commitment to professional development and continuous improvement. This high level of engagement in reflective practices is a positive indicator of proactive attitudes among the teachers towards their professional growth. The overall mean score for teacher engagement is 3.3, indicating a moderate level of engagement among the teaching staff at Opoku Ware School. While there are areas of strength, such as finding meaning in their work and a commitment to improving teaching practices, there are also areas that require attention, particularly in enhancing enthusiasm, passion, and the motivation to go above and beyond in their duties.

The data presented in Table 3 outlines the factors influencing the engagement levels among the teachers, covering aspects such as leadership style, organisational culture, professional development, work-life balance, and recognition and rewards.

For leadership style, the mean score of 4.0 indicates a generally positive perception among teachers. A significant majority, with 42.6% agreeing and 36.0% strongly agreeing, suggests that the leadership at Opoku



Ware School is viewed favourably. This high level of agreement underscores the importance of effective leadership in promoting teacher engagement. Effective leadership likely fosters a supportive and motivating work environment, which is crucial for maintaining high levels of engagement among staff members. In contrast, organisational culture received a mean score of 3.3. While 34.6% of teachers agree and 8.0% strongly agree that the organisational culture positively influences their engagement, a substantial 41.3% remain neutral. This neutrality suggests that while there are positive elements within the school's culture, there is also significant room for improvement. Moreover, the perception of professional development opportunities, reflected by a mean score of 3.1, presents a mixed picture. Although 25.3% agree and 13.3% strongly agree that professional development positively impacts their engagement, a notable 38.6% maintain a neutral stand and 12.0% strongly disagree. This distribution indicates that the current professional development offerings might not fully meet the needs or expectations of all teachers.

Table 3. Factors Influencing the Engagement Level of Teachers

Factor	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
	<i>No. (%)</i>	<i>No. (%)</i>	<i>No. (%)</i>	<i>No. (%)</i>	<i>No. (%)</i>	
Leadership Style	2 (2.6)	5 (6.6)	9 (12.0)	32 (42.6)	27 (36.0)	4.0
Organisational Culture	0 (0.0)	12 (16.0)	31 (41.3)	26 (34.6)	6 (8.0)	3.3
Professional Development	9 (12.0)	8 (10.6)	29 (38.6)	19 (25.3)	10 (13.3)	3.1
Work-Life Balance	2 (2.6)	4 (5.3)	33 (44.0)	30 (40.0)	6 (8.0)	3.4
Recognition and Rewards	10 (13.3)	19 (25.3)	22 (29.3)	23 (30.6)	1 (1.3)	2.8

Work-life balance, with a mean score of 3.4, is generally perceived positively. A combined 48.0% of teachers agree or strongly agree that work-life balance is a positive factor in their engagement. However, the high proportion of neutral responses (44.0%) suggests that while many teachers are satisfied, there may be inconsistencies or specific areas where work-life balance could be improved. Furthermore, recognition and rewards received the lowest mean score of 2.8, indicating this area is a significant concern among teachers. Only 31.9% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they feel adequately recognised and rewarded, while a combined 38.6% disagree or strongly disagree. This dissatisfaction with recognition and rewards suggests that many teachers feel undervalued, which can negatively impact their engagement and motivation. Overall, the analysis highlights that leadership style and work-life balance are the most positively perceived factors influencing teacher engagement. Professional development and organisational culture have moderate impacts, with significant neutral responses indicating potential areas for enhancement. Recognition and rewards are identified as the least favourable factor, highlighting an urgent need for improvement.

4.3 The Impact of Influential Factors on Engagement Levels across Different Departments

The provided ANOVA results in Table 4 analyse the variance for different factors affecting employee engagement across various departments.

For Leadership Style, the F-value is 1.16 with a P-value of 0.33. Since the P-value exceeds 0.05, the HO is not rejected, and hence H₁ is not supported, indicating no significant difference in its impact on employee engagement across departments. This suggests that leadership style is perceived similarly across departments, implying that the influence of leadership practices on engagement does not vary significantly from one department to another. In contrast, the results for Organisational Culture reveal an F-value of 7.71 with a P-value of less than 0.001. This significant P-value leads to rejecting the HO, thereby supporting H₁, indicating a notable difference in the perception of organisational culture across departments. Such variance suggests that some departments may view the organisational culture more positively or negatively, impacting their engagement levels differently, attributed possibly to specific departmental practices or the varying effectiveness of cultural initiatives within different departments. Furthermore, Professional Development presents an F-value of 3.05 and a P-value of 0.01, prompting the rejection of the HO, hence supporting the H₁. This significant result indicates that the impact of



professional development opportunities on engagement varies significantly across departments. Departments may differ in the availability or perceived effectiveness of professional development programmes, leading to different engagement outcomes.

