Tripartite relationships between frontline managers' competencies, wellbeing initiatives, and perceived job engagement in a developing economy

Hezekiah Falola[1], Opeyemi Joel[2*], Emmanuel Efe-Imafidon[3], Valerie Onyia[4]

[1,2,3]*Business Management Department, Covenant University, Nigeria.*
[4]*Business Administration and Marketing Department, Babcock University, Nigeria.*

Corresponding author: Opeyemi Joel (*Email: opeyemi.joel@covenantuniversity.edu.ng*)

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate the tripartite relationships between frontline managers' competencies, wellbeing initiatives, and perceived job engagement in some selected manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Based on a sample size of four hundred and ninety-nine (499) frontline managers drawn from selected manufacturing firms, smart partial least squares (SMART PLS) 3.0 was adopted to show the relationships among frontline managers' competencies, wellbeing initiatives, and perceived job engagement in the world of work. The statistical results show that the dimensions of front-line managers' competencies, significant change-management skills, employee relations, business savvy, and problem-solving skills, greatly influenced job engagement, while components of talent wellbeing initiatives mediate the relationship between front-line managers' competencies and job engagement. The study recommends that frontline managers adopt a continuous competency evaluation approach, focusing on frequent evaluations to identify areas of improvement and potential for development. As a means of developing a resilient and competent managerial workforce, it emphasises the significance of specifically designed wellbeing programmes that address the difficulties associated with their jobs. Organisations may foster a good work environment that improves wellbeing in general and supports long-term, productive engagement. Existing literature that focused on the frontline managers' competency theme in the manufacturing industry scarcely examined the processes critical to wellbeing initiatives and perceived job engagement in the manufacturing industry. As a result, the present study uses a moderating variable of employee wellbeing initiatives to explain how frontline managers' competencies foster job engagement.

1. Introduction

Global organizations are currently grappling with intense competition within an ever-volatile business landscape. Even manufacturing firms are not exempted from these formidable global challenges, resulting in some organizations shutting down [1]. In today's digital business environment, the continued existence of many manufacturing firms hinges on their ability to harness the competencies of their employees, particularly those of frontline managers, to enhance job engagement [2]. Therefore, the competencies of frontline managers in driving productive job engagement through contemporary digital management practices are pivotal for the sustainability of manufacturing firms in both developing and developed nations. This is due to the constantly evolving business environment and human resource management practices, which demand managers with exceptional capabilities to ensure optimal job engagement. As highlighted by Ward [3] frontline managers oversee up to 80% of a company's workforce, underscoring their crucial role in the success and longevity of the organization. Therefore, appealing well-being initiative can facilitate the productive engagement of frontlines management. We assume that fostering talent well-being could strengthen the link between the unique competencies of frontline managers and job engagement in the manufacturing industry. Similarly, leveraging the unique competencies of frontline managers can serve as the intellectual driving force behind manufacturing firms, fostering high levels of employee engagement.

It's crucial to note that studies have recognized the unparalleled significance of employee well-being in promoting employee engagement [4-6]. Various researchers have identified indicators that enhance employee engagement and performance in the workplace. These include flexible work arrangements in the banking sector and employee engagement strategies in higher education institutions[7]. Additionally, Anitha [8] delved into the determinants of employee engagement and commitment, while Blattner and Walter [9] explored methods for creating and sustaining a productive, multigenerational, engaged workforce. Cain, et al. [10]examined employee engagement from the customer's perspective. Other researchers, such as Eldor and Harpaz [11]; Joo, et al. [12]; Jamaludin, et al. [13]; Jena and Pradhan [14] and Ogueyungbo, et al. [15] among others, have investigated work engagement, employee core competencies, and performance and job satisfaction. However, none of these studies explored the interconnectedness of frontline managers' competencies, employee well-being initiatives, and perceived job engagement, particularly within the fast-moving consumer goods industry in Nigeria. None of these studies included talent well-being as a mediating factor. As introduced in this study, talent well-being assumes great importance in motivating frontline managers to exhibit loyalty and commitment to the organization. The loyalty of frontline managers could potentially inspire them to employ their unique competencies for the advancement of the organization.

