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Planned Behavior Theory Based Model to Predict Employee Engagement and its Impact on Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

The study develops and empirically verifies a model based on a Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to predict employee engagement and evaluate the implications of this theory on the commitment of employees to the organization. Despite the fact that the focus on employee engagement has been increasing, there has been a dearth of research that has integrated cognitive-behavioral theories such as the TPB in describing engagement behavior in the workplace. This gap is filled in the research by taking attitude, subjective norms, and the perceived behavioral control as predictors of employee engagement which in turn results in organizational commitment. The quantitative and cross-sectional research design was taken with the help of the structured questionnaire to 243 employees working in various industries. The relationships between the variables were tested by analyzing data with descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that all TPB constructs have significant influence on the engagement of the employees, with the strongest effect experienced on the perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.41$), followed by the attitude ($\beta = 0.32$) and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.25$). Moreover, employee engagement has a high positive effect on organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.55$), which proves the important mediating role of employee engagement in workplace behavior. The research concludes that employee engagement is highly influenced by psychological and behavioral factors, and that, in turn, leads to increased commitment to the organization. The suggested model offers both theoretical and practical information as it introduces TPB to the field of organizational behavior studies and provides practical suggestions that could be used to enhance human resource management and increase its efficiency in terms of employee engagement and retention.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Theory of Planned Behavior, Organizational Commitment, Structural Equation Modeling, Workplace Behavior.

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Introduction

Engagement of employees has become a crucial factor in the success of organizations in the dynamic and competitive environment. Engaged employees are more productive and have less turnover intention and alignment to organizational goals, thus playing a key role in the overall organizational effectiveness (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). In addition, engagement of employees has been recently and consistently associated with improved job performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, and long-term sustainability (Schwarz et al., 2023; Gumasing & Ilo, 2023). Although a great deal of research has been conducted, employee engagement is still a complex phenomenon to predict because of the interaction of psychological, behavioural, and contextual forces that can affect the attitude of employees as well as organisational behaviour at the workplace (Al Zeer et al., 2023).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a powerful model to explain human behaviour based on three predictors, namely, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The TPB has successfully been used in elucidating behavioural intentions in a number of areas, such as leadership behaviour and decision-making in an organisation (Mohi Ud Din & Zhang, 2023). Nevertheless, the way it can be used to predict employee engagement and its further impact on organisational commitment has not been investigated thoroughly yet.

The importance of organisational commitment, especially affective commitment, in influencing employee retention, loyalty, and performance outcomes is very critical (Ly, 2024; Pimenta et al., 2024). Research indicates that employee engagement is a mediating factor that has a connection between organisational practices and commitment/performance outcomes (Imam & Kim, 2023; Yousf & Khurshid, 2024). Thus, combining TPB with engagement and commitment constructs offers an extensive model to perceive employee actions within organisations.

This study will create a TPB-based model and empirically test it to predict employee engagement and analyse the effect of the latter on organisational commitment. This study will help fill the gap between psychological theory and human resource management practices by connecting cognitive intentions with workplace behaviour.

Objectives

- To analyse the effects of TPB constructs on employee engagement.
- To examine how organisational commitment and employee engagement are related.
- To create a predictive structural model with the help of TPB.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control and employee engagement?
2. Does employee engagement have a considerable influence on organisational commitment?

Paper Organization

The article is well organised in such a way that it has a coherent and logical research flow. Section 1 is the introduction that provides the background of the research, the problem statement, the objectives, and the importance of the research. Section 2 presents an extensive literature review of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), employee engagement, organisational commitment, hypothesis development, and identification of a research gap. Section 3 explains the methodology followed in the study, research design, sampling strategy, measurement scales, data collection procedure, and analysis tools like Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Section 4 gives the findings and discussion of the empirical findings in terms of descriptive statistics and SEM to determine the hypotheses. Section 5 presents the most important findings in correlation with the existing literature and points to the theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, Section 6 concludes the study by summarising the most important findings, contributions, limitations and future research directions.