Moreover, the analysis for Work-Life Balance shows an F-value of 4.93 with a P-value of 0.0003, leading to the rejection of the H_0 , thereby supporting the H_1 . This indicates a significant difference in the impact of work-life balance on engagement across departments, suggesting that departments may have better work-life balance practices, resulting in more positive engagement levels compared to others. Finally, the results for Recognition and Rewards reveal an F-value of 9.38 with a P-value of less than 0.001, leading to the rejection of the H_0 , thus supporting the H_1 . This significant finding indicates that the influence of recognition and rewards on engagement varies significantly across departments. This suggests that the systems for recognition and rewards may not be equally effective or perceived across all departments, leading to differing engagement levels. In summary, while Leadership Style does not significantly affect engagement across departments, other influential factors show significant differences, suggesting that these factors are perceived and possibly implemented differently across departments, leading to varied engagement levels.

Table 4. ANOVA Results for Factors Affecting Engagement Across Departments

Factor	Variation Source	Sum of Square	Deg. of Free.	Mean Square	F-critical	F-value	P-value
Leadership Style	Betw. Groups	1.34	6	0.22	2.23	1.16	0.33
	Within Groups	13.10	68	0.19			
	Total	14.44	74				
Organisational Culture	Betw. Groups	13.84	6	2.30	2.23	7.71	< 0.001
	Within Groups	20.34	68	0.29			
	Total	34.18	74				
Professional Development	Betw. Groups	3.13	6	0.52	2.23	3.05	0.01
	Within Groups	11.64	68	0.17			
	Total	14.77	74				
Work-Life Balance	Betw. Groups	2.68	6	0.44	2.23	4.93	0.0003
	Within Groups	6.17	68	0.09			
	Total	8.85	74				
Recognition and Rewards	Betw. Groups	9.48	6	1.58	2.23	9.38	< 0.001
	Within Groups	11.44	68	0.16			
	Total	20.92	74				

4.4 The Impact of Influential Factors on Engagement Levels across Levels of Seniority

The provided ANOVA results in Table 5 examine the variance for different factors affecting employee engagement across various levels of seniority among the teachers.

For Leadership Style, the F-value is 25.35 with a P-value of less than 0.001, indicating a significant difference in the perception of leadership style across different levels of seniority. Given the P-value is less than 0.05, the H_0 is rejected, therefore H_2 is supported, suggesting that seniority impacts how leadership style is perceived. This finding implies that leadership practices may be experienced differently by teachers depending on their level of seniority, which could affect their engagement levels. In contrast, the results for Organisational Culture show an F-value of 0.38 with a P-value of 0.81, indicating no significant difference in its impact on employee engagement across levels of seniority. Given that the P-value exceeds 0.05, the H_0 is not rejected, and



hence H_2 is unsupported, suggesting that organisational culture is perceived consistently across different seniority levels. This implies that the school's organisational culture initiatives are broadly experienced similarly by all teachers, regardless of their seniority. Furthermore, Professional Development presents an F-value of 10.99 and a P-value of less than 0.001, leading to rejecting H_0 , thereby supporting H_2 . This significant result indicates that the perception of professional development opportunities varies significantly across different levels of seniority. This disparity suggests that professional development programmes may be more accessible or beneficial to certain seniority levels, impacting their engagement differently.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Factors Affecting Engagement Across Levels of Seniority

Factor	Variation Source	Sum of Square	Deg. of Free.	Mean Square	F-critical	F-value	P-value
Leadership Style	Betw. Groups	18.15	4	4.53	2.50	25.35	< 0.001
	Within Groups	12.53	70	0.17			
	Total	30.68	74				
Organisational Culture	Betw. Groups	0.28	4	0.07	2.50	0.38	0.81
	Within Groups	12.80	70	0.18			
	Total	13.08	74				
Professional Development	Betw. Groups	2.92	4	0.73	2.50	10.99	< 0.001
	Within Groups	4.64	70	0.06			
	Total	7.56	74				
Work-Life Balance	Betw. Groups	0.18	4	0.04	2.50	0.46	0.76
	Within Groups	7.01	70	0.10			
	Total	7.19	74				
Recognition and Rewards	Betw. Groups	5.78	4	1.44	2.50	19.40	< 0.001
	Within Groups	5.22	70	0.07			
	Total	11.00	74				