In light of the above, it is evident that a research gap in the Nigerian manufacturing industry regarding the tripartite relationship between frontline managers' competencies, job engagement, and talent well-being. This study investigates the impact of frontline managers' competencies (including business acumen, change management skills, operational skills, employee relations skills, and problem-solving skills) on job engagement (encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement), with talent well-being (covering physical, emotional, mental, and purposeful well-being) playing a mediating role. The unique responsibilities of frontline managers in the manufacturing sector led to the selection of these specific constructs. Furthermore, while many existing empirical studies have used regression and correlation analyses, the present study employs Smart PLS 3.0 as the statistical analytical tool for this research, addressing the identified gap in the literature.

Consequently, this study's specific objectives stem from its significance. It aims to investigate the influence of frontline managers' competencies on job engagement, examine the impact of frontline managers' competencies on talent well-being initiatives, and explore the mediating role of talent well-being in the relationship between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement. This research can provide valuable insights for Nigeria's manufacturing industry management on how to leverage the competencies and well-being of front-line managers to enhance engagement, provided practical policies are developed. We divide the article into distinct sections with appropriate subheadings, which include the introduction, literature review, and methodology, discussion of findings, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Change Management Skills and Job Engagement

Change management is the systematic approach used by organizations to adapt to strategies, structures, technologies, and processes in response to both internal and external changes. It's an ongoing process that ensures an organization proactively aligns with the evolving business environment [16]. Proficiency in change management skills equips organizations to effectively handle changes, whether they are unexpected, affect the entire organization, require remedial actions, or involve transformation Zarrillo [17]. Setyanto, et al. [18] argue that change is inevitable, making it essential for managers to adapt to the evolving business landscape to achieve their strategic objectives.

Today's business environment faces intense competition, coupled with complex technology and the recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the shutdown of many organizations' production lines. Consequently, managers need advanced strategic analytical skills, effective communication, and digital literacy to successfully implement these changes [16]. Digital literacy is crucial for enhancing the outcomes of change programs, while effective communication reduces employee resistance to change and garners their support. Research has demonstrated that successful skills and tactics in change management can increase employee engagement and participation, focusing on improving overall performance [19].

2.1.1. Business Savvy and Job Engagement

Business savvy refers to a manager's ability to swiftly comprehend the intricacies of the business, enabling them to effectively navigate its challenges and opportunities to yield positive outcomes [16]. Dealing with threats and capitalizing on business opportunities necessitates the active involvement of employees. Business acumen equips managers with an understanding of the ever-evolving demands of their roles and the interconnectedness of business operations. A comprehensive grasp of business operations has the potential to elevate job engagement, ultimately leading to the achievement of organizational objectives Zarrillo [17]. Setyanto, et al. [18] also contend that a manager's ability to recognize the financial aspects of the business and make crucial decisions that align with a strategic approach to job engagement can have a positive impact on the organization. As suggested by Mathafena and Hewitt [20] and Zarrillo [17] business acumen is instrumental in maximizing employee job engagement within organizations. Job engagement and productivity experience a boost when employees comprehend how their roles and job functions contribute to the overarching goals of the organization. According to Zarrillo [17] employee engagement can be further enhanced, especially among those employees aspiring to ascend to leadership positions within the organization.

2.1.2. Problem Solving Skills and Job Engagement

The role of managers extends beyond mere management and delegation; they must also possess effective problem-solving skills [21]. Challenges are an inherent part of organizational life, each presenting a unique battle that demands creative problem-solving abilities for resolution. The COVID-19 pandemic is a distinctive challenge that necessitates expanded thinking capabilities. Its impact on organizations is a significant issue, requiring critical thinking to rejuvenate economic activities. The restrictions imposed by governments worldwide in response to COVID-19 have compelled many frontline managers to work remotely [22]. Managers must approach this problem as an opportunity, adopting a comprehensive perspective and maintaining a composed demeanor. According to Palmon and Illies [22] managers need problem-solving skills that encompass problem identification, problem analysis, the use of data, and effective communication.

Problem identification entails investing time in understanding the nature of the problem and generating diverse solutions before acting. Problem analysis involves assessing the extent of the problem's impact on the organization, with the primary objective being to unearth its root causes and implement lasting solutions instead of temporary fixes. Cultivating effective communication skills is essential for conveying information to key stakeholders. Managers engage with employees, motivating them to contribute to problem-solving and maintain their engagement until the resolution. Scholars like Chukwudi, et al. [21] and Houghton and Stewart [23]. Palmon and Illies [22] posit that organizations thrive in today's competitive business landscape when they foster a creative problem-solving environment. Also supports the notion that when organizations empower their talents by granting them autonomy in their roles and involving them in the decision-making process, employees exhibit higher job involvement and engagement.

