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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Engagement: An Investigation of Indian and Nigerian Workforce

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Organisational culture (OC) and employee engagement (EE) are the two constructs that form the basis of this research to investigate the effect of OC on EE of government and private sector employees in India and Nigeria on a comparative basis. The study also evaluates the role of myriad demographic factors taken as independent variables on these two dependent variables. The sample of 107 participants was collected through non-probability convenience sampling using a questionnaire. The analysis of raw data was accomplished using Percentages, Simple Means, Standard Deviation, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Levene Statistics, Pearson Chi-Square Test, Spearman's Correlations, and Cronbach's Alpha as statistical tools. The findings indicated many similarities as well as variances in different types of organizations vis-à-vis the relationship between OC and EE in these two countries, concluding with managerial ramifications discussed.

Keywords: Organisational culture, Employee engagement, Organizations, India, Nigeria

# INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisations seek to have engaged and committed employees to work for them; it is a fact. But it is equally important for them to create a culture within their systems that nurtures these types of employees. In other words, we can safely say that Organisational Culture (OC), which is robust, positive, and strong, brings about a workforce that is engaged mentally and physically in their work. The people working in any organisation are an epitome of diversity, with different languages, societal upbringing, notions, beliefs, and value systems. And while coming together, there must be a common ground of conduct for them to work as an effective unit. Here, the concept of OC comes to fore.

The definition given by Schein (1992) puts OC as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions and integration that works well. Therefore, it can be instilled in new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel about those problems." Harter *et al.* (2002) have defined Employee Engagement

(EE) as "an individual's involvement and satisfaction with, as well as enthusiasm for, their work." Another definition given by Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) states that EE is the "opposite of burnout; a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption."

According to Kahn (1990), EE has two dimensions. When an employee is obligated in a bodily, emotional, and cognitive sense to his work, it is termed as him being personally engaged. If not, he is

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personally disengaged. The author further states that the effect of the feeling of a conducive environment offered by an organisation leads the employees to psychologically associate with people, the work, and the organization. Employee engagement, which is termed as a step further to commitment and motivation, positively correlates with the success of a business. Many renowned consulting firms like Price Waterhouse Coopers, Valtera Corporation, Watson Wyatt Worldwide, and Towers Watson offer their services to improve EE for their clients (Woodruffe, 2006). The productivity of an organization, according to Sundaray (2011), is dependent on the positive attitude of the workforce towards it. And EE acts like a driver to this end, as it creates a favorable business environment for the employees to put in their best.

Bhatnagar (2007) talks about drivers of EE, which include OC, career planning, incentives, and organizational support. The downsides of not having engaged employees are many. Besides productivity and performance, which may be marred, low levels of EE may also lead to high absenteeism and employee turnover. It may also lead to the added cost of recruitment and training (Abukhalifeh and Som, 2013). Meaningfulness realised through job enrichment and work-role congruence, backing from supervisor and co-worker, and availability of resources are the three characteristics of a workplace that aids and stimulates EE (Kahn, 1990). Vaijayanthi et al. (2011) did a study on predictors of at GE Power & Water and came up with a description of EE, terming it as "a measurable degree of an employee's positive or negative emotional attachment to their job, colleagues, and organization, which profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work."

Since OC is termed as the glue that holds the organization together, stimulating the workforce to be committed and to perform (Van den Berg and Wilderom, 2004), it is imperative to have a review of

related studies to understand OC as well as EE, the two constructs which are core to the study at hand. A study done in the manufacturing sector of the National Capital Region of India came to the conclusion that OC is the reason for permanence and flexibility for organisations. It provides a clear set of principles which employees can follow for performance management policies to be made to ensure EE (Lather *et al.*, 2010).

A research done in the hospitality industry of Australia, precisely in the Regent Hotel, Sydney, by Kemp and Dwyer (2001) contends that devising and executing any business strategy as well as the assessment of EE is heavily influenced by OC. The authors further state that linking OC and strategy leads to positive effects of employee identification, commitment, and engagement. How much an employee feels that they have control, choice, fairness, justice, organisational support, and workload sustainability in their place of work determines their positivity or negativity towards EE (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001). This view is empirically supported by the research done by Rothmann and Joubert (2007) in the platinum mining industry of the North West Province of South Africa.

