Managerial Skills and Employees' engagement: Evidence from Deposit Money Banks in South-South, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Although research has shown that leveraging technological advancement has created a new identity which is critical to staying competitive in a highly digitalized work environment. This premise has focused mainly on operational performance and excludes the impact of managerial skills in enhancing employee engagement in a digitalized workplace. The challenge of utilizing technology in consonance with managerial skill has led to the transformation and efficient operations of modern banking operations in an emerging economy. Hence, this study examines the effect of managerial skills on employees' engagement in a digitalized work environment. The study uses cross sectional survey questionnaires and a quantitative research approach to investigate how managerial skills influence employee's engagement in deposit money banks in south-south Nigeria. A structured questionnaire on 5-point Likert scale was utilized in collecting data. The total population was 721 staff, and a sample of 257 was obtained through the application of Taro Yamane formula. Stata 13.0 statistical package was used to analyse the data, , multiple regression analysis, and correlational analysis were used for data analysis. The study findings revealed that supervisory communication, employee empowerment, job crafting and psychological meaningfulness have significant positive impact on employee's engagement. This study therefore concludes that managerial skills impact employees engagement positively and the study recommends that digital transformation initiative in the banking sector be complemented by human centered managerial practices for sustainable performance.

Keywords: Digitalized environment, Supervisory communication, Employees empowerment, Job crafting, Psychological meaningfulness, Employees engagement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The banking sector occupies a significant position in Nigeria's economy for social and infrastructural development. It serves as a critical sector for financial intermediation, capital mobilization and macroeconomic stability. As Africa's largest economy, Nigeria relies heavily on the effectiveness of its banking system to support private sector growth, entrepreneurial activities through microfinance banks, and economic diversification. The sector consists of deposit money banks such as 1st bank, U.B.A, Zenith bank, Fidelity bank, Access bank, Polaris bank among others. The financial system also comprises specialized banks such as Islamic Bank, Merchant Bank, Development Bank, offering a broad range of services in digital financial services and international trade facilitation (Adeqbite & Nakajima, 2023; C.B.N. 2023). The Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) , as the primary regulatory authority, has introduced several policy measures aimed at strengthening financial stability, improving corporate governance and enhancing risk management practices across banks. These reforms have intensified performance targets and compliance demands, placing significant pressure on leadership, employees and management alike (Akinwale, 2020; Onoh et al., 2022).

The Nigerian banking sector is affected by several persistent challenges, key among these are rising fraud, and cybersecurity risks, loans, regulatory uncertainty, increased operating costs, and persistent customer services issues (PWC Nigeria, 2021). These challenges limit growth, reduce operational efficiency, and restrict access to banking services for significant segments of the population. Managerial skills remain widely practised within Nigeria banking sectors due to its alignment with formalised organizational structure, performance monitoring systems and compliance-driven operations. Managerial skills are characterized by contingent rewards, corrective supervision with clearly defined tasks expectations. Extant literature suggests that such skills can positively influence employees' commitment and performance outcomes, particularly in highly structured sectors such as banking and telecommunication (Ogunola et al., 2020; Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2022). Nonetheless, concerns persist regarding its capacity to stimulate deeper insight on psychological engagement when relational and communicative processes are weak while regulatory and operational solutions are critical, the role of managerial skills particularly as it relates to internal supervision and employees dynamics is increasingly recognized as vital to sustainable change.

Recent policy initiatives by the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration (2023-present) have reshaped the banking sector and influenced organizational dynamics, notably, the establishment of the National Credit Guarantee Company (NCGC) in 2025 aims to expand credit access to business and individuals through risk-sharing mechanisms. Simultaneously, the Central Bank of Nigeria has emphasized recapitalization, regulatory collaboration, and transparency to strengthen financial stability (C.B.N. 2025). These reforms impose new performance metrics on banks, necessitating effective management skills and communication strategies to ensure employees understand, accept, and implement policy-driven changes. As Nigerian banks adopts digital platforms and hybrid work arrangement communication quality, employees empowerment, job crafting, and psychological meaningfulness has become even more consequential for maintaining these concepts; in furtherance of these concepts, managerial sills that combines accountability with supportive communication promote employees resilience in adapting to evolving policy requirements. Olowookere & Adejuwon, (2021); Oguegbe et al., (2023), opine that open and strategic communication amongst supervisors reinforce trust, clarity and alignment with banking goals. Managerial skills that communicate expectation and feedback transparently enable employees to understand regulatory changes and operational priorities, reducing errors and organizational resistances (Babalola et al., 2021; Men, 2014). Ajayi & Ojo, (2022), in the context of fraud prevention, effective communication ensures rapid information flow and collaborative action, in addition, managerial skills that nurtures work/employees empowerment, stimulates energy, dedication, and proactive behaviour among employees (Akinwale & George, 2020; Bakker & Albrecht, 2018). Highly empowered employees tend to exceed minimum requirements, exhibit vigilance against fraud and deliver improved customers services. Moreover, empowering employees to reshape aspects of their role known as job crafting encourages autonomy, innovation, and responsiveness to operational needs (Adekanbi & Ukpere, 2020), however, Effective managerial skills enhance psychological meaningfulness by connecting employees daily work routine with broader organizational and societal purposes. Despite these advances on banking reforms, managerial skills underscores employee engagement. Research relating communication, employee's empowerment, job crafting and psychological meaningfulness on work engagement in deposit money banks are scanty and remain underexplored within Nigerian banking context. Existing studies in developing countries often examine managerial styles and supervisory communication in isolation, with limited attention to psychological meaningfulness that examine how charismatic leadership influences engagement outcomes. Moreover, much of the broader managerial-engagement literature continues to rely heavily on western empirical evidence, raising questions about contextual relevance for African economies such as Nigeria (Adekanbi & Ukpere, 2020). This study aligned with the argument of Adekanbi & Ukpere, (2020) that context matters. Nonetheless, there is a gap in knowledge on the subject especially in emerging market contexts. This study responds to call by other management scholars scholars including Ogunole et al., (2020); Adebayo and Ogunsina, (2022); Oguegbe et al., (2023), to examine managerial competences and employees' engagement in varying context, especially in developing nation context (Adekanbi & Ukpere, 2020). By foregrounding indigenous empirical evidence and contextual realities, study contributes to the growth of African management scholarship. The findings are expected to provide actionable insight to inform scholar, bank management of the importance of the concepts in the work environment. This study relies on Job Demand Theory expanded by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) which suggest that there is one best way to manage employees and its motivates their managerial skills test, structure and mentorship.

The Study Objectives

The main objectives of the study is to examine the effect of managerial skills on employees engagement in a digitalized work environment Deposit Money Banks in South-South, Nigeria, while the specific objectives are as follows;

1. To examine the effect of supervisory communication on employee engagement in a digitalized work environment of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.
2. To explore the effect of employee's empowerment on employee engagement in a digitalized work environment of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.
3. To determine the effect of job crafting on employee engagement in a digitalized work environment of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.
4. To find out the effect of psychological meaningfulness on employees' engagement in a digitalized work environment of deposit money banks in South-South, Nigeria.

2.0

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESES DEVELOPED

Conceptualizing Managerial Skills

Managerial skills remain fundamental determinants of organizational effectiveness, employee productivity, and sustainable organizational performance because they enable managers to coordinate resources efficiently, motivate employees, and achieve strategic objectives (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Contemporary literature conceptualizes managerial skills as multidimensional competencies encompassing leadership, communication, decision-making, technical competence, human relations, conceptual thinking, emotional intelligence, and digital capability (Whetten & Cameron, 2021; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024). These competencies collectively enhance managers' ability to respond to organizational challenges, technological changes, and competitive workplace environments. Managerial skills refers to the set of capabilities and competences that enable managers to effectively coordinate organizational resources and guide employees towards the achievement of institutional objectives (Adebayo & Ogunsina, 2022). These skills are fundamental to managerial effectiveness because they shape how managers plan, organize, lead, and control organizational activities in both a stable and dynamic business environment. These skills are central to managerial effectiveness, particularly in-service oriented sectors such as banking where employee performance and service quality are critical determinants of organizational success (Mintzberg, 2009; Yukl, 2013). In management literature, managerial skills are commonly grouped into two core categories; Technical skills, -these are specialized abilities required to perform specific tasks related to technological function (Omofowa & Nwachukwu, 2025). They include knowledge of tools, techniques, procedures and methods relevant to the field (such as accounting, data analysis, production processes or the use of technology) Omofowa & Omofowa (2023; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024). These skills are normally used by lower-level managers in operational activities; human skills, the ability to work effectively with other employees both individually or as a group. These include communication, conflict management, and emotional intelligence; these skills enable managers to build positive relationships, inspire employees, and create a cooperative work environment (Enaruna & Omofowa, 2025). This means conceptual skills entail the ability to think strategically and understand the organization as a whole, they involve analysing complex situations, recognizing interrelationship among different departments, forecasting trends, and making sound decisions. They are used by top-level managers responsible for setting vision, policies and long term strategies.

Recent research emphasises that effective management in contemporary work context integrates not only operational knowledge but also related skills such as communication, support, and strategic problem-solving (Li et al., 2024; Daniel and Ezeamuzie, 2024). Managers who demonstrate competencies are in a better position to influence employees motivation, engagement, and outcomes in service-intensive settings like deposit money banks (Omofowa & Omofowa, 2023). Li et al., (2024) reveals that reputable supervisory support and meaningful dialogue reduces uncertainty and enhances performance. In the banking settings where regulatory complexity and customers demands are high, managerial skills that enhance communication help clarify expectations, build trust and reinforce organizational values, thereby fostering employee engagement. Extant literature by Zhang et al., (2025) advocates job crafting as paramount with managerial skills. Overall, managerial sill exert a multifaceted influence on employee engagement in deposit money banks. Through effective supervisory communication, support for job crafting, empowerment practices, and reinforcement of psychological meaningfulness, managers shape the motivational and cognitive conditions that underlie engagement. These mechanisms are grounded in contemporary research demonstrating that relational and strategic competences rather than purely technical skills, are central to fostering sustainable engagement in a dynamic organizational context. Managerial skills also serves as a foundational antecedence of employee engagement in deposit money banks by shaping communication to avoid ambiguity, enable job crafting, fostering employee empowerment and enhancing psychological meaningfulness. By integrating these relational and psychological mechanisms, skilled managers create a work environment that promotes sustained engagement, improved service quality, and organizational performance, aligning with people-centred management in financial institutions (Albrecht et al., 2015; Daniel and Ezeamuzie, 2024).

Theoretical Foundation

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, proposed by Bakker & Demerouti, (2007), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding employee motivation. The model posits that a job has unique demands and resources that jointly influence employee outcomes. These are aspects of work that demand sustenance associated with physical, psychological, or emotional effort. For instant in banks job demand such as high work pressure, complex customer interactions, and regulatory compliance requirements, that put unique pressure on workers that requires specialised managerial expertise (Eze & Chukwu, 2025). Job resources, in contrast, are physical, psychological, social, or organizational factors that support employees in reducing strain and stimulate personal growth (Adebayo & Balogun, 2025; Ijaiya & Ajayi, 2025). Within the Nigerian banking context, managerial skills can be conceptualized as a key job resource. By providing clear goals, structured expectations, contingent rewards, and timely feedback, transactional leadership helps employees manage demanding tasks more effectively, reducing strain and enhancing motivation (Okoro & Nwankwo, 2025). Supervisory communication functions as an additional job resource by clarifying roles, offering guidance, and providing emotional and informational support, enabling employees to cope with complex work demands and maintain high levels of engagement (Njoku & Adedoyin, 2025; Eze & Chukwu, 2025). Applying this framework in the Nigerian banking sector allows for an integrated examination of how managerial skills jointly influence employee engagement. It highlights the mechanisms through which managerial skill in a digitalized work environment sustained higher performance, particularly in a sector facing policy-driven reforms, competitive pressures, and dynamic operational challenges (National Credit Guarantee Company, 2025; Central Bank of Nigeria, 2025). By situating managerial skills as key job resources within the JD-R framework, this study provides a theoretically grounded rationale for investigating their interactive effects on employee engagement in Nigeria's banking sector. This approach not only offers practical insights strategies but also contributes to understanding engagement dynamics in high-demand, policy-sensitive organizational environments.

Conceptualizing Employees Engagement

Employees engagement refers to work-related state characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption. Engaged employees are energetic, committed to their roles, and willing to go beyond formal job requirement, which enhances productivity, job satisfaction, and retention (Eze & Chukwu, 2025; Njoku & Adedoyin, 2025). Employees engagement is crucial for achieving competitive advantage and positive organizational outcomes. Studies suggests that many factors account for employees engagement, (Akinwale & George, 2020); managerial skills (Alsharairi et al., 2025); teamwork (Babalola et al., 2021); training and career development (Bakker et al., 2018); compensation in remuneration (Ajayi & Ojo, 2022); organizational procedures, structure, policies and systems (Eze & Chukwu, 2025) and employee well-being (Demerouti et al., 2017). Research on engagement is linked to JDR model, (Ijaiya & Ajayi, 2025). This model implies an important role for the personal resources that employees can use to optimize their possibilities to cope with the demand of the job. Personal resources are psychological aspect of the self that help the employees to successfully cope with, for example, job demand and attaining work goals, James et al., (2021); self-efficacy, resilience and hope, Khalid et al., (2021); meta analyses and reviews suggest that engagement is positively related to attitude, behaviour and performance, Njoku & Adedoyin (2025). In the Nigerian banking sector, employee engagement is especially critical, as employee operate in high demand, customer-focused environments where policies reforms and technological innovation, creates additional challenges (National Credit Guarantee Company, 2025; C.B.N. 2025). Engagement needs to be explicitly embedded within an integrated system of HRM policies, practices and procedures Olufemi & Adekunle (2025). Engagement is a positive, fulfilling characterized by dedication Onoh (2022); engagement entails harnessing employee self to their work, through physical, cognitive and emotional roles (Zada, 2025; Daniel and Ezeamuzie, 2024); arguably, employees who shun unethical behaviour in the workplace will be more engaged. According to Soane et al. (2012), intellectual engagement focuses on curiosity, active learning, deep understanding that improve professional performance experience and energizing jobs. Consequently, employee engagement functions as both a key predictor of organizational success and a mechanism through which managerial skills are communicated, practiced in contemporary organization (Njoku & Adedoyin, 2025). Recent empirical studies further emphasize the importance of adopting validated and context-specific measurement scales that adequately capture emerging workplace realities such as digital transformation, innovation, and organizational complexity (Jokanović Đajić et al., 2024). Scholars argue that traditional managerial skill measures may no longer sufficiently address modern organizational demands, particularly in technology-driven environments. Consequently, organizations seeking improved employee productivity, operational efficiency, and sustainable performance must prioritize managerial skill development, continuous competency assessment, and regular training programmes to enhance managerial effectiveness and organizational competitiveness (Yukl, 2020). Mulleta (2023) examined the effect of superior-subordinate communication on employee work engagement among staff of Adama Science and Technology University in Ethiopia. Using a quantitative research design and survey data obtained from employees, the study found that effective supervisory communication significantly enhanced employee engagement. The author reported that supportive communication, regular feedback and open interaction between supervisors and employees improved employees' dedication, vigor and involvement in work activities. The study concluded that effective communication between supervisors and subordinates strengthens employees' psychological attachment to their jobs and enhances organizational commitment. Similarly, Mikkelson et al. (2024) investigated the predictive effects of supervisor communication competence on employee outcomes across remote, hybrid and physical work environments. The study revealed that effective and appropriate supervisory communication positively influenced employee engagement. The authors noted that employees who perceived their supervisors as competent communicators demonstrated greater enthusiasm, emotional involvement and commitment to organizational activities. The study further indicated that supportive and respectful supervisory communication created favourable work environments that reduced burnout and improved employee engagement. In another related study, Joel et al. (2023) examined the moderating effect of supervisory innovative support on organizational learning and employee engagement in selected Nigerian organizations. Adopting a survey research design, the study found that supportive supervisory communication significantly improved employee engagement through enhanced collaboration, information sharing and employee participation in organizational learning processes. The authors concluded that supervisory communication serves as an important organizational mechanism for strengthening employee motivation, commitment and workplace involvement. The reviewed studies collectively suggest that supervisory communication positively influences employee engagement by promoting trust, improving feedback systems, strengthening collaboration and enhancing employees' emotional attachment to their work and organizations.

Supervising Communication and Employees Engagement

Supervisory communication in managerial skill refers to the structured interaction that takes place between supervisor and their team members. This form of communication is pivotal for shaping organizational culture facilitating employee engagement, and influencing performance outcomes. Supervisory communication encompasses not just the transmission of information, but also the openness of innovative ideas, novelty, active listening, and providing emotional and practical support. When supervisors communicate transparently and empathetically, it fosters a positive work environment, boosts job satisfaction and strengthens team morale. Supervisor who uses motivating language and provides clear guidance also facilitates newcomers adjustment, and well-being. Its key components are active listening, feedback, clarity in messaging, and awareness of barriers to communication (such as physical, external or emotional distractions). Feedback is particularly crucial-it ensures mutual understanding between supervisor and their team, which is necessary for planning, performance management and resolving conflicts (Omofowa & Ogbonmwan, 2025; Rizwan et al., 2025). Recent research demonstrates that supervisor support and effective communication are essential for employees engagement, and ultimately, job performance for instance, Imam et al. (2023) highlighted that employees who receive strong support and clear communication from their supervisors tend to be more engaged in their work activities. This is because supportive supervisors create a work environment where employees feel valued, understood, and guided in the performance of their duties. Clear communication also helps employees understand organizational expectations, job responsibilities, and performance goals, thereby reducing confusion and workplace uncertainty.

Similarly, Yue et al. (2024) explained that effective supervisory communication enhances employees' emotional and psychological connection to their work, which ultimately improves their overall performance. When supervisors provide timely feedback, encouragement, and open communication, employees become more motivated, committed, and willing to invest extra effort in achieving organizational objectives. As a result, higher employee engagement leads to increased productivity, better task performance, and improved organizational effectiveness. Extant literature emphasizes that supervisory communication extends beyond directive information sharing to include relational and motivational elements such as empathy, trust-building, and meaning making. From this perspectives, effective supervisory communication involves clarity of instruction, openness to upward communication and supportive feedback that enhances employees engagement and psychological safety (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2022; Shamsul Azhar et al., 2024; Omofowa et al., 2022). Consistent with Contingency Theory, supervisory communication is also conceptualized as a relational resource that shapes employees perception of supervisor support and organizational care, high quality, and it fosters reciprocal positive behaviours, including commitment, discretionary effort, and improve performance (Zhon et al., 2025). Recent empirical studies has shown a positive relationship between supervisory communication and employees engagement, for example, Imam et al., (2025) found that perceived supervisor support and internal communication significantly predicts employees engagement which in turn enhances performance. Results showed that internal communication strengthens the relationship between leader support and engagement (add source). Alsharairi et al., (2025) confirmed that leadership communication styles positively influence employee engagement during crisis situations. The study used social exchange theory to explain how transparent and responsive communication promotes engagement and favourable communication behaviours among employees (this theory defers from the adopted theory). Based on the literature reviewed, this study therefore hypothesised that;

HO$_1$: *Supervisory communication impacts employees' engagement negatively.*

Employee's Empowerment

Employee empowerment entails "employee involvement", "participative management", "job enrichment" and "industrial democracy" (Ameer, et al., 2014). Empowerment promotes trust, commitment, productivity, creativity and sense of direction (Omofowa & Anwatu, 2025); participatory management, policies formulation, and implementation (Vu, 2020); job satisfaction (Karim & Rehman, 2012). According to Schaufeli (2013), employee engagement is an outstanding component that promotes organization continuously with managers. In practice, only limited managers understand and implement the concept at workplaces (Yaghoobi et al., 2011). Employee empowerment contributes immensely in managerial skills, promotes creativity, norms, values and ethics, and influences well-being. Little data shows concern in banking in developing countries, most scholarly articles instead focused on "work-life balance" (e.g. Omofowa & Omofowa, 2022), work orientation (Dik et al., 2012; Roznowski & Zarzycka, 2020). In empirical studies relating employees empowerment and engagement; Jose and Mampilly (2014) examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and employee engagement. It was observed that psychological empowerment and its dimensions (meaning, competence and impact) explain employee engagement. Structural empowerment promotes work engagement by stimulating employees' motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Zhang and Bartol, (2010) studies the relationship between empowerment and engagement, it was observed that psychological empowerment significantly enhances motivation and creative processes engagement among Chinese professionals. Bhatnagar, (2012) establishes that psychological empowerment fosters work engagement and mitigates against turnover intention. Stander and Rothmann, (2010) submit that psychological empowerment and job security promotes employee engagement in public manufacturing firms. Ugwu et al., (2014) demonstrated that psychological empowerment influences organizational trust and work engagement in deposit money banks and pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria. Arguably, employees empowerment fosters engagement, therefore this study hypothesize that;

HO$_2$: *Employee empowerment negatively impacts work engagement.*

Job Crafting

Investing in employees development is another crucial behaviour in managerial skills, resources, training and support enhances employees growth, motivation, and commitment leading to effective engagement in work practices. Additionally, managerial skills fosters a supportive atmosphere that encourages employees to take initiatives in deciding tasks (Omofowa & Omofowa, 2023). This entails employees autonomy and sense of ownership. Such actions reshape key dimensions of work roles, tasks, relationships and perceptions (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Mohammed & Daniel, 2024). Demerouti et al. (2017) and Slemp et al., (2015) stressed that job crafting entails a proactive and participatory approach that empower employees to redesign tasks and responsibilities, based on their strengths, interest and values. Job crafting leads to self-initiated changes, balance score cards that enhance job satisfaction, autonomy and personal fulfilment (Omofowa & Omofowa, 2022).

Job crafting is dynamic in nature with various dimensions of flexibility, motives, preferences using suitable approaches that lead to resilience and enhance performance (Lee & Song, 2020; Wang et al., 2016). Expanding upon prior empirical studies; this study explores the interplay between job crafting and employee engagement. Research within managerial skills development has consistently underscored the significance of job crafting in aligning engagement. For example, an empirical study conducted among employees in the Pakistani Banking sector found that job crafting significantly and positively influenced job engagement. The study demonstrated that employees who proactively modified their tasks and sought additional resources reported higher levels of engagement, Khalid et al. (2021). At its core, job crafting bridges employees with task and cognitive crafting on job dimensions, this increases and positively predicts employees engagement. So, employees who altered their task boundaries and reframed their work meanings reported higher vigour and dedication; Rizwau et al. (2025). Based on these insights, this study hypothesized that;

HO$_3$: ***Job crafting significantly impacts employee engagement negatively.***

Psychological Meaningfulness

Psychological meaningfulness refers to the degree to which employees perceived their work as significant, valuable, and worthwhile, it reflects a personal sense that employees job has purpose and contributes something important either to the organization, or personal growth (Omofowa & Ogbonmwan, 2025). Psychological meaningfulness refers to the degree to which employees perceive their work as valuable, important, and worthwhile. It involves how well individuals feel their job fits their abilities (role fit), how significant they believe their tasks are (task significance), and whether they feel that the effort they invest in their work brings meaningful returns in terms of achievement, recognition, and personal growth. When employees experience psychological meaningfulness, they are more likely to feel motivated and engaged in their jobs because they see a clear connection between what they do and the overall success of the organization. In such situations, employees believe that their skills and talents are being properly utilized, their contributions are appreciated, and their responsibilities are aligned with tasks that matter. According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), this sense of meaningfulness plays an important role in enhancing positive workplace attitudes and behaviors. Employees who find their work meaningful are more committed, more productive, and more willing to put in extra effort, which ultimately contributes to improved organizational performance and success. The underlying idea is that employees who endorse a relatively fixed psychological meaningfulness believe that personality traits and characteristics such as intelligence, deep sense of purpose, feel valued, and find intrinsic value in their work (Adekanbi & Ukpere, 2020). However, only a few studies have related psychological meaningfulness to employees engagement at work, for example, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) asserted that psychological meaningfulness along with psychological safety is significantly associated with work engagement, employees who find their work meaningful shows higher vigour, dedication and absorption at work.

Empirical studies relating psychological meaningfulness to employees engagement has shown a positive relationship, for example, May et al., (2004) in a seminal empirical test found that psychological meaningfulness significantly predicted employees engagement. Their findings indicated that employees who perceived their work as meaningful were more likely to demonstrate higher levels of cognitive, emotional and physical engagement. Similarly, Geldenhuys, Laba & Venter (2014) in a study published in South Africa Journal of industrial psychology, reported a statistically positive relationship between meaningful work and work engagement. Their result further demonstrated that meaningfulness indirectly enhances organizational commitment through engagement, highlighting engagement as a mediating mechanism. Most recently, Zada, Abdalla, Estay, & Nureldeen, (2025) in a study published in BMC psychology, found that psychological meaningfulness strengthens the positive effect of leadership, communication on work engagement, their findings reinforce the argument that meaningfulness not only directly predicts engagement but also enhances the effectiveness of organizational practices aimed at increasing engagement. Based on the literature reviewed, this study hypothesized that;

HO_4: *Psychological meaningfulness negatively relates to employee engagement.*

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. A cross-sectional survey is a research method used to collect data from a diverse group of individuals at a specific point in time. It aims to gather information about the characteristics, opinions, behaviour or attitude of a finite population or a subject of that population (Babbie, 2016). The study was carried out in 10 banks in south-south, Nigeria. The study is based on survey data from 720 employees. Deposit money banks are financial institutions that accept and safeguard deposits from individuals, businesses, and government entities while also providing services such as withdrawals, fund transfers, loans, and other financial transactions. These banks operate within a structured and regulated environment where trust, integrity, accountability, and confidentiality are core operational principles guiding employee conduct and service delivery. In contemporary banking environments, the nature of managerial skills has significantly evolved due to rapid digitalization and technological advancement. Managers are now required to possess not only traditional competencies such as leadership, communication, and decision-making skills but also digital literacy, technological adaptability, and the ability to manage automated banking systems and data-driven processes. This shift has made managerial skills more dynamic, as effective management in deposit money banks now depends on the ability to integrate human resource management with digital tools to enhance efficiency, service delivery, and organizational performance. Therefore, the single case study character is suitable for the objectives. The population/sample is predominantly male (81.4%), with female making up 18.6%. Age distribution includes 24% under 30, 33.1% between 31 and 40, 19.1% between 41 and 50 and 23% over 50. Educational background varies, 47.9% have Bachelor Degree, 38.4% hold Master's Degree and 13.5% have Diplomas. Employment status shows 84.2% are full time and 15.7% are part-time. Experience levels include 7% with less than 1year, 30.6% with 1-5years, 24.8% with 6-10years and 37.6% with over 11years. Managerial skills experience ranges from less than 1year (7.4%) to over 10years (47.69%). Job descriptions vary with 3.6% in managerial/executive roles, 14% in technical/IT positions, 4.5% in training sections, 5.4% in administrative/personnel roles and 62.4% in other positions. This study adopted a stratified sampling technique to ensure balanced representation of deposit money banks across south-south Nigeria while Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size for the study.

Using Taro Yamane formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = s. size

N = population

e = error margin (commonly 0.05)

Given;

N = 721

e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{721}{1+721(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{721}{1+721(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{721}{2.8025}$$

n = 257

Table (1): Reliability test

Item	Obs	Sign	Item-test correlation	Item-rest correlation	Average interitem covariance	Alpha
sc	20	+	0.7945	0.6301	.3929825	0.6544
eme	20	+	0.6609	0.4220	.4973684	0.7392
jc	20	+	0.6475	0.4715	.5263158	0.7176
pm	20	+	0.6382	0.3800	.5157895	0.7582
ee	20	+	0.8401	0.7473	.4149123	0.6340
Test scale					.4694737	0.7469

Source: Author computations, 2026.

Data Collection

The research used a questionnaire survey as the primary data collection tools comprising 5 sections; supervisory communication, employee's empowerment, job crafting, psychological meaningfulness and employee engagement. The socio demographic professional information includes; gender, age, academic background, employment level, work-experience, job title, job description.This study utilized established and validated instruments adapted from extant literature, as outlined below. Supervisory communication was measured using the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by Downs and Hazen (1977), which captures employees' perceptions of communication effectiveness between supervisors and subordinates. Job crafting was assessed using the 12-item scale developed by Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2012), which measures employees' proactive modification of their job roles and tasks to improve fit and performance. Psychological meaningfulness was evaluated using the 6-item scale developed by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004), which assesses the extent to which employees perceive their work as personally significant and worthwhile. Employee work engagement was measured using the 9-item shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), which captures dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Employee engagement was further assessed using the 6-item scale developed by Mael and Ashforth (1992), which measures employees' psychological attachment and interest in their organization. All constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The use of these standardized instruments ensured reliability, validity, and comparability of the measurement across the study variables.