2.1.3. Employee Relations Skills and Job Engagement

Employee relations refers to the dynamic between employees and employers within an organization. Effective employee relations skills are crucial for maintaining a harmonious balance among employees and their peers, as well as between employers and employees. This is primarily because employees require a positive work environment and a sense of belonging [24]. Simultaneously, organizations aspire to achieve high performance, increased productivity, and the cultivation of strong leadership [25]. It's widely acknowledged that employees are a company's most valuable assets, making it imperative to develop employee relations skills that encompass recognizing employees, fostering effective communication, conducting regular team meetings, and providing training.

According to Sequeira [24] demonstrating recognition towards employees significantly motivates them to maintain their exemplary performance. Offering praise to employees is another effective means of acknowledgment, while also inspiring the entire team. Team meetings serve as a platform for open discussions, and these meetings need not be overly formal. Managers and leaders should initiate and conclude such gatherings on a positive note, encouraging active

participation from the group. Proficient employee relations skills can facilitate enhanced employee job engagement, ultimately contributing to improved organizational performance [24].

2.1.4. Talent Wellbeing and Job Engagement

Workplace well-being encompasses a wide array of aspects pertaining to one's work life, spanning from the physical work environment and safety to how employees feel about their work, the overall work climate, and the structure of the work organization. Talent well-being stands as a crucial factor in an organization's long-term efficacy and the engagement of its talents [6]. The World Health Organisation [26] further defines talent well-being as the state of an employee's good mental, physical, emotional, and purposeful wellness. It reflects an employee's state of life satisfaction, happiness, positive mood, and cheerfulness in the workplace. Organizations must ensure employee well-being by addressing their physical, emotional, mental, and purposeful wellness [27].

According to Keeman, et al. [27] physical well-being relates to the state of health within one's biological body systems. This encompasses healthy eating habits, positive energy, adequate rest, exercise, overall fitness, and the proper functioning of vital organs. Mental well-being allows employees to experience productivity, creativity, and the absence of psychological and mental health issues [26]. It is associated with self-worth, multiple strengths, high self-esteem, resilience, flourishing, and competence. Numerous studies underscore the pivotal role of managers in influencing employee well-being [20, 27]. Positive relationships between managers and employees are correlated with enhanced well-being, also contributing to the achievement of the ambitious third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) — ensuring good health and promoting talent well-being by 2030.

Research has consistently demonstrated a connection between the levels of employee physical, emotional, mental, and purposeful well-being and their job engagement [27, 28]. This implies that effective organizational well-being initiatives encourage employee commitment, work behavior, attendance, and engagement in their job roles and functions. Even when employees highly value their commitment, engagement, and involvement in their work, talent well-being allows them to experience reduced stress.

2.2. Hypotheses Development

Competencies encompass the essential qualifications, skills, knowledge, and technical expertise required for effective performance. Frontline managers are expected to exhibit a specific set of skills and attributes that enhance and optimize efficiency. For optimal effectiveness, managers should possess strong communication skills and the ability to manage employee relations. Moreover, organizations need to offer appealing employee well-being initiatives. Given the continuous evolution of organizations, driven by advanced technologies that redefine work, the workforce, and the workplace, these changes significantly influence the roles and responsibilities of line managers. To navigate these changes effectively, organizations must communicate their intentions clearly to frontline managers, who are responsible for implementation.

Effective change management communication is pivotal in shaping employees' perception of change, determining whether they will resist or support it. Unplanned changes, particularly events like the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic, demand health-oriented leaders to communicate and manage them in an organized manner [17]. Another essential competence for line managers involved in change management is digital literacy, as modern change efforts are often technology-driven [16]. The necessity for a profound understanding of digital technology has become imperative, given the increased remote work and online meetings required due to Covid-19.