Moreover, the analysis for Work-Life Balance shows an F-value of 0.46 with a P-value of 0.76, indicating no significant difference in its impact on engagement across levels of seniority. Given the high P-value, the H_0 is not rejected, so the H_2 is not supported, suggesting that work-life balance is perceived similarly by teachers regardless of their seniority. This finding implies that the school's work-life balance policies and practices are consistently experienced by teachers at different seniority levels, contributing uniformly to their engagement. Finally, the results for Recognition and Rewards reveal an F-value of 19.40 with a P-value of less than 0.001, leading to the rejection of the H_0 , thus supporting H_2 . This significant finding indicates that the perception of recognition and rewards varies significantly across levels of seniority, suggesting that recognition and reward systems may be perceived as more effective or equitable by certain seniority levels, influencing their engagement differently. Overall, while Organisational Culture and Work-Life Balance do not significantly differ in their impact on engagement across levels of seniority, other influential factors show significant differences. This suggests that these factors are perceived and possibly implemented differently across various levels of seniority, leading to varied engagement levels.

5. Discussion

5.1 Impact of Influential Factors on Employee Engagement

The investigation into the key factors influencing employee engagement among staff members at Opoku Ware School reveals a multifaceted picture, underscoring the importance of several critical components: leadership



style, organisational culture, professional development, work-life balance, and recognition and rewards. Leadership style emerged as the most influential factor among the teachers with no significant difference across different departments, indicating that effective leadership exemplified by assistance and empowerment is pivotal for teacher engagement and successful management of schools towards their desired goals (Kumar & Matheen, 2019). This finding is supported by extensive research indicating that leadership styles, which inspire and motivate employees and prioritise their needs, significantly enhance engagement (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016; Azmy, 2019; Balwant, et al., 2019). Thus, supportive leaders providing clear communication and fostering a positive work environment are crucial in maintaining high engagement among teachers (Sagala et al., 2022; Kumar & Matheen, 2019). The high perception of leadership effectiveness suggests that current leadership practices are successful, but continuous development and training for leaders could further enhance engagement, especially across all levels of seniority.

Additionally, organisational culture presents a more mixed picture, as some departments view the culture positively, and significant neutrality suggests areas for improvement. This aligns with existing literature highlighting the critical role of a positive organisational culture in promoting employee engagement (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016; Azmy, 2019). A supportive culture that fosters collaboration, innovation, and a sense of belonging is essential for high engagement (Ghani & Taylor, 2023). The data indicates that some departments may lack these positive cultural attributes, which could be addressed through initiatives aimed at building a more inclusive and supportive school environment. Furthermore, professional development also shows varied perceptions across departments and seniority levels. While opportunities for professional growth are crucial for engagement, as noted by research emphasising the role of continuous professional development in enhancing teacher motivation and performance (Li et al., 2022; Gartia & Sharma, 2021), the negative views indicate that current offerings may not fully meet the needs of all teachers. Tailoring professional development programmes to be more relevant and impactful could address this gap, ensuring that all teachers feel supported in their career growth.

Work-life balance is generally perceived positively, but the high proportion of neutral responses suggests inconsistencies, specifically across various departments. Work-life balance is a well-documented predictor of job satisfaction and engagement (Akshaya et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Ensuring that all teachers have access to fair and supportive work-life balance policies could enhance overall engagement levels. This might include prioritising employee wellness during challenging times and offering flexible scheduling and workload management (Ghani & Taylor, 2023). Also, recognition and rewards with slightly lower mean and mixed perceptions, indicate significant dissatisfaction among teachers. This aligns with research showing that recognition and rewards are crucial for maintaining high levels of engagement (Akshaya et al., 2018; Chand et al., 2022). Feeling undervalued can lead to decreased motivation and engagement. Implementing a more effective system for recognising and rewarding teacher contributions is essential (Wait, 2017). This could include formal recognition programmes and informal appreciation of teachers' efforts and achievements through financial rewards, bonuses, and non-cash incentives (Ghani & Taylor, 2023). Generally, the study's findings compared to existing research underscore the universal importance of these influential factors in driving employee engagement. Effective leadership, a positive organisational culture, opportunities for professional development, a supportive work-life balance, and adequate recognition and rewards are all well-established key drivers of engagement in various contexts (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016; Ghani & Taylor, 2023; Sundaray & Vihar, 2011).