The relationship between OC and EE is further supported by research mentioned in the Accenture Human Capital Development framework, developed by Accenture, a global management consulting, technology services, and outsourcing company. The framework was accomplished by investigating and analysing data collected from 2400 employees, and 240 HR executives from 26 organisations. This study provides a two-way understanding of the constructs of OC and EE. On one hand, it states that engaged employees shape an OC of nurturing motivation, commitment, and passion for work. On the other hand, it recognizes that recognizing and rewarding performance, creating learning environment, promoting knowledge creation, and managing change shapes EE in an organization.

Explaining the relationship among OC, organisational change, and EE, Jung et al. (2009) propose that the former leads to the second, which in turn leads to the latter. Although not explicitly stated Ferreira and de Oliveira (2014) discuss the 'common goal' of social responsibility to identify thoughts, feelings, and perception that increase EE level. In this context the term 'common goal' refers to a culture that is shared throughout the organization. Employees strive to have a future, and if an organization can provide it, they remain committed, leading to engagement. Additionally, EE is also enhanced through corporate cultures that foster teamwork, pleasant working conditions, caring treatment, growth opportunities, training, and skill development employees (Devi, 2009). A preliminary study conducted by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) concluded that OC of justice and support, along with employee job fit and attending to the prospects and expectations of employees, lead to EE. Building on previous research, the present study includes organizational culture as an antecedent that impacts employee engagement levels.

#### Research Problem and Significance of Study

The central gap in research problem here is the lack of empirical studies that specifically explore the interplay of OC and EE by comparing the employees of India and Nigeria, including those working in public and private sector organizations. Hence the study at hand is significant for businesses engaged in the continents of Asia and Africa to understand employee behavior in similar yet different countries like India and Nigeria.

#### **Objectives of Research**

The basic objective of the present research is to understand the relationship between and influence of OC and EE for employees working in government and private sector organizations in India and Nigeria. The study at hand also aims to measure the OC and EE

levels of the employees and to comprehend the impact of independent demographic variables on OC and EE as dependent variables. It is also intended to provide reference and guidance for organizations in the researched countries to delve deeper into the dynamics of having stronger OC and better engaged employees.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

According to Bratton, Callinan, Forshaw, and Sawchuk (2007), organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions, beliefs, values, myths, stories, and rituals that are created by organizational members, as they learn to cope with the labor process. In the managerial context, OC is something that is conveyed to new employees as the correct way to perceive, think, and act in relation to challenges and opportunities facing the organization (Cray and Mallory, 1998; Geertz, 1973; Schein, 1991). According to the theoretical model given by Williams (1980), continual transformation of culture is the norm. Marcoulides (1993) theorized that many organizations lack the desired levels of output or productivity, which may be due to a lack of understanding of the interrelated dimensions that OC entails, namely a socio-cultural system of the perceived functioning of the organization's strategies and practices, an organizational value system, and the collective beliefs of the individuals working within the organization.

Another theory given by Zheng et al. (2009) describes how human resource personnel should be aware of the dynamism of cultural mechanisms to better their response to various organizational needs. They posit that organizational culture has various stages of progression like inspiration, implantation, negotiation, and, lastly, transformation. According to Van den Berg and Wilderom's (2004) theory, organizational culture comprises autonomy, external orientation, interdepartmental coordination, human resource, and improvement orientation.

Harter et al. (2002) have described EE as an individual's involvement and satisfaction with, as well

as enthusiasm for, their work. Schaufeli et al. (2002) postulate that EE comprises three elements, namely vigor, dedication, and absorption. One of the important models in the context of EE is the Two-factor theory given by Herzberg (1966), which posits that elements like achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibilities, and advancement (motivation factors) in the organizational environment will lead to greater engagement on the part of the employees. The other factor given in the theory is hygiene factors, which include company policy and administration, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working condition, salary, status, security, and personal life. The lack of these factors will result in low levels of EE.