Previous studies underscore the significant role of managers in shaping employee well-being [20, 27]. Managers achieve this by cultivating quality relationships with employees, which in turn foster creativity, productivity, and engagement. Effective communication, digital literacy, and employee well-being initiatives all contribute to employee commitment and engagement in job-related tasks and organizational development [29]. This implies that cognitive job engagement, reflecting employees' acquisition of job-related knowledge, emotional job engagement, encompassing positive emotions and interactions with colleagues and supervisors, and physical job engagement, involving actions and behaviors toward work, are all crucial for the productive engagement of frontline managers. Frontline managers' competencies serve as a powerful management tool that promotes talent and job engagement within organizations [30]. This study combines paradox theory and Blau's social exchange perspective to understand the competencies of front-line managers working in the context of radical organizational change and engaging in social and economic exchanges as part of their work. These conflicts often manifest as dilemmas or paradoxes, forming the foundation of "paradox theory." Researchers have recognized the challenge of balancing change facilitation and the maintenance of operational continuity [31]. This also contributes to the emotional and physical engagement of managers. Without cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement, organizations may not experience radical change. Furthermore, frontline managers can draw guidance from social exchange theory (SET) on how to fulfill their roles in a manner that reconciles the tension between promoting change and managing routine tasks. Social exchange theory is particularly relevant because frontline managers are primarily responsible for people management and tend to develop social relationships with employees. This study aims to help organizations understand how they can harness the opportunity to enhance the competencies of line managers for improved job engagement, which can also be facilitated by well-being initiatives.

On that note, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H₁: Frontline managers' competence will significantly influence talent wellbeing initiatives.

H₂: Frontline managers' competence will significantly influence job engagement.

H₃: Talent wellbeing initiatives mediate the relationship between frontline managers' competence and job engagement.

3. Methodology

This study delves into the impact of frontline managers 'competencies on job engagement, with talent well-being serving as a mediating factor. The study was conducted at selected manufacturing firms in Nigeria. We assessed the competencies of frontline managers using carefully chosen dimensions such as business acumen, change management skills, operating skills, employee relations skills, and problem-solving skills. Job engagement was evaluated in terms of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement, while talent well-being was measured in relation to physical, emotional, mental, and purposeful well-being. We employed a descriptive survey research design to accommodate this study's descriptive nature. The study focused on the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) segment of the manufacturing industry situated in Lagos State, Nigeria, chosen for its remarkable performance as indicated by the Nigeria Stock Exchange performance index. We selected Lagos due to concentration of over 50% of FMCG headquarters in the state. The selected firms had a total population of approximately 2,000 frontline managers. To determine the sample size, [32] table chart was utilized, resulting in a sample size of 499 with a margin of error set at 0.05. The Proportional Affixation Criterion (PAC) was used to allocate the questionnaires to each of the selected organizations. Purposeful, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques were employed, with purposeful sampling chosen because only frontline managers of the selected firms were eligible for participation, and stratified sampling used due to the population's heterogeneity. A pilot study assessed face and content validity composite reliability, the average variance extracted (AVE) estimate, and Cronbach Alpha to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The pilot study sample size adhered to Baker [33] recommendation of at least 10% of the study population, resulting in fifty questionnaires administered to a manufacturing company in Ogun State. The main study's sample size of 499, determined using [32] table chart, was supported by the pilot study's findings, demonstrating normal data distribution and reliable scale measurements as per [34] benchmarks. Data was collected primarily from the selected firms' frontline managers, while literature review was sourced from reputable scientific databases. This research followed a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale to collect data from the participants, who were duly informed about the study's objectives. We thoroughly examined the assumptions for the data analysis, which included normality, linearity, and the removal of outliers based on the Mahalanobis Distance Criterion. Missing data was handled using the listwise deletion method. We used 409 out of 499 administered questionnaires, representing an 82% response rate, for the final analysis. Smart PLS 3.0 was the software used for the analysis, and the construct reliability and validity for the formulated hypotheses are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1.
Construct reliability and validity.

