



Employee Engagement as a Strategic Pillar: A Case Study of Ooredoo Oman's Organizational Resilience and Success

 Hisham Al Ghunaimi^{1*}, Mohamad Shah bin Kassim²

¹Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM); hisham9934@gmail.com (H.A.G.)

²Faculty of Management, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM); mshah9344@utm.my (M.S.B.K.).

Abstract. Employee engagement is a vital driver of organizational performance, particularly in dynamic and competitive industries. This study explores how Ooredoo Oman leverages employee engagement strategies to foster organizational resilience and achieve sustained success. Drawing on secondary data sources, this research highlights the innovative practices employed by Ooredoo, including team-building initiatives, transparent communication channels, and professional development programs. Findings indicate that these efforts not only enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty but also contribute to the company's ability to adapt to challenges and maintain a competitive edge. The study concludes with practical recommendations for multinational companies aiming to implement employee engagement as a strategic pillar for resilience and long-term growth. This study provides a replicable framework for MNCs to integrate employee engagement practices tailored to regional cultural dynamics, addressing a critical gap in the global literature.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage, Employee Engagement, Multinational Companies, Ooredoo Oman, Organizational Resilience, Strategic Management, Workplace Satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee engagement has emerged as a critical factor influencing the success of organizations across various sectors. In today's competitive global economy, organizations must not only retain but also actively engage their workforce to achieve sustained performance and innovation. Research consistently shows that engaged employees are more productive, committed, and resilient, making them indispensable assets for organizations navigating complex market challenges (Kahn, 1990; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Multinational companies (MNCs), operating in complex and competitive environments, often rely on engaged employees to navigate challenges, foster innovation, and maintain resilience. These organizations face unique challenges, including cultural diversity, varying market demands, and the need to remain agile amidst rapid technological advancements. The global workplace is experiencing a paradigm shift, particularly in the post-pandemic era, where hybrid and remote work models have gained prominence. Employee engagement has emerged as a critical determinant of organizational success, fostering innovation, resilience, and adaptability amidst rapidly changing dynamics. Employee engagement strategies, when implemented effectively, can address these challenges by enhancing workforce cohesion, motivation, and alignment with organizational goals.

This paper focuses on Ooredoo Oman, a leading telecommunications provider, as a case study to explore how employee engagement strategies have contributed to its sustained success and adaptability in the face of industry challenges. Ooredoo's approach demonstrates how organizations in the Middle East, with its distinct cultural and economic contexts, can leverage employee engagement to drive organizational performance. Through initiatives such as transparent communication, professional development programs, and cultural alignment, Ooredoo has established itself as a benchmark for employee-centric practices in the region.

Despite extensive research on employee engagement in Western contexts, there is a paucity of studies focusing on the Middle East, particularly Oman. This gap highlights the necessity of exploring how culturally nuanced engagement strategies can influence organizational outcomes in this underrepresented region.

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the impact of employee engagement practices on Ooredoo's organizational performance. By utilizing secondary data sources, this research uncovers the key initiatives that have enhanced employee satisfaction, loyalty, and productivity, ultimately enabling Ooredoo to maintain a competitive edge. The findings offer valuable insights for other MNCs seeking to implement similar strategies for organizational growth and resilience. By highlighting the interplay between engagement strategies and cultural alignment, this research contributes to the strategic management discourse and provides actionable insights for practitioners aiming to enhance workforce cohesion and organizational adaptability.

This study contributes to the broader discourse on employee engagement by providing an in-depth analysis of a Middle Eastern MNC, addressing a significant gap in existing literature. It highlights the interplay between cultural values and engagement practices, underscoring the importance of contextually tailored strategies in achieving organizational success.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

This study aims to explore the impact of employee engagement strategies on organizational resilience and performance, with a specific focus on Ooredoo Oman. The research objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the key employee engagement strategies implemented by Ooredoo Oman.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing organizational resilience and performance.

3. To identify lessons and best practices for other multinational corporations operating in similar cultural and industry contexts.