Additionally, the Path-goal theory given by House (1996) and the Total Rewards model (Jiang *et al.*, 2009) critically correlate culture in organizations and the engagement of employees, which forms the basis of the current research. It has been proven that there does exist an effect of OC on the variables related to EE (Joushan *et al.*, 2015), or, for that matter, dimensions of OC. If found to be stronger, they positively correlated with EE, leading to engaged employees (Naidoo and Martins, 2014). Based on this theoretical background, the next section presents the conceptual framework of the study.

# **Conceptual Framework**

Keeping in view the review of literature and the theoretical framework, the conceptual model of the present study posits that the levels of OC, which comprise factors affecting it like employee empowerment, interdepartmental cooperation, human resource orientation, and improvement orientation, would influence the levels of EE in employees, with the elements of EE being vigor, dedication, and absorption. Both OC and EE are constructs according to Gold, Malhotra, and Segars (2001) that have a positive and momentous impact on the success of any organization. Therefore, based on this conceptual

model, the following null hypotheses were formulated and subsequently tested:

**H01.** There is no significant difference among government and private sector employees in India and Nigeria in terms of their OC and EE levels.

**H02.** There is no significant difference between male and female employees vis-à-vis OC in India and Nigeria.

**H03.** There is no significant difference between single and married employees vis-à-vis OC in India and Nigeria.

**H04.** There is no significant association between education and OC for Indian and Nigerian employees.

**H05.** There is no significant relationship between the age of employees in India and Nigeria and their level of OC.

**H06.** There is no significant relationship between the age and education of employees in India and Nigeria and their level of EE.

**H07.** There is no significant relationship between OC and EE for combined employees in India and Nigeria.

**H08.** There is no significant relationship between OC and EE for employees in India and Nigeria.

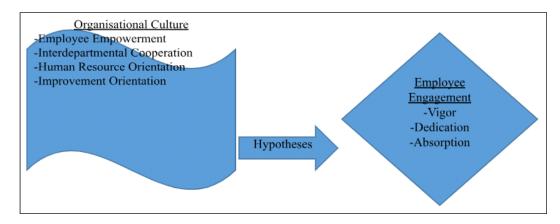
**H09.** There is no significant relationship between OC and EE for combined government and private sector employees in India and Nigeria.

**H010.** There is no significant relationship between OC and EE for government and private sector employees in India and Nigeria.

#### **METHODS**

Adopting a descriptive research design, the data collected for the present study included a sample size of 107 respondents from India and Nigeria. The data was collected through non-probability convenience sampling, using a Google form link. SPSS version 29 was employed to analyse the raw data using statistical procedures such as Percentage, Simple Means,

Figure 1: The conceptual model of the study



Standard Deviation, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Levene Statistics, Pearson Chi Square Test, and Spearman's Correlations.

# Scales and Reliability Statistics

Keeping in view the face and content validity of the instrument, a 17-item questionnaire to measure OC adopted from Van Den Berg and Wilderom (2004) was administered, and the scale gave a Cronbach's Alpha value of .742. EE for the respondents was established through a 17-item scale adopted from Schaufeli *et al.* (2002), with the Cronbach's Alpha value of the same being .824. Showing a high level of internal consistency, the reliability values were acceptable according to the dimensions of Hofstede (1990) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

# **Demographic Statistics**

Nigerian respondents were in the majority, with 74.8%, while 25.2% were Indians. 28% of respondents were in the age group of 30-39 years, and 28% were in the age group of 40-49 years. This was followed by 22.4% in the 20-24 year category, 11.2% in the 25-29 years category, 6.5% in the 50-59 years category, and finally 3.7% in the 60 years and above group. In the total sample, 81.3% were males, while 18.7% were females. Additionally, 35.5% were single, 62.6% were married, and 1.9% were divorced. For ease of analysis, the divorced individuals are treated as singles. In terms of education, most of

the respondents (44.9%) had 19 years and above of formal education, followed by those who had 11 to 18 years of education (43.9%), and 11.2% had 10 or fewer years of formal education.

Further, 58.9% were government sector employees while 41.1% were engaged in private jobs. The job profile of the respondents was majority in the education sector, with 47.7% followed by those in the service sector (13.1%), sales and marketing jobs (9.3%), and managerial jobs (6.5%) among others. For the Indian data, 16.8% had private jobs, and 8.4% had government jobs as against 50.5% Nigerians, whereas 24.3% of Nigerians had private jobs. Majority of the respondents had 0-5 years of work experience (27.1%), 6-10 years (21.5%), 11-15 years (19.6%) followed by those having more than 20 years (17.8%) and 16-20 years (14%).