Literature Review

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) presupposes that behavioural intention is determined by three factors that are at the heart of this theory: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The positive or negative evaluation of a person to perform a behaviour is attitude; the perceived pressure of social beings that a person is supposed to be close to is the subjective norms; the perceived behaviour control is the perceived ease or difficulty of doing the behaviour (Mohi Ud Din & Zhang, 2023). All these constructs contribute to the behavioural outcomes and have been extensively applied in the explanation of how individuals make decisions in an organisational setting.

Employee engagement is described as a positive, fulfilling, work-related condition of vigour, commitment, and involvement. It is an essential element that determines the productivity of employees, their job satisfaction, and organisational success (Nabhan & Munajat, 2023; Abdelwahed & Doghan, 2023). Involved employees would be more prone to proactive behaviours, become innovation-driven, and have greater degrees of organisational commitment (Al Zeer et al., 2023). Moreover, engagement has been found to mediate between organisational practices and performance outcomes (Yousf & Khurshid, 2024).

Organisational commitment is an indicator of the psychological attachment and loyalty of employees to the organisation. It can be broadly divided into affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Especially affective commitment has been closely linked with employee engagement and organisational performance (Ly, 2024; Pimenta et al., 2024). According to previous research, a greater commitment level means a better quality of services, a decrease in turnover, and workplace sustainability (Al-Refaei et al., 2023; Gumasing & Ilo, 2023). In addition, leadership styles and employee behaviour are also mediated by organisational commitment (Imam & Kim, 2023).

According to recent studies, TPB constructs have a great impact on employee engagement. Favourable perceptions of employment and organisational functions promote the level of engagement, whereas the supportive subjective norms, including peer and supervisor support, contribute to participation and engagement (Ampofo et al., 2023). A perceived behavioural control, which is the confidence of employees in their ability to do their work well, has been demonstrated to be a good predictor of engagement and performance outcomes (Al Zeer et al., 2023). Further, these relationships can be enhanced by leadership practices and organisational climate that influence how employees perceive and intend to behave (Schwarz et al., 2023; Imam & Kim, 2023).

Research Gap

Although there is a lot of information on employee engagement and organisational commitment studies, little has incorporated the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to forecast the outcome of engagement in an organisation. The majority of existing work is on direct correlations between engagement and performance or commitment without consideration of cognitive and behavioural antecedents that motivate engagement. Moreover, many of the previous studies have focused on engagement as a mediator and not an outcome of a psychological construct of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. The study fills this gap by creating a predictive model of employee engagement based on the TPB that is further used to explain the engagement and subsequent effect on organisational commitment.

Hypothesis Development

The propositions are the following hypotheses based on the TPB framework and the literature:

H1: Attitude has a positive impact on employee engagement.

The more positive the attitude of employees toward their work, the more likely to exhibit greater engagement, as positive ratings of occupations will positively influence motivation and engagement.

H2: The subjective norms have a positive effect on employee engagement.

Social support, such as supervisor and peer support, can greatly contribute to employee engagement, as employees develop a feeling of belonging and responsibility.

H3: Behavioural control has a positive impact on employee engagement.

When employees feel more in control of their work activities and environment, chances of active participation in their work increase and performance results coupled with commitment are attained.