The implications of these findings for Opoku Ware School are significant. With the variations in the impacts of the influential factors on employee engagement across contexts, it may be beneficial to investigate and address these discrepancies so that targeted interventions can be designed and implemented, ensuring a more uniform and positive impact on employee engagement across all departments and levels of seniority. Enhancing teacher engagement through targeted interventions in the key areas can lead to improved job satisfaction, retention, and performance. Specifically, focusing on improving organisational culture, tailoring professional development programmes, ensuring consistent work-life balance policies, and implementing effective recognition and reward systems can significantly enhance high school teacher engagement levels, leading to more motivated, satisfied, and effective teaching staff, ultimately benefiting the entire school community.

5.2 Contribution to Existing Theories and Framework



The findings of this study contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on employee engagement by providing new insights into how the highlighted influential factors impact engagement among high school teachers in a developing country context. In consequence, the study supports and extends several prominent theories, including the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Equity Theory, by highlighting how these factors operate within the specific context of a high school in Ghana. Firstly, the findings indicate that effective leadership style plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher engagement, aligning with existing literature within the JD-R framework, where leadership is considered a key job resource that can buffer the negative effects of job demands (Schaufeli, 2017; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The study's findings also extend this theory by highlighting that the impact of leadership style can vary depending on the seniority level within a school, indicating leadership interventions should be tailored to specific contexts. Moreover, the study's findings reinforce the notion that a positive organisational culture is a critical resource that promotes employee engagement, consistent with SET (Yin, 2018; Ahmad, 2023), which suggests that when employees perceive their organisation as supportive, they reciprocate with higher engagement. The study's findings further contribute to this theory by demonstrating that cultural impacts on engagement are not uniform across departments, signifying that sub-cultures within an organisation can significantly influence employee behaviour, and understanding these nuances is essential for designing effective engagement strategies.

The findings confirm that opportunities for professional growth and recognition are strong predictors of employee engagement employee, aligning with SDT, which emphasises the importance of competence and growth in fostering intrinsic motivation (Wiedemann, 2016). Also, the study's findings extend this theory by indicating that the perceived value of professional development varies by seniority, where more experienced teachers place higher importance on opportunities for advancement, suggesting a need for differentiated professional development strategies that cater to varying career stages. In addition, the findings suggest that maintaining a healthy work-life balance is essential for sustaining high levels of engagement, which aligns with the principle of the COR and the JD-R Model. According to COR, individuals endeavour to acquire, retain, and protect resources (Hobfoll et al. 2018), and a balanced work-life dynamic supports this by preserving resources and mitigating job demands, which subsequently helps employees manage stress, enhancing their overall well-being and productivity. The study's contribution highlights that the importance of work-life balance may differ across departments, indicating that tailored approaches are necessary to address the unique challenges of the different groups within the school.

Lastly, the findings reveal that recognition and reward enhance employee engagement, aligning with the Equity theory. This indicates that employees are motivated by fairness in recognising and distributing rewards (Chand et al., 2022). When teachers perceive that their efforts are recognised and fairly rewarded, their engagement levels increase (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019), which supports the idea that recognition and rewards are vital job resources and intrinsic needs for competence within the JD-R framework and SDT, respectively (Schaufeli, 2017; Wiedemann, 2016). The study extends these theories by indicating that the impact of recognition and rewards can vary across different levels of seniority and departments, emphasising that tailored reward systems that reflect the diverse contributions of teachers at various stages of their careers can enhance overall engagement.

5.3 Unique and Unexpected Findings

The study uncovered various unique and unexpected findings, contributing to the significance of employee engagement research. As highlighted, the most striking discovery is the variation in the influence of different factors on engagement levels across departments and levels of seniority within the school. While the variation is generally expected, the study revealed notable exceptions, specifically, the consistency of certain influential factors across departments and seniority levels, that make the findings particularly insightful and impactful.

An unexpected and noteworthy finding is that the influence of leadership style on engagement remained consistent across all departments. Regardless of the specific dynamics within each department, leadership practices and styles, particularly transformational leadership, were uniformly valued by all the teachers. This indicates that transformational leadership may universally impact employee engagement, surpassing the typical variations seen in other factors. This finding challenges the common assumption that the effectiveness of