Constructs	Loading	VIF	P value	AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
	≥ 0.7	<3.0	<.05	≥0.5	≥ 0.8	> 0.7
Change management skill (CMS)				0.647	0.846	0.725
CMS1	0.859	2.105	0.000	-	-	-
CMS2	0.814	1.825	0.000	-	-	-
CMS3	0.735	1.255	0.000	-	-	-
Business savvy skill (BSS)				0.591	0.812	0.791
BSS1	0.811	1.125	0.000	-	-	-
BSS2	0.784	2.165	0.000	-	-	-
BSS3	0.707	2.038	0.000	-	-	-
Employee relation skill (ERS)				0.583	0.804	0.775
ERS1	0.867	1.234	0.000	-	-	-
ERS2	0.624	1.373	0.000	-	-	-
ERS3	0.778	1.551	0.000	-	-	-
Problem-solving skill (PSS)				0.751	0.900	0.838
PSS1	0.786	1.734	0.000	-	-	-
PSS2	0.885	2.100	0.000	-	-	-
PSS3	0.923	2.330	0.000	-	-	-
Talent wellbeing initiatives (TWI)				0.678	0.893	0.842
TWI1	0.741	1.372	0.000	-	-	-
TWI2	0.751	2.035	0.000	-	-	-
TWI3	0.884	2.039	0.000	-	-	-
TWI4	0.903	3.101	0.000	-	-	-
Perceived job engagement (PJE)				0.640	0.876	0.811
PJE1	0.864	2.287	0.000	-	-	-
PJE2	0.773	2.658	0.000	-	-	-
PJE3	0.727	1.398	0.000	-	-	-
PJE4	0.830	1.838	0.000	-	-	-

4. Result

We assessed the instruments' reliability using both composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. All the individual constructs exhibited Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability scores exceeding the recommended minimums of 0.80 and 0.70, respectively. This indicates that the items on the scale display strong internal consistency. Furthermore, for each specific item in the variables, factor loading exceeded 0.70. While reliability is essential for assessing the research measure, it is not in itself sufficient. Therefore, establishing validity is crucial to affirming the measure's accuracy. We subsequently conducted convergent validity testing to determine whether the indicators on the scale collectively loaded onto a single construct.

4.1. Average Variance Extracted Estimate (Ave)

We conducted this assessment to evaluate the reliability of the item. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) coefficients for perceived job engagement, employee relations, talent well-being initiatives, business acumen, problem-solving, and change management skills stand at 0.647, 0.591, 0.583, 0.751, 0.678, and 0.640, respectively. Notably, these values surpass the recommended 0.50 threshold, affirming the fulfillment of the convergent validity criterion. In terms of composite reliability, the figures for change management skills, business acumen skills, employee relations skills, problem-solving skills, talent well-being initiatives, and perceived job engagement are 0.846, 0.812, 0.804, 0.900, 0.893, and 0.876, respectively, all exceeding the 0.70 benchmarks. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha values for these same constructs, namely change management skills, business acumen skills, employee relations skills, problem-solving skills, talent well-being initiatives, and perceived job engagement, are 0.725, 0.791, 0.775, 0.838, 0.842, and 0.811, respectively. These composite reliability values and Cronbach's alpha coefficients consistently surpass the 0.70 threshold, confirming strong internal consistency.

Table 2.
Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) discriminant validity.

	BSS	CMS	ERS	LMC	PJE	PSS	TWI
BSS							
CMS	0.674 [0.562; 0.794]						
ERS	0.783 [0.652; 0.821]	0.760 [0.672; 0.842]					
LMC	0.544 [0.411; 0.600]	0.700 [0.688; 0.822]	0.678 [0.588; 0.756]				
PJE	0.817 [0.725; 0.894]	0.801 [0.722; 0.887]	0.756 [0.605; 0.840]	0.838 [0.730; 0.881]			
PSS	0.685 [0.587; 0.711]	0.806 [0.714; 0.879]	0.665 [0.541; 0.719]	0.760 [0.610; 0.849]	0.741 [0.655; 0.888]		
TWI	0.733 [0.642; 0.819]	0.714 [0.644; 0.851]	0.692 [0.552; 0.753]	0.811 [0.709; 0.878]	0.707 [0.680; 0.825]	0.701 [0.689; 0.824]	

Note: Business savvy skill (BSS), Change management skill (CMS), Employee relation skill (ERS), Problem-solving skill (PSS), Talent wellbeing initiatives (TWI) and Perceived job engagement (PJE).

Table 2 presents the discriminant validity of the constructs. We assessed this using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, a measure of how different constructs exhibit higher correlations with their own trait compared to other traits. All HTMT values were found to be significantly different from 1, with upper confidence intervals below the value of 1. Moreover, each HTMT value was below the critical threshold of 0.85, indicating strong discriminant validity. Additionally, the average correlation between heterotraits and heteromethods was lower than the correlation between monotraits and heteromethods, further supporting the establishment of discriminant validity.

4.1.1. Discriminant Validity

All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. We applied the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations method to assess discriminant validity. It was found that all HTMT values significantly deviated from 1, with the upper confidence intervals falling below this threshold. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that each value remained below the critical HTMT threshold of 0.85. Furthermore, the average correlation between heterotraits and heteromethods proved to be lower than the correlation between monotraits and heteromethods, confirming the discriminant validity.

4.1.2. Common Method Bias

We applied the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to mitigate the influence of common method bias. As per Kock [35] guideline, it is necessary for all factor-level VIFs from a comprehensive collinearity test to equal or be less than 3.3 before concluding that the model is devoid of common method bias. The findings indicated that each VIF value remained below the 3.3 threshold, affirming the absence of common method bias in the study.

4.1.3. Predictive Relevance and Effect Size

The Q2 values were utilized to assess the predictive relevance of the measurement constructs and their respective indicator data points in the PLS-SEM. It's noteworthy that all specific indicator Q2 values, ranging from 0.244 to 0.380, exceeded zero. This suggests that the PLS path model may possess predictive relevance for these constructs.

Additionally, we quantified the effect size using the F-square. This metric aids in elucidating the degree to which the model can account for the variance in each exogenous variable. According to Kline [36] effect sizes of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered small, medium, and large, respectively. The F-square values for the specific constructs are 0.256, 0.222, 0.233, 0.543, 0.731, 0.225, and 0.254, signifying that the sample effects for all the constructs fall between medium and large.

4.1.4. Compliance with Ethical Standards

The primary investigator sought ethical approval for the research proposals from the Business Management Research Ethics Committee (BMREC: 19/05/110) to uphold research ethics standards. An introductory letter outlining the study's purpose was provided to the participating organizations, and only employees who volunteered took part in the survey. In this case, it falls under the category of exempt research, which implies minimal or no risk to participants. Therefore, implied consent, rather than signed consent, sufficed, as indicated by Falola, et al. [2]. Nonetheless, we gave allrespondents the option to remain anonymous and assured them that they would handle their responses with the utmost confidentiality.
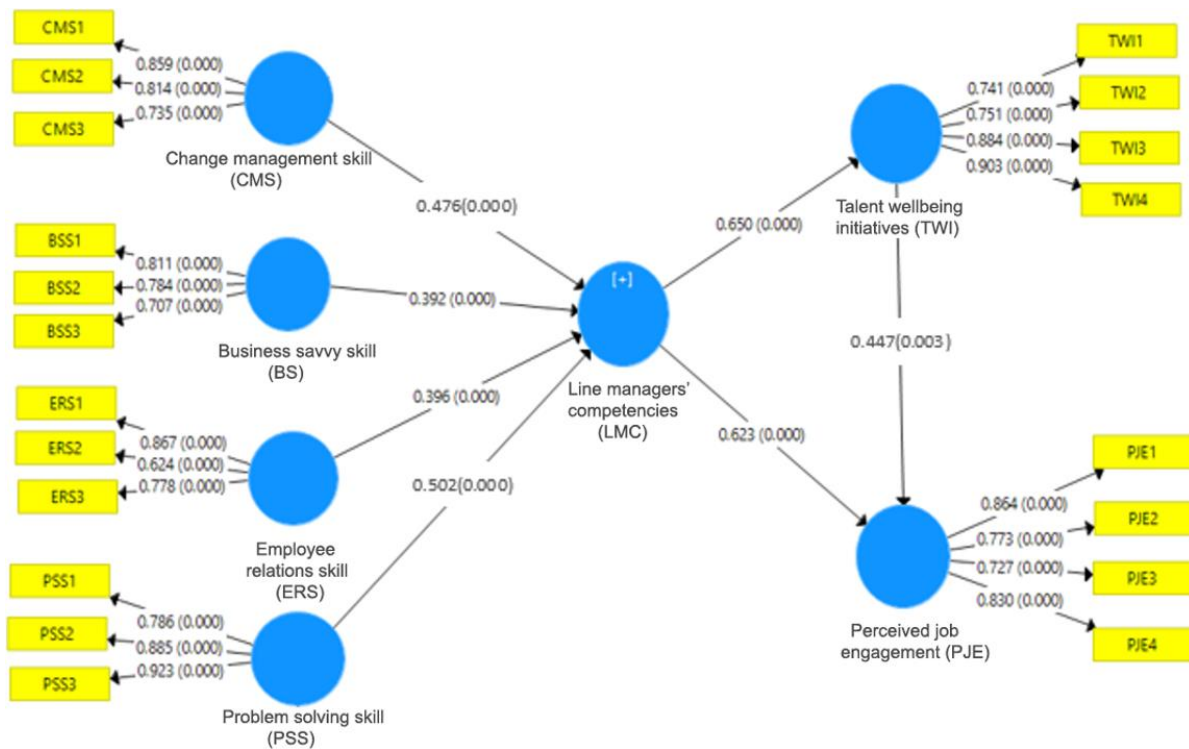