Methodology

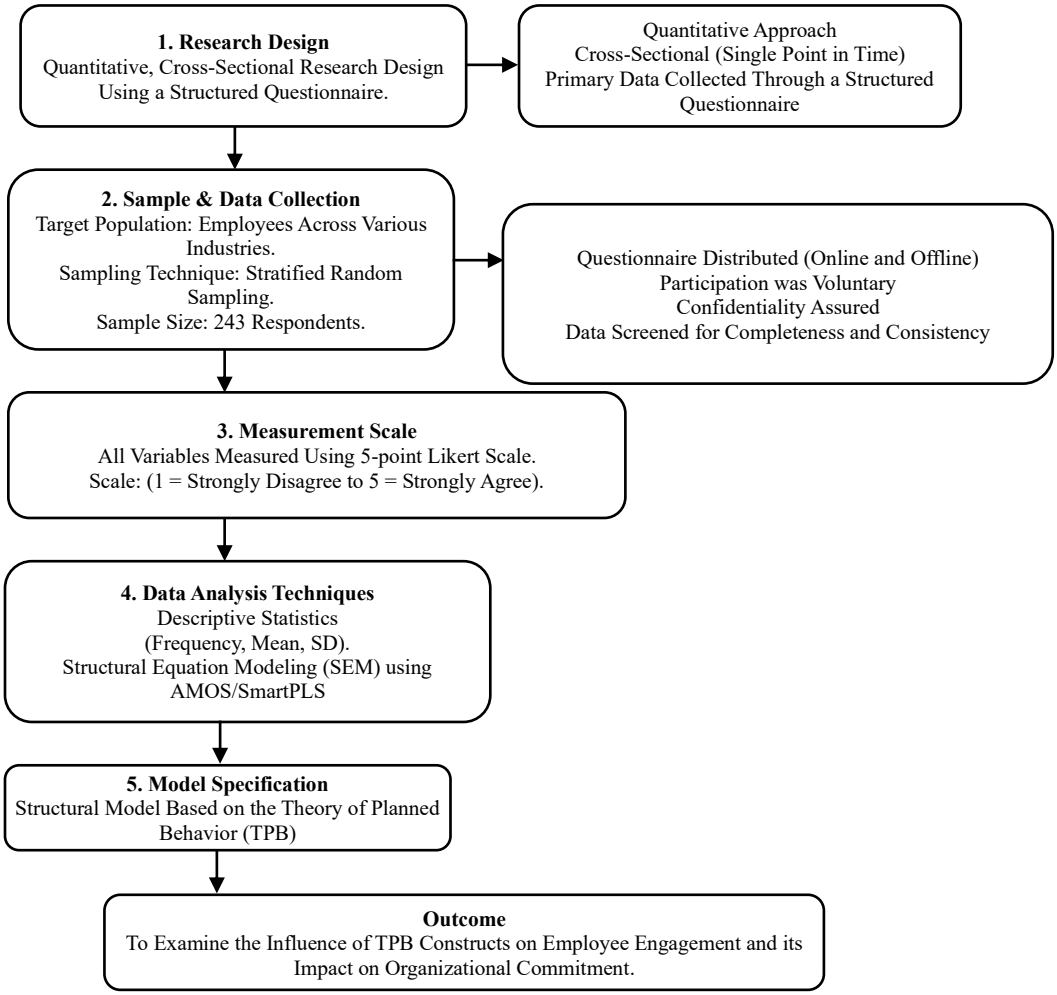


Fig. 1: Methodology Framework for TPB-Based Employee Engagement Model

Fig. 1 presents the overall methodology outline, which was followed in this research, starting with a detailed research design of a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, followed by the main steps of sample selection, data collection, development of measurement scales, data analysis, and specifying the model. The former is backed up with the framework of stratified random sampling of 243 respondents and the structured questionnaire (a 5-point Likert scale). It also demonstrates the validation of the relationships between Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs, attitude, the subjective norms and perceived behavioural control and its impact on employee engagement and commitment to an organisation using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The process effectively brings together the theoretical constructs and empirical analysis to attain the research objectives as illustrated in fig. 1.

Research Design

It is a quantitative and cross-sectional research design that aims to explore the connections of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs, the engagement of the employees, and the organisational commitment. The quantitative approach is appropriate since it will help measure the variables objectively and test the hypotheses statistically. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument, as it was used to obtain standardised responses from the respondents.

The cross-sectional design allows for collecting the data at one point in time, which will be especially appropriate when considering the relationships between behaviours and verifying predictive models. The design is popular in organisational behaviour studies where the goal is to comprehend relationships between psychological variables and not to change relationships over time. Moreover, the design facilitates the use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which involves the concurrent measurement and structural analysis of latent variables.

Sample and Data Collection

This study will focus on the employees in various sectors (both in the government and in the private sector) and will target all employees who are in the different sectors. This guarantees differences in organisational culture, job positions, and working environments, thus enhancing the generalizability of results.