2.1. The Study Seeks to Answer the Following Research Questions

1. How do employee engagement strategies influence organizational resilience in Ooredoo Oman?
2. What specific practices have been most effective in fostering employee satisfaction and loyalty?
3. How can Ooredoo's approach serve as a model for other MNCs in dynamic and culturally diverse environments?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Kahn's (1990) personal engagement theory, which defines employee engagement as the harnessing of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to achieve organizational goals. Kahn's theory emphasizes the role of meaningful work, psychological safety, and resource availability in fostering engagement. Additionally, the job demands-resources (JD-R) model by Bakker and Demerouti (2008) provides a framework for understanding how balancing job demands and resources influences employee engagement. This study also draws on social exchange theory, which posits that employees reciprocate organizational support with increased commitment and engagement. Transformational leadership, emphasizing the role of visionary and inclusive leaders, further complements the analysis by underscoring the importance of leadership in shaping engagement practices. Authentic and transformational leadership positively impact employees' creativity, with organizational commitment serving as a mediating factor (Sallem, Alrashdi, Al Ghunaimi, & Battour, 2024). These findings align with Ooredoo's strategies, which emphasize inclusive leadership and transparent communication. By fostering an environment of trust and collaboration, Ooredoo has successfully cultivated a workforce that is both creative and committed to organizational goals.

In the context of Ooredoo Oman, the study examines how the organization's practices align with these theoretical perspectives, particularly in addressing cultural and organizational nuances. The findings extend these frameworks by highlighting the role of culturally tailored engagement strategies in a Middle Eastern setting.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement has been widely recognized as a significant driver of organizational outcomes, including productivity, profitability, and employee retention. According to Kahn (1990), engagement is the harnessing of employees' physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to achieve organizational goals. Studies have shown that organizations with high engagement levels report improved financial performance and employee satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Schaufeli et al. (2002) highlighted that engaged employees demonstrate higher levels of energy and mental resilience, contributing positively to workplace performance. Saks (2006) emphasized the role of organizational support in fostering employee engagement, noting that perceived organizational support significantly impacts engagement levels.

In multinational corporations (MNCs), employee engagement practices often involve strategies such as continuous learning opportunities, open communication channels, and an inclusive work culture. For instance, the Gallup Organization (2017) reported that companies with engaged employees outperform their competitors in productivity and profitability metrics. Furthermore, Baumruk (2006) argued that organizations that invest in employee engagement witness reduced turnover rates and increased innovation capabilities.

From a regional perspective, the Middle Eastern context presents unique dynamics influencing employee engagement. Cultural norms emphasizing community and collaboration align closely with engagement strategies that foster inclusion and respect. Al-Ali et al. (2017) explored engagement practices in GCC countries and found that employees value transparent leadership, recognition, and opportunities for personal development.

Despite the global emphasis on employee engagement, research focusing on Oman remains limited. Ooredoo Oman's practices offer an opportunity to understand how engagement strategies can be tailored to align with cultural and organizational nuances, contributing to the broader literature on employee engagement in the Middle East.

5. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on secondary data analysis, utilizing publicly available reports, corporate social responsibility documents, and industry publications. The methodology involves:

1. **Data Sources:** Data were collected from Ooredoo Oman's annual reports, sustainability reports, and industry analyses published by reputable sources. To ensure the reliability of secondary data, multiple sources were cross verified. Reports from independent organizations were used alongside company-provided data to minimize potential bias.
2. **Data Analysis:** Content analysis was conducted to identify patterns and themes related to employee engagement strategies and their impact on organizational performance.
3. **Scope:** The study period focuses on the past five years to ensure a comprehensive understanding of Ooredoo's engagement practices and outcomes.

This approach ensures that the findings are grounded in credible and verifiable information, avoiding biases

associated with primary data collection. Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring all secondary data used in this study were publicly available and credible, minimizing potential biases and ensuring adherence to ethical research standards.

While secondary data provides valuable insights, it may lack the depth of primary data collection methods such as interviews. To mitigate this limitation, a triangulation approach was employed, validating findings through cