

17 - 19 October 2025

Lyon , France

Work Engagement in the South African Public Sector: a Demographic Analysis

Mpolokeng Ramajoe , Prof Cecile M. Schultz , Dr Estelle Bruhns , Dr Dina van Vuuren Marais

Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa

Abstract

Work engagement has been recognised as a critical factor in enhancing organisational performance, especially within the public sector. Despite extensive research globally, work engagement within the South African public sector remains underexplored, especially from a demographic perspective. This study aims to explore the demographic factors that influence work engagement in the South African public sector, focusing on employees' age, gender, employment position, highest qualifications and duration of service at their current employer. The South African public sector plays a crucial role in national development, and understanding the factors that influence work engagement can lead to improved employee performance, productivity, and organisational commitment. By considering demographic variables, this research seeks to fill gaps in existing literature and inform human resource practices in the public sector. A quantitative research design was employed, utilising a survey-based method to collect data from public sector administrative employees. Demographic information was gathered alongside work engagement metrics, analysed using statistical techniques to identify correlations between demographic variables and work engagement levels. The results show that age is significantly related to work engagement, while no significant differences were found between work engagement and gender, highest qualification, or length of service with the current employer. The results suggest that tailored interventions and employee development programs are necessary to enhance work engagement among different demographic groups. Public sector managers can influence these insights to create a more inclusive and supportive work environment that nurtures higher engagement across diverse employee segments.

Keywords: Work Engagement, South Africa, Public Sector, Demographics and Administrative Environment