Figure 1.
PLS bootstrapping model with β and P value.

Figure 1 displays the PLS Bootstrapping Model, presenting β and P values, as well as the PLS Bootstrapping Model depicting the relationship between frontline managers' competencies, perceived job engagement, and the mediating role of talent wellbeing initiatives. This path graphically represents the extent of correlation among these three observable variables. The R-square value assesses the degree of variance in job engagement, talent wellbeing, and frontline managers' competencies. Generally, an R-square exceeding 0.75 is considered substantial, above 0.50 is moderate, and exceeding 0.25 is weak. The β value serves as a predictor, indicating the expected variation in job engagement for a unit change in frontline managers' competencies. We employed this parameter to test the significance of the formulated hypotheses, with a higher value indicating a more substantial impact of frontline managers' competencies. To confirm the significant influence of frontline managers' competencies on job engagement through the mediating role of talent wellbeing initiatives, a T-statistical test was conducted. Details of the path coefficients for the observed variables can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.
Path co-efficient of the formulated hypotheses.

Variables	Path co-efficient	R-squared	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Frontline managers' competence→Perceived job engagement.	0.623	0.388	0.081	7.735	0.000
Frontline managers' competence→Talent wellbeing initiatives	0.650	0.423	0.056	11.644	0.000
Frontline managers' competence→Talent wellbeing initiatives →Perceived job engagement	0.447	0.200	0.088	5.080	0.003

Table 3 provides the Smart PLS path coefficients for the hypotheses formulated in Figure 1. Based on both the statistical and empirical findings, it is evident that the structural path coefficients for the various dimensions of frontline managers' competencies (including business savvy, change management skills, operating skills, employee relations skills, and problem-solving skills) and job engagement (encompassing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement) exhibit a significant relationship at a significance level of 0.05. The results unambiguously demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement ($\beta = 0.623$, $t = 7.735$, $p = 0.000$).

Also there is a strong link between the structural path coefficients that show frontline managers' skills and talent wellbeing, which includes physical, emotional, mental, purposeful wellbeing, with a p-value of less than 0.05. The findings reveal a noteworthy relationship between talent wellbeing and job engagement ($\beta = 0.650$, $t = 11.664$, $p = 0.000$).

Furthermore, the connection between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement is significantly mediated by talent wellbeing ($\beta = 0.447$, t-value $= 5.080$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, it can be concluded that talent wellbeing serves as a mediator in the relationship between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) sector.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study delved into the interplay between frontline managers' competencies, talent wellbeing initiatives, and perceived job engagement within the fast-moving consumer goods sector of the manufacturing industry. The findings confirmed that the competencies of frontline managers, encompassing elements such as business acumen, change management skills, operational proficiency, employee relations skills, and problem-solving abilities, have a substantial influence on job engagement, spanning emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. This underscores the essential nature of frontline managers' competencies for fostering job engagement, aligning with prior research by Joo, et al. [12] and Falola, et al. [7] which highlighted that equipping employees with the requisite skills and distinctive capabilities enhances job engagement. Moreover, this finding resonates with the competence model proposed by Adeniji, et al. [37] to elevate job engagement and organizational productivity, reinforcing the notion that bolstering frontline managers' competencies, coupled with adequate wellbeing initiatives, can bolster employee satisfaction and, by extension, enhance job engagement, as also corroborated by previous studies [16, 17, 29].