To guarantee equal representation of respondents in the various industry groups and organisational levels (entry-level, middle-level, and managerial employees), a stratified random sampling methodology was used. The technique is used to increase sample representativeness and minimise sampling bias since there is adequate representation of each group in the population.

There were 243 valid responses that were collected and used in the final analysis. This sample is believed to be sufficient to use Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which has the minimum size to be used to estimate parameters as well as to determine the fit of the model.

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the data both online (Google Forms) and offline (on paper surveys). The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents who took part in the study beforehand. To ensure that ethical standards were met and to minimise bias in responses, confidentiality and anonymity of the responses were strongly maintained.

Measurement Scale

In this research, all the variables were measured with the help of a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 (Strongly Disagree) is the minimum and 5 (Strongly Agree) is the maximum. The Likert scale has gained a lot of popularity in behavioural studies because of its simplicity and ability to elicit the respondent's attitudes and perceptions.

To achieve content validity, reliability, and consistency with the existing research frameworks, the measurement items were modified to use well-established and validated scales in the previous literature. The constructs, the number of items, and the source of items are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Measurement of Constructs and Scale Sources

Construct	No. of Items	Source
Attitude (ATT)	4–5	Adapted TPB scale
Subjective Norms (SN)	3–4	TPB studies
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	4–5	TPB scale
Employee Engagement (ENG)	6–9	Utrecht Work Engagement Scale
Organisational Commitment (OC)	6–9	Meyer & Allen model

All constructs have been measured by the validated instruments that are well-known instruments in the study of organisational behaviour and psychology, as presented in table 1. This ensures the dependability of measurement and heightens the comparability of results with past research.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analysed by using a mix of both descriptive and multivariate statistics to test the hypotheses proposed and prove the conceptual model.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution were used to summarise the demographic profile of the respondents to gain a generalised view of the central tendency of the mean and dispersion of the key variables of the study. The move will give a baseline of the data and assist in determining trends in employee perceptions as per the TPB constructs, engagement, and commitment.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The main analytical method used was structural equation modelling (SEM), which helps to analyse the correlations between latent constructs. SEM is one of the most appropriate approaches to be used in this study since it enables the following:

- Parallel estimation of a variety of dependent relationships.
- Both measurement and structural model evaluation.
- Measurement errors have been taken into account in the observed variables.
- Experiments of complicated theoretical models like TPB.

The SEM approach allows testing the postulated Attitude-Subjective Norms-Perceived Behavioural Control-Employee Engagement relationships and the following outcome of the impact of employee engagement on organisational commitment. This gives a complete insight into the structural relations in the proposed model.

Model Specification

To test the hypotheses that relationships among TPB constructs, employee engagement, and organisational commitment existed, the following structural equations were defined:

$$ENG = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ATT + \beta_2 SN + \beta_3 PBC + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$

The employees' engagement (ENG) is formulated as a variable of attitude (ATT), subjective norms (SN), perceived behavioural control (PBC), and the error term (ε).

As indicated in equation (1), the coefficients β_1, β_2, and β_3 are the influence of constructs of TPB on employee engagement.

$$OC = \beta_0 + \beta_4 ENG + \varepsilon \qquad (2)$$

Employee Engagement (ENG) is a predictor of Organisational Commitment (OC), and the error term (ε) is included. As shown in equation (2), the β_4 reflects the effect of the engagement of employees on the commitment of the organisation.

All of these equations are structural model equations that can be used to test the proposed relationships in this study. The model is based on the assumption that TPB constructs can have an impact on the engagement of employees, which subsequently causes organisational commitment.

Results and Analysis

The descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used to analyse the data obtained from 243 respondents to test the relationships in the study variables.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics were calculated to learn about the central tendency and dispersion of the variables. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude (ATT)	3.85	0.65
Subjective Norms (SN)	3.60	0.70
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	3.75	0.68
Employee Engagement (ENG)	3.90	0.60
Organisational Commitment (OC)	3.80	0.66

Table 2 demonstrates that all variables have moderate to high mean values, which means that there is a good perception among respondents, in general. The highest mean of employee engagement (M = 3.90) indicates that the employees are engaged in their work, but not very much.