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

#### Mean OC and EE nationality wise

The decision rule applied for the OC and EE levels of the researched employees meant that low levels encompassed less than 50% of the maximum score, 50%-70% for moderate levels, and more than a 75% threshold for high levels (Alanazi *et al.*, 2023; Hasani *et al.*, 2020; Le, 2022; Priyadharsan and Nithiya, 2020). A moderate OC level was obtained for the

Indian sample (mean 3.4815 and standard deviation .64273), which was almost comparable to the Nigeria one (mean 3.4750 and standard deviation .69309). However, country-wise, the EE levels for both countries were on the fringes of the higher side, with the Indian mean at 3.7037 and standard deviation .72403, and the Nigerian mean score at 3.6500 and standard deviation .57589.

The results also show that the Indian sample displayed stronger OC for private sector employees (mean 3.6111 and standard deviation .60768) compared to those working in the private sector in Nigeria (mean 3.2222 and standard deviation .66667), who had moderate levels of OC. Additionally, we also find that though both the public and private sector employees in Nigeria had moderate OC intensity, it was higher for private sector employees compared to their government sector counterparts, with a mean of 3.5769 and standard deviation .70274, and a mean of 3.4259 and standard deviation .68960, respectively. Further analysis established that the average accumulation of responses for EE in Indian government employees was 3.7778 with a standard deviation of .66667, showing higher commitment levels compared to their private sector counterparts (mean 3.6667 and standard deviation .76696). Nonetheless, in both cases, their EE levels were on the higher threshold. Coming to the Nigerian data, with a mean of 3.6852 and standard deviation of .57705, the EE levels for government employees were higher compared to private sector employees (mean 3.5769 and standard deviation .57779), showing their EE variable in the high category.

# **Inferential Statistics**

# OC and EE level variances based on nationality and organization type

The above-mentioned descriptive analysis is further supplemented by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, where with F(3,103) = .948, and

significance .420 (p>.05), there was no significant difference in OC levels among the government and private sector employees working in India and Nigeria. The test of homogeneity of variances or the Levene statistic (.322), further agrees with the assumption that group variances are equal, as .809 significance (p>.05) for the four categories of respondents were not significantly different, as the value of significance is more than 0.05. Additionally, for the EE levels, there was no significant difference for the above-mentioned categories of employees {F (3,103) = .293, and significance .830 (p>.05)}, which was further supported by the Levene statistic (.427), .734 significance (p>.05). Multiple Comparisons of OC and EE Levels through Games-Howell procedure was not applied since all four categories based on nationality profile of the type of organization in the present study do not have significant differences in their OC and EE levels; therefore, null hypothesis 1 is accepted.

# Gender and OC

To analyze the non-parametric data a gender chi square test was employed. The Indian sample, with a chi square value of 2.299, degrees of freedom (df) 3, and asymptotic significance .513 (>.05), indicated no significant difference between genders and OC. However, the Nigerian sample showed a significant difference between male and female employees in their level of OC {chi square value 8.296, df 3, and asymptotic significance .040 (<.05)}. Furthermore, the results suggested that female employees in Nigeria, with a mean score of 3.92, experienced stronger OC than their male counterparts (mean 3.38). In other words, they perceived the culture of their organization differently. Consequently, the null hypothesis 2 is accepted for India and rejected for Nigeria. Researches like that of Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (2001), confirm that gender-based employee differences for OC do exist.

#### Marital status and OC

Further analysis suggested that in the Indian sample, with a chi-square value of 1.119, df 3, and asymptotic significance of .773 (>.05), it was indicated that there was no significant difference between married and single employees regarding their OC. However, for Nigerian employees, there was a statistically significant difference in how they perceived the subtleties of OC {chi-square value of 21.023, df 6, and asymptotic significance of .002 (<.05)}. Additionally, in Nigeria, it was also found that single employees experienced higher levels of OC (mean 3.75) compared to the moderate levels perceived by married respondents. Thus, the null hypothesis 3 is accepted for India and rejected for Nigeria. A study conducted by Akyel and Burmaoglu (2019) confirms that there is a difference in how employees perceive OC according to their marital status. The investigation found that married employees had higher levels of OC compared to single employees working in sports facilities. A similar finding, where marital status affected OC, was also established in Egyptian research conducted by Mohamed et al. (2022).