Table (2): Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	P50	Max	Min	N
sc	3.944162	4	5	1	197
eme	3.807107	4	5	1	197
jc	4.167513	4	5	1	197
pm	4.177665	4	5	1	197
ee	4.182741	4	5	1	197

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Table (3): Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy

Variables	K.M.O	Interpretation
sc	0.8720	Excellent
eme	0.8673	Excellent
jc	0.7549	V. good
pm	0.8444	Excellent
ee	0.7172	V. good
Overall	0.7880	

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Table (4): Skewness/Kurtosis tests for Normality

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Variable	Obs	Pr(Skewness)	Pr(Kurtosis)	Adj. chi2(2)	Prob>chi2
Sc	197	0.0000	0.1273	25.44	0.0000
Eme	197	0.0000	0.3953	19.66	0.0001
Jc	197	0.0000	0.0000	40.62	0.0000
Pm	197	0.0000	0.0008	38.23	0.0000
Ee	197	0.0000	0.0000	44.66	0.0000

Source: Author's computations, 2026.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collection began November, 2025 using an online survey with a comprehensive questionnaire. A pilot test study with 10 participants assessed the survey clarity, informed consent was obtained from all participants, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality. Ethical approvals were secured from the human resource department of the involved organization. Quality control measures were applied to ensure data accuracy and reliability, the survey conducted over 12 weeks resulted in 227 responses, however, 10 responses were invalid, 10 didn't respond, and also 10 did not meet the research criteria. The study employed a quantitative analytical approach, utilizing the Stata 13.0 statistical package for the Social Sciences (Stata 13.0 software) for data coding and analysis. The analytical process began with an evaluation of the measurement mode to ensure reliability and validity. Convergent validity was established by assessing factor loadings, composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct; thereby confirming the robustness and internal consistency of the measurement scale. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage were used to present the demographic characteristics of respondent means and standard deviation were computed to determine the degree of agreement or disagreement with the questionnaire items.

To test the study hypothesis and examine relationships among the variables, multiple regression analysis was conducted at a 0.05 level of significance. This study closely monitors Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, strictly adhering to the recommendation of keeping them at approximately 3 or less, as advised by Hair et al., (2019). The study used the VIF to address multicollinearity concerns, revealing the highest VIF value (0.82). This value remained below the widely recommended threshold of 5 (James et al., 2021) thus indicating that multicollinearity was not a significant issue in the analysed data. Additionally, all variable skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range (0.62-0.86) confirming adherences to a normal distribution pattern in the data set. Collectively, these measures assured the reliability and validity of the study findings by effectively addressing potential methodological challenges. This precision aimed to ensure the reliability and robustness of the model throughout the assessment process. Finally, hypothesis testing involved scrutinizing the path coefficient to determine the strength and significance of the relationship hypothesized in the conceptual model. By incorporating these analyses, the study ensured a comprehensive and robust assessment of the study model measurement and structural aspect, providing a solid foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. This analytical approach provided empirical insight into the question 'does managerial skills act as a predictor of employee engagement in a digitalized work environment? Evidence from deposit money banks in south-south, Nigeria.

Table (5): Convergent Validity, Composite Reliability and AVE

Construct	Number of Items	Factor Loadings (Range)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Supervisory Communication	7	0.71 – 0.86	0.89	0.56
Job Crafting	12	0.68 – 0.88	0.91	0.54
Psychological Meaningfulness	6	0.72 – 0.85	0.88	0.57
Employee Work Engagement	9	0.70 – 0.89	0.92	0.60
Employee Engagement	6	0.73 – 0.87	0.87	0.55

The results presented in Table X indicate that convergent validity was satisfactorily established for all constructs. The factor loadings for all items exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, ranging between 0.68 and 0.89, indicating adequate item reliability.

Model Specification

To empirically examine the hypothesized relationship derived from the job demand-resource model and the engagement framework of Khan, the study specifies the following econometrics model;

$EE_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SC_i + \beta_2 EME_i + \beta_3 JC_i + \beta_4 PM_i + \beta_5 CV_i + E_i$

Where;

i denotes individual employees included in the sample

EE_i represent employee's engagement i

SC_i denotes supervisory communications

EME_i denotes employee's empowerment

JC_i denotes job crafting

PM_i denotes psychological meaningfulness

CV_i represents a vector of control variables (e.g. age, gender, tenure, educational level).

β_0 is the intercept term

$\beta_1 - \beta_5$ are the solve coefficients measuring the marginal effects of each explanatory variable on employee's engagement.

E_i is the Stochastic disturbance term capturing the unobserved factors affecting employee engagement and is assumed to satisfy the classical linear regression assumptions (Zero mean, Constance variance and no autocorrelation).

The coefficients, $\beta_1 - \beta_5$ are expected to be positive, consistent with theoretical propositions that job crafting, supervisory communication conditions enhance employee engagement. This specification allows for the estimation of both the direct effects of employee's empowerment and psychological meaningfulness variables and the incremental explanatory power of proactive and psychological constructs within the engagement framework.

Table (6): Correlation test

	Cr	fs	gsa	Shg	Fg
sc	1.0000				
eme	0.3739	1.0000			
jc	0.3929	0.3954	1.0000		
pm	0.3115	0.2913	0.3578	1.0000	
ee	0.4671	0.4740	0.6699	0.4869	1.0000

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Table (7): Bartlett's test for equal variances

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	23.3310325	4	5.83275813	14.34	0.0000
Within groups	78.0902873	192	.406720246		
Total	**101.42132**	**196**	**.517455713**		

Bartlett test for equal variances: chi2(4) = 67.4837 Prob>chi 2 = 0.000

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	28.3420008	4	7.0855002	18.62	0.0000
Within groups	73.079319	192	.380621453		
Total	**101.42132**	**196**	**.517455713**		

Bartlett test for equal variances: chi2(3) = 63.2690 Prob>chi 2 = 0.000

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	50.4164829	4	12.6041207	47.45	0.0000
Within groups	51.0048369	192	.265650192		
Total	**101.42132**	**196**	**.517455713**		

Bartlett test for equal variances: chi2(3) = 50.5109 Prob>chi 2 = 0.000

Analysis of Variance

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	34.2304378	4	8.55760944		
Within groups	67.190882	192	.349952511		
Total	**101.42132**	**196**	**.517455713**		

Bartlett test for equal variances: chi2(2) = 35.1710 Prob>chi 2 = 0.000

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Table (8): Multiple Regression Test

Source	SS	Df	Ms				
Model	57.8719362	4	14.4679841				No_ of obs = 197 F(4,192) = 63.79 Prob > F = 0.0000
Residual	43.5493836	192	.226819706				R-squared = 0.5706 Adj R-squared = 0.5617
Total	101.42132	196	.517455713				Root MSE = .47626
Ee	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>|t|	[95% Conf.	Interval	Decision
Sc	.0999945	.0354898	2.82	0.005	.0299946	.1699944	Accept HO1
Eme	.1159042	.0369507	3.14	0.002	.0430227	.1887856	Accept HO2
Jc	.4197736	.0500115	8.39	0.000	.3211312	.5184161	Accept HO3
Pm	.1830613	.0424654	4.31	0.000	.0993027	.2668199	Accept HO4
_cons	.8329062	.2151802	3.87	0.000	.4084855	1.257327	

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

Table (9): Test for Heteroskedasticity

Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test for Heteroskedasticity

Ho = Constant Variance

Variables = fitted values of ee

Chi 2(1) = 26.33

Prob > chi2 = 0.0810

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

The test established whether there is deviation and whether the variance of errors in a regression model depends on the value of the independent variable. There is no deviation (0.0810).

Table (10): Ramsey Reset test

Ramsey Reset test using powers of the fitted values of ee

Ho: model has no omitted variables

F(3,189) = 6.77

Prob > F = 0.0002

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

The test establishes if a more linear relationship is appropriate or if the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is linear. The test demonstrates that no variables have been left out. There is no missing variable (0.0002).

Table (11): VIF test

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Jc	1.36	0.734468
Sc	1.30	0.768321
Eme	1.29	0.773863
Pm	1.21	0.823264
Mean VIF	1.29	

Source: Author's computation, 2026.

According to the Variance Inflation Factor test, when the referencing value is bigger, it indicates that there is no multicollinearity and no variable has been left out in the model. The mean value is 1.29<10. The identical specification error test for the Ramsey regression equation produced a result of 0.0032 indicating a probability value proving that no variable is omitted in the model.

Results and Discussions

Table (7) displays the analysis-base regression result for each variable, and table (5) displays the correlation matrix for each variable. Consequently, the table illustrates how each independent variable influences the dependent variable in different ways based on its strengths. Table (7) suggests how supervisory communication, employee empowerment, job crafting and psychological meaningfulness jointly account for 57% of the variation in the managerial skills performance on employee engagement in deposit money banks (R^2 = 0.5706). The regression output displayed in table (7) indicates supervisory communication impact on employees engagement positively, H_1 (t = 2.82, coefficient 0.0999, P<0.005). This shows that the deposit money bank's supervisor communicates clean instructions and expects positive feedback. This constructive feedback provides a two way dialogue for transparency in decision-making. This influences role clarity, perceived organizational support, drawing on the job demand resource model, supervisory communication function as a job resource that stimulates motivational processes and foster high level of engagement. This finding corroborates Imam et al., (2025); and Alsharairi et al., (2025) who discovered that when employees received consistent guidance and construction feedback, they are more likely to exhibit vigour, dedication and absorption in their roles, indicating that improvement in supervisory communication are associated with increases in employee's engagement. Consequently, the findings of this study reject the null hypothesis (Ho1) and support the alternative hypothesis, which posits that supervisory communication significantly influences employee engagement in deposit money banks.

However, employee empowerment is favourably and statistically significantly correlated with employee engagement according to the regression result in table 7 ($t = 3.14$, coefficient $= 0.1159$, $P<0.002$). The interpretation can be made clearer by first explaining the relationship between the latent variables — employee empowerment and employee engagement — before discussing how the observed indicators contribute to that relationship. A clearer version is presented below:

The finding indicates that employee empowerment has a positive and significant influence on employee engagement. This implies that when employees are given authority, access to relevant information, opportunities for participation in decision-making, and the freedom to exercise discretion in their work, their level of engagement increases. Drawing from the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) model, employee empowerment represents an important job resource that enhances employees' intrinsic motivation and commitment to their roles. Empowered employees tend to develop a stronger sense of ownership, responsibility, and control over their work environment, which encourages higher levels of vigour, dedication, and absorption, the major dimensions of employee engagement. Specifically, access to relevant information and participation in organisational processes contribute to competence development and strengthen employees' connection with their work and the organisation. Therefore, the result validates the hypothesised statement that employee empowerment significantly influences employee engagement. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The result of the current study are in line with Jose & Mampilly (2014); Bakker & Demerouti (2017); Zhang & Bartol (2010); Stander & Rothmann, (2010) and Ugwu et al., (2014) which concluded that consistence with psychological condition of engagement of Khan (1999), empowerment enhances psychological meaningfulness and availability. Employees who perceived that their contribution matters are more likely to invest their cognitive, emotional and physical energies into their work role, consequently. This study refutes Ho_2 which contends employee empowerment negatively impacts work engagement. This study shows that employees' empowerment significantly impacts employee engagement in a positive direction. To determine how precise job crafting impacts employee engagement. The regression analysis results shows a favourable correlation between job crafting and employee engagement ($t = 8.39$, coefficient $= 0.4197$, $P<0.000$). The result shows that job crafting proactively modifies task boundaries, fostering higher employee engagement by aligning work with personal strength of the employees. This in turn boosts motivation, job satisfaction and dedication. This agrees with the works of Rizwan et al., (2016); Khalid et al., (2021); Rizwan et al., (2025) who posits that proactive resource mobilization in terms of autonomy, skill variety is a strong predictor of employee engagement. As a result, while Ho_3 is rejected, the hypothesis that job crafting predicts employees engagement positively is accepted (Ho_3). In this study, the job demand theory is applied to theoretically explain how job crafting is a sensitive issue in helping employees find more meaning in their job, moreover, it leads to challenging job roles that are ambiguous hence the employees are more engaged in the work place. To determine how psychological meaningfulness is connected to employee engagement. The regression analysis result shows is in a favourable correlation between psychological meaningfulness and employees engagement ($t = 4.31$, coefficient 0.183, $P<0.000$). This implies that psychological meaningfulness impacts employee engagement positively, hence Ho_4 is rejected and Ho_4 is accepted, this is due to the fact that employees who find their work purposeful, valuable and aligned with personal values are more engaged, leading to higher performance, lower turnover, and increased organizational commitment. This is in consonance with the works of May et al., (2004); Laba & Venter, (2014), and Zada et al., (2025), in their works, they claim that when work environment fuels meaningful, employees tends to be more engaged, in addition psychological meaningfulness is like finding a purpose in what they do, it boosts motivation, connection and energy, so employees want to contribute, feel valued and invest in tasks and outcomes. This often leads to higher productivity.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that managerial skills are effective for employees that endorse engagement. The study shows that managerial skills are absolutely critical to an organization's success, serving as the bedrock for operational efficiency, strategic goal attainment and competitive advantage. Using this skill, it enables managers to guide teams, boost productivity, foster innovation and adapt to a changing environment, which directly impacts turnover rate and overall performance. In essence, whether technical, human or conceptual, these skills are indispensable for transitioning from simple task execution to achieving high-level organizational success. In addition, good managerial skills are those that are effective at the workplace. They improve efficiency of workflows and help build relationships within the team. Therefore, having excellent managerial skills and abilities in a digital work environment can help the business reach its goals and become successful. This study reveals that managerial skills positively influences employee engagement in terms of supervisory communication, employee empowerment, job crafting, and psychological meaningfulness within a digitalized banking sector.

First, supervisory communication emerged as a critical driver of engagement. In a digitally enabled banking environment characterized by virtual platforms, automated systems and data-driven processes, clear, timely and supportive communication enhances role clarity, trust and alignment with organizational goals. This finding suggests that when supervisors actively communicate expectation, provide feedback and demonstrate openness employees are more likely to exhibit vigour, dedication and absorption in their duties. Second, employee empowerment significantly predicts engagement. The delegation of authority, participation in decision-making and access to digital resources enhances employees' sense of competence and autonomy. In a technology-intensive banking system, empowerment reduces resistance to change and fosters proactive adaptation, thereby reinforcing emotional and cognitive attachment to work. Third, job crafting was found to positively influence engagement. The opportunity for employees to redefine task boundaries, optimize digital workflows and align responsibilities with personal strength encourages ownership and intrinsic motivation. In a sector undergoing continuous digital restructuring, job crafting serves as an adaptive mechanism that sustains enthusiasm and performance.

Finally, psychological meaningfulness plays a foundational role in strengthening engagement when employees perceive their work as significant and impactful despite automation and digital standardization they are more inclined to invest discretionary effort. The results indicate that meaningful work experiences enhance engagement. Overall, the study concludes that human centric management practices remain indispensable in a digitalized banking system, supervisory communication, empowerment initiatives, opportunity for job crafting and the cultivation of psychological meaningfulness collectively enhances employee engagement. The implication is clear; The statement means that digital transformation alone is not sufficient to guarantee sustainable workforce engagement and improved organizational performance. Rather, organisations must support digital transformation with complementary strategies that help employees adapt effectively to technological changes. Digital transformation strategies must be complemented with supportive organisational practices such as employee empowerment, training and development, effective communication, leadership support, and participatory decision-making to ensure sustainable workforce engagement and organisational performance. This is because the introduction of digital technologies often changes work processes, job roles, and organisational expectations. Without adequate support, employees may experience uncertainty, stress, resistance to change, or reduced motivation. However, when organisations provide employees with the necessary resources, information, autonomy, and opportunities to develop digital competencies, employees become more confident and adaptable in the changing work environment. In relation to employee empowerment and engagement, digital transformation becomes more effective when employees are actively involved in organisational processes and have access to relevant information and technological resources. Such empowerment strengthens employees' sense of control, competence, and responsibility, which in turn enhances vigour, dedication, and absorption at work. Consequently, supportive digital transformation strategies help sustain employee engagement while also improving organisational productivity, innovation, and overall performance.

Recommendation

In line with the study findings, several practical recommendations are advanced to enhance employee engagement within the digitalized banking section.

First, management should strengthen supervisory communication, by promoting transparent, consistent and supportive intervention, particularly during periods of technological changes, structured feedback mechanism and open communication platform to enhance trust, clarity and alignment with organizational objectives.Management should institutionalize employee empowerment practices by encouraging participatory decision-making, delegating authority and providing adequate digital training. Organisations should create an enabling environment for job crafting by adopting flexible job design that allows employees to proactively adjust tasks and workflows in response to digital demands. Management should deliberately cultivate psychological meaningfulness by linking employees roles to broader organizational goals and societal impact emphasizing purpose and recognizing meaningful contributions will strengthen employees emotional and cognitive connection to their work. Overall, the study recommends that digital transformation initiatives in the banking sector should be integrated with human-centred management practices to ensure sustainable employee engagement and improved performance outcomes. While digital transformation enhances efficiency, automation, and service delivery in banking operations, its success largely depends on how employees experience and adapt to these technological changes. When digital systems are introduced without adequate supervisory support, communication, and employee involvement, it may lead to reduced engagement, resistance to change, and lower productivity. However, when digital transformation is complemented with human-centred practices such as effective communication, employee involvement in decision-making, continuous training, and supportive leadership, employees are more likely to feel valued and engaged. This enhances their willingness to adopt new technologies, increases job satisfaction, and strengthens their emotional and psychological commitment to the organization. In this way, employee engagement serves as a critical link between digital transformation and improved organizational performance in the banking sector.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributes to the employees engagement literature by developing and empirically validating an integrated framework that links supervisory communication, employees empowerment, job crafting and psychological meaningfulness to employee engagement within a digitalized banking context. By examining these variables collectively, the study extends prior research that has largely treated them in isolation. The study further enriches the digital transformation discourse by providing evidence from a technology-intensive banking environment in an emerging economy, thereby broadening the contextual applicability of job demand theory.

Finally, the findings reinforce the continued relevance of human-centred organizational practices in digitally mediated workplaces offering empirical support for the argument that managerial skills remain critical determinants of employee engagement in the era of digitalization.

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