The hypothesised relationships were tested by performing SEM analysis. Table 3 shows the path coefficients and the results of hypothesis tests.

Table 3: Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	Result
H1	ATT → ENG	0.32**	Supported
H2	SN → ENG	0.25**	Supported
H3	PBC → ENG	0.41**	Supported
—	ENG → OC	0.55**	Supported

Table 3 shows that all the relationships that were theorised are statistically significant. Employee engagement is affected most by perceived behavioural control (β = 0.41), attitude, and subjective norms. Moreover, organisational commitment (β = 0.55) is also influenced by employee engagement, which proves the importance of the latter in terms of employee loyalty.

SEM produced the standardised path coefficients (which are visualised in Fig. 2).

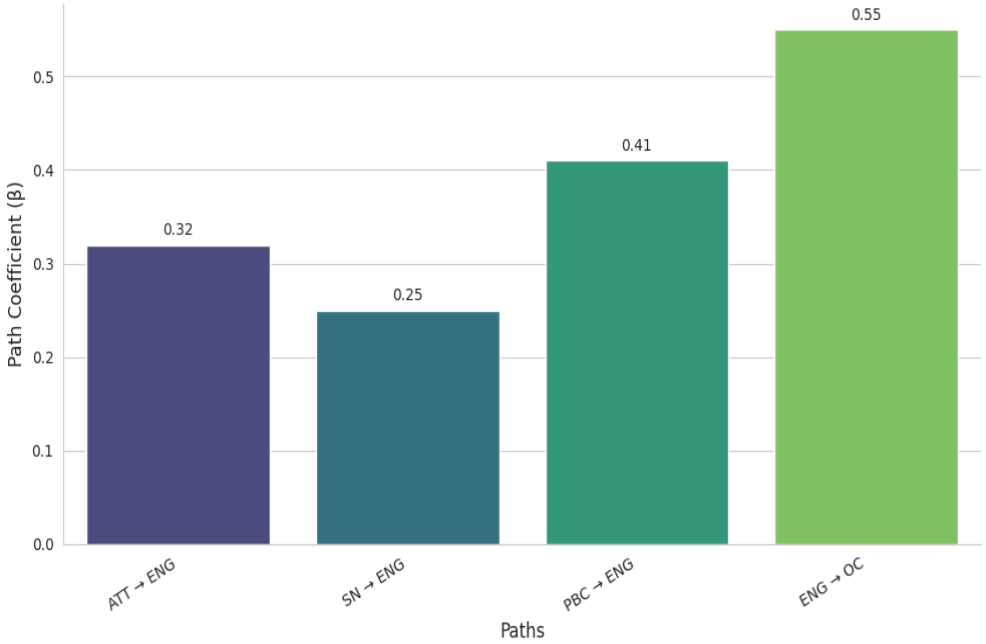


Fig. 2: Structural Model Path Coefficients

Fig. 2 shows that the perceived behavioural control has the most powerful impact on the engagement of employees, with attitude and subjective norms coming next. The employee engagement, on the other hand, has a significant positive effect on the organisational commitment, and that supports its mediating role in the model.

The findings of the study indicate that the three constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have a significant and positive influence on employee engagement, with perceived behavioural control being the strongest predictor. Also, employee engagement positively significantly impacts organisational commitment, which is why it is essential in raising employee loyalty and attachment. On the whole, the results confirm the suggested TPB-based model, which emphasizes the importance of psychological and behavioural variables in increasing employee engagement and further organisational commitment.

Discussion

The results of this research indicate that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a powerful and effective model that is effective in forecasting employee engagement in an organisational environment. The three TPB constructs of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control showed all significant positive effects on employee engagement. Among them, the most predictive one was perceived behavioural control, which means that employees will be more willing to become involved in their work when feel that have more autonomy, competence, and power to control their work. The outcome is congruent with the earlier research that has demonstrated the importance of empowerment and self-efficacy to enhance engagement and the level of employee performance.