Furthermore, the development of frontline managers' competencies in change management is a crucial strategy in the dynamic landscape of business, characterized by fierce competition and rapid technological advancements. This includes keenly assessing the business environment, fostering creativity, making sound decisions, and cultivating effective problem-solving and employee relations skills. These competencies enable a comprehensive exploration of workplace conditions, allowing frontline managers to formulate informed strategies to enhance job engagement. The interconnectedness between frontline managers' competencies and the three dimensions of job engagement (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral) underscores that the level of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement among line managers is contingent upon the effective utilization of their distinct capabilities. Therefore, investments or support from manufacturing firm management aimed at enhancing the competencies of frontline managers can significantly impact their level of engagement.

Another noteworthy discovery is the significant relationship between frontline managers' competencies and talent wellbeing, encompassing physical, emotional, mental, and purposeful wellbeing, and how this relates to their job engagement. This implies that when frontline managers' competencies are integrated, effectively harnessed, and complemented by robust talent wellbeing programs, it can lead to a considerable boost in the optimal engagement of frontline managers. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Aryan and Kathuria [6] and Mathafena and Hewitt [20] highlighting the critical role of employee wellbeing in facilitating the utilization of frontline managers' capabilities and the resulting enhancement of employee engagement. Ultimately, this underscores the significance of employee wellbeing in shaping the effective deployment of frontline managers' distinctive competencies.

Finally, this research extends the existing body of knowledge by introducing talent or employee wellbeing as a mediating factor in the relationship between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement. It is noteworthy that talent wellbeing plays a mediating role in the connection between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement within the fast-moving consumer goods sector in Nigeria. This indicates that the distinctive competencies of frontline managers wield a substantial influence on job engagement. Given the intensely competitive business environment, employee engagement remains a linchpin for the survival and sustainable growth of organizations, particularly within the

fast-moving consumer goods sector in Nigeria. Relevant training, self-development, job enrichment, role-playing, and stimulation, among other methods, can be instrumental in boosting job engagement to improve managers' competencies. Similarly, management's attention to the wellbeing of their workforce can significantly elevate employee job engagement, in line with prior findings [15, 29,30]. This implies that the harmonious interplay between talent or employee wellbeing, as uncovered in this study, exerts a notable mediating effect on the relationship between frontline managers' competencies and job engagement in manufacturing firms.

5.1. Conclusion and Recommendation

We cannot overstate the importance of leveraging frontline managers' distinctive competencies and talent wellbeing to drive job engagement within the fast-moving consumer good sectors. Therefore, it is imperative to invest in strategic welfare initiatives that empower frontline managers to fully utilize their competencies. This investment will enhance the productivity of the manufacturing industry and promote active job engagement. Some key competencies that can be utilized include business acumen, change management skills, operational proficiency, employee relations skills, and problem-solving abilities.

The management of manufacturing firms should make concerted efforts to enrich these competencies, aiming to improve employees' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement. This should be achieved by integrating talent wellbeing initiatives that facilitate the optimal utilization of frontline managers' competencies to enhance job engagement.

As a recommendation, the management of fast-moving consumer goods companies should consistently explore the competencies of their frontline managers to drive job engagement. Furthermore, management must recognize their motivational roles in guiding and inspiring frontline managers to be productively engaged in achieving the firm's aspirations and strategic objectives. The reciprocal roles of frontline managers' competencies and employee wellbeing initiatives are essential for enhancing job engagement. To this end, it is advised that management should provide competitive wellbeing packages that encourage ongoing upgrades and utilization of line managers' capabilities for productive engagement. This approach will enable line managers to stay updated on best practices that foster continuous and productive engagement within the fast-moving consumer goods sector.

5.2. Policy Implication

1. Enhancing Competence: Policy should endorse programs for the training and development of frontline managers to boost their skills, ultimately enabling them to lead and engage their teams more effectively.

2. Fostering Employee Well-Being: Organizations should be incentivized to introduce initiatives that prioritize the mental and physical health of their employees, resulting in heightened job engagement.

3. Continuous Evaluation: Implement policies that encourage consistent assessment and feedback processes for job engagement, enabling the identification of areas needing improvement and the maintenance of a motivated workforce in developing economies.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

The survey in this study had the participation of only ten (10) fast-moving consumer goods companies within the manufacturing industry in Lagos, Nigeria. This suggests that the study's scope is somewhat limited. Therefore, future research endeavors should consider expanding the scope to encompass additional fast-moving consumer goods companies located in various geopolitical zones across Nigeria. While this study employed a quantitative methodology, it is advisable for future investigations to incorporate a mixed-method approach. This would allow for more comprehensive, in-depth research.

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