leadership style may vary depending on the context and the idea that people's perceptions of leadership differ across contexts, as indicated by various theories, including Fiedler's contingency model, social identity theory of leadership, Globe study, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, and implicit leadership theories (Reams, 2023; Steffens et al., 2021; Dorfman et al., 2012; Žemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023; Lord et al., 2020). This highlights the potential of effective leadership strategies, like transformational, as a universally applicable strategy for enhancing employee engagement. Another surprising finding was the uniformity in the impact of organisational culture across seniority levels. While it was anticipated that more experienced teachers might prioritise culture differently than the less experienced ones because of experience, professional development and expertise (Latta, 2020; Olson & Rao, 2016; Gay, 2018), the study indicated that all levels of seniority valued a positive and supportive organisational culture equally, suggesting that fostering a strong organisational culture can have widespread benefits regardless of the level of experience of the staff. This also indicates that the efforts to improve culture should be a priority at all levels since it forms a foundation element that fosters overall engagement. Similarly, the study revealed the uniform influence of work-life balance on engagement across different levels of seniority, contrary to expectations (Björk-Fant et al., 2023; Slowiak & DeLongchamp, 2022; Han, 2015). The various teacher groups (junior and senior teachers) equally valued a healthy work-life balance, recognising its importance in maintaining their overall well-being and job satisfaction. This consistency highlights that work-life balance is a critical factor for all employees regardless of their tenure or position in the organisation and that organisational policies should be equally applied across all workforce levels.

The consistency in the impact of leadership style across departments, as well as the uniform importance of work-life balance and organisational culture across all levels of seniority, suggests that certain factors may have a broader, more universal applicability in enhancing engagement than previously thought. These unique findings challenge existing assumptions and theories that emphasise contextual variability and highlight the potential for more generalised strategies to improve employee engagement across differential organisational contexts. This research provides practical insights that can be applied to the studied school, other educational institutions and potentially across different sectors. Accordingly, the findings emphasised the universal importance of transformational and servant leadership, work-life balance, and organisational culture, highlighting key areas for organisations to focus on to foster a more engaged and motivated workforce.

5.4 Generalisation and Application of Findings in Other Contexts

While the study is situation within the specific context of a high school in Ghana, the findings have broader implications and hence be generalised or applied to other educational settings and beyond: Firstly, the emphasis on highlighted influential factors as key drivers of employee engagement is not unique to Ghanaian schools. These factors are relevant across various cultural contexts, although with different nuances. For instance, in schools of similar settings in other developing countries, similar dynamics might be observed, but the specific ways in which these factors may differ due to local cultural, social, and economic conditions. By comparing the findings of this study with those from other contexts, researchers and educationists can develop a more holistic understanding of how to promote employee engagement across different settings. Secondly, the insights gained from the study can be applied to other educational institutions, such as universities or technical and vocational training institutes, where the same influential factors may influence teacher engagement. Understanding how highlighted influential factors impact engagement at various levels of education can inform the development of sector-wide policies and interventions aimed at improving employee satisfaction and performance. Thirdly, deductions uncovered in this study extend beyond the educational sector and can be applied to other organisations that target to advance employee engagement since similar influential factors are likely to play crucial roles in employee engagement in non-profit or corporate settings. Organisations can use these findings to design targeted strategies that address the specific needs of their employees based on department or seniority, thereby enhancing overall organisational performance. Fourthly, this study emphasises the importance of supporting leadership development at a policy level, promoting a positive organisational culture, providing efficient and sufficient professional development opportunities, fostering work-life balance, and employing fair recognition and reward systems. Hence, policymakers in the education sector and beyond can use these insights to create an environment suitable for high employee engagement, necessary for reaching broader organisational and societal goals.



5.5 Limitations and Future Research

This study, despite its contributions, acknowledges some limitations. The sample size of 75 teachers from a single school may restrict the generalisability of findings beyond this specific context. Moreover, reliance on closed-ended survey data limited the depth of qualitative insights that could have provided a richer contextual understanding. To address these limitations, future research could employ larger, more diverse samples across multiple schools to enhance external validity. Incorporating qualitative methods like interviews or focus groups could offer deeper insights into teachers' perceptions. Longitudinal studies would provide a dynamic perspective on how factors influencing engagement evolve. Additionally, exploring external influences like socioeconomic conditions or educational policies on employee engagement could offer broader contextual insights. Future studies could also delve into specific mechanisms through which professional development, work-life balance, and recognition systems impact teacher motivation and job satisfaction, thereby informing more targeted strategies for improving school effectiveness and teacher satisfaction in Ghanaian high schools.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the crucial factors influencing employee engagement among high school teachers at Opoku Ware School in Ghana, examining how these factors drive engagement across departments and levels of seniority and underscoring the complexity of teacher engagement dynamics. It highlights the profound impact of leadership, organisational culture, professional development opportunities, work-life balance, and recognition systems on enhancing high school teacher satisfaction and effectiveness. These insights emphasise the importance for educational institutions to prioritise these aspects to cultivate a supportive and empowering environment for their teaching staff, contributing to sustained educational excellence and school success.

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Conflict of Interest

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