Also, the results indicated that employee engagement correlates positively with organisational commitment, with a strong correlation, which means that engaged employees are more attached and loyal to their employer. This supports earlier research, which established engagement to be a determinant of retention, job satisfaction and organisational sustainability. The findings also embrace the notion that engagement is a psychological process that relates perceptions of people and organisational performance.

Theoretical Implications

This study has several vital theoretical contributions. Firstly, it extends the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to a new area of organisational behaviour since it demonstrates that it can be used when predicting employee engagement. Although TPB has been used in the traditional context of behavioural intention, this study brings out its applicability in the workplace. Second, the research offers a predictive framework that is very detailed and connects cognitive variables (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) to behavioural (employee engagement) and attitudinal (organisational commitment) outcomes. This combination helps in gaining a better insight into the ability of psychological determinants to shape employee behaviour in organisations.

Managerial Implications

The results provide useful information to practitioners and the leaders of organisations. To begin with, organisations need to work towards improving employee autonomy and empowerment since perceived behavioural control was the most effective predictor of engagement. Engagement levels can be increased greatly by empowering employees by giving them decision-making powers, resources, and skill development. Second, a positive work environment and social climate are required to strengthen the subjective norms, which could be greatly reinforced by positive attitudes of superiors and co-workers towards the employees. Finally, the organisational strategies to raise employee attitude to work, such as recognition programs, meaningful job design and career development opportunities, should be present to ensure the engagement and commitment on a long-term basis.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations of this study that need to be considered. To begin with, the research design is a cross-sectional design, which fails to provide the possibility of making causal connections between the variables. A longitudinal study would provide a more accurate idea of how the levels of employee engagement and organisational commitment change over the years. Second, data were collected through self-reported measures, and this may have increased the common method and social desirability bias. Future research can be used to complement the proposed study by incorporating multi-source data, such as supervisor ratings or objective performance indicators, to enhance the validity of the proposed study. Third, the sample was limited to the workers in various industries, and this may affect the generalizability of the findings to other industries or cultures.

It is conducted with a focus on the basic constructs of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) without considering the potential moderating or mediating variables. It is possible to expand this model to incorporate the elements of leadership style, organisational culture, job satisfaction, and psychological empowerment and apply it in future research to provide a more in-depth view of the engagement of employees. In addition, cross-industrial/ cross-country research would also help with cross-cultural information. Some other types of analysis, such as the multi-group SEM or longitudinal modelling, can be applied as well to justify and enhance the presented framework. In general, future studies must work towards broadening the application and applicability of the TPB to the field of organisational behaviour by incorporating the contextual and dynamic aspects.

Conclusion

The current paper was able to formulate and test a Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)-based concept to elucidate employee engagement and its role in commitment to the organisation. The results indicate that the three constructs of the TPB attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control play a significant role in engaging employees. Among them, the perceived behavioural control was found to be the most significant predictor, which is why employee autonomy, competence, and perceived control become key factors that contribute to an increase in the level of engagement. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) findings were also able to affirm that the involvement of employees significantly and positively influences organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.55$), thereby showing that engaged employees are more emotionally bonded, loyal, and committed to their organisations. The given discovery supports the importance of engagement as a psychological process that converts personal attitudes and perceptions into organisational performance. Theoretically, the current research represents the extension of the TPB application to the research area of organisational behaviour, proving the effectiveness of the approach in forecasting the engagement of employees at work. It also gives a unified model of the relationship between cognitive determinants and behavioural and attitudinal results, thus contributing to existing engagement and commitment literature. In practice, the implications of the results on human resource management are enormous. Organisations must make an effort to empower their workforces, establish an improved work culture and enforce a positive job attitude in order to increase the level of engagement. The interventions can ultimately lead to a rise in organisational commitment, reduced turnover intentions and overall performance. Though useful, the study has its limitations because of the cross-sectional nature of the study and self-reporting. Future studies can employ longitudinal designs and more moderating variables such as the leadership style and organizational culture can be added to enhance the strength of the model to explain.

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