# Education and OC

The present study established a significant negative correlation between the constructs of education and OC for both Indian and Nigerian employees. The results of the correlation for the Indian sample were r = -0.451, n = 107, and the value of p = <0.05. For Nigerian employees the correlation was r = -0.393, n = 107, and the value of p = <0.01. This implies that in both countries, stronger OC levels were experienced by employees with lesser qualifications, and vice versa. Therefore, null hypothesis 4 is rejected for employees in both countries. Education as a variable also has an effect on perception for OC, as evidenced by a study conducted in the Malaysian education sector, where it was found that education had a significant positive correlation with OC (Moradi et al., 2012).

## Age and OC correlation

The analysis of age and OC in Indian employees showed that there was no statistically significant relationship (r = .071, n = 107, p>0.05). A research done in Egypt and Mexico as background reported similar findings, where age did not have any statistically significant consequence on OC (El Badawy et al., 2017). In contrast, the Nigerian sample revealed a significant negative correlation between the variables (r = -0.281, n = 107, p<0.05). This implies that, unlike the Indian employees, the older Nigerian employees get, the weaker the OC dynamics, thereby accepting null hypothesis 5 for India and rejecting it for Nigeria. It has been determined that there are age differences vis-à-vis the perception of OC in studies like that of Helm and Stern (2001). Another study done on staff nurses in Egypt showed a significant difference between their age and perception about OC, which may be because as the age of employees increases, there is more cooperation and positive OC among the staff leading to a better view of OC (Mohamed et al., 2022 op. cit.).

#### Age, education and EE

Spearman's Correlation run for age among Indian (r = 0.158, n = 107, p > 0.01) as well as Nigerian (r = 0.041, n = 107, p > 0.01) employees did not reveal any statistically significant relationship with EE. Similarly, education and EE also yielded similar results, with non-significant positive correlation for Indian employees (r = 0.037, n = 107, p > 0.01) and non-significant negative correlation for Nigerian employees (r = -0.044, n = 107, p > 0.01). This implies that any increase or decrease in both variables among the respondents did not affect the engagement level of the employees. The null hypothesis 6 is accepted for both nations.

## Effect of OC on EE in over-all

The basic premise for all correlation analyses between OC and EE is that the better the value or levels of OC, or the stronger the OC, the more EE there will

be. The indicators for both OC and EE have already been mentioned in the reliability of scales section. Therefore, to test null hypothesis 7, Spearman's Correlation was run across the two variables. The results (r = 0.344, n = 107, p<0.01) indicated a strong positive and significant relationship between the variables. This implies that the stronger the OC in both countries, the higher the EE levels were. Thus, null hypothesis 7 is rejected for combined employees in India and Nigeria.

### Effect of OC on EE country wise

Expanding the research and establishing the countrywise effect of OC on EE, both Indian and Nigerian data showed a positive significant relationship between the variables. The resultant Spearman's correlation values, in that order, were = 0.566, n = 107, with a p-value of <0.01, and r = 0.263, n = 107, with a p-value of <0.05. Thus, both countries individually indicated that stronger OC led to more displayed EE. Hence, null hypothesis 8 for India and Nigeria is rejected.

# Effect of OC o EE organisation wise

Further, a key finding emerged that OC in government organizations statistically had no significant effect on the EE (r = 0.223, n = 107, p value = >0.01). In contrast, private organizations displayed a positive significant relation between both variables (r = 0.542, n = 107, p value = <0.01). This implies that OC in the public sector, whether weak or strong, had no effect on the engagement levels of employees compared to the private sector, where stronger OC means more EE for collective employees of these two countries. Therefore, null hypothesis 9 is accepted for government employees and rejected for those working in the private sector for the combined employees of both countries.

# Effect of OC on EE organisation and nationality wise

Not limited to the type of organization per se, the present study further delved into the relationship between variables of OC and EE among organizations country-wise for further interpretations. Indian government, as well as private sector employees, showed a significant positive correlation between OC and EE, which means stronger OC led to employees being engaged more. The Spearman's Correlation values in that order were r = 0.687, n = 107, the value of p = <0.05 and r = 0.589, n = 107, the value of p = <0.05. OC had no effect vis-à-vis EE for Nigerian government employees (r = 0.154, n = 107, the value of p = >0.01); nonetheless, a significant positive correlation was established for Nigerian private sector employees (r = 0.527, n = 107, the value of p =<0.01). Therefore, null hypothesis 10 is rejected for Indian employees in both sectors, along with Nigerian private sector employees and accepted for government employees in Nigeria.

# CONCLUSION, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND FUTURE RESEARCHES

The study, being a comparative one, aimed to determine and present the dynamics of OC and EE Indian and Nigerian employees. It was found that the OC levels among the workforce in both countries were moderate, unlike the mutually high levels of EE. When considering the OC levels by sector, Indian employees experienced higher levels of OC than their Nigerian counterparts in private jobs. Another significant finding was that the private sector in Nigeria offered stronger OC levels than the government sector. Although employees in both sectors displayed higher levels of EE, both Indian and Nigerian government employees were found to be more engaged compared to private employees.

There was no difference between males and females in terms of OC levels among Indian employees, which was not the case with their Nigerian counterparts. This shows a marked difference in attitude and work behavior between male and female employees in Nigeria, as well as how they are treated.

Additionally, the fact that females experience stronger OC in Nigeria suggests that they are likely to be more engaged in their organizations. There were no statistically significant differences in EE based on gender among both Indian and Nigerian employees. The managerial implication here is that organizations operating in these two countries need to focus on building stronger OC, especially in the Nigerian private and public sectors. The HR strategists also need to consider how to increase employee engagement levels of their employees, which does not auger well if EE levels are compared with that of public sector workforce. Nigerian male employees also should also focus more on Nigerian male employees to reinforce OC, so that they can focus more on their work. Building shared values, trust, and inclusion can be key to achieving this.

The findings also pointed to the fact that among the Nigerian employees, OC perception among singles was stronger than that among married individuals, who only demonstrated moderate levels. However, statistically significant findings were not obtained in the Indian sample. Organizational managers, especially in Nigeria, should also note that marital status does play an important role in relation to OC, as suggested in the present study. They can place emphasis on hiring single candidates if they want their employees to perceive OC in their organizations positively. Surprisingly, the findings suggest that in both the Indian and Nigerian respondents, those with less education had stronger OC perception than their better-qualified counterparts. It is imperative for HR managers not to limit their recruitment and selection strategy strictly based on hiring a well-qualified workforce, as suggested by the findings. Positively perceiving the dynamics of culture in the work place goes beyond how much employees have studies; HR managers should also perform other attitude-related tests to select potential employees.

Though the Indian sample did not show it, OC levels experienced by older Nigerian employees were

not strong, implying that the younger work-force felt the culture in their work-place more. Future studies can explore and understand the reasons for this phenomenon, which can be very relevant both academically and practically organizational managers. One important conclusion of this study was that whether the employees in both countries were young or old, or highly educated or less educated, it did not statistically determine the engagement outcomes of the employees. Future studies can further research these two variables as a detailed examination was not within the scope and objectives of the present research.

However, many studies have shown that OC plays a very important role in relation to EE. As the perception of OC was stronger among the researched employees in India and Nigeria, they were found to be more engaged in their work. The implication for managers here is that in order to ensure a dedicated and involved workforce, they should work towards a stronger degree of OC in their organizations. The analysis of public sector employees showed that the level of OC had no bearing on EE, whereas for people working in the private sector, a higher level of OC meant that they were found to be a more engaged workforce. Since this finding was the result of combined data, managers in government organizations in both countries should explore the reasons why their personnel felt this way and how to create a stronger sense of culture among them.

Nevertheless, when considering the types of organizations individually in both countries, Indian employees, regardless of the sector they were involved with, showed that if their level of OC was robust, they also displayed high engagement levels with their work. The increase or decrease in OC levels had no bearing on EE for government workers in Nigeria, which is an area of concern for management strategists. In contrast, for private sector employees in the country, a stronger perception of OC meant higher engagement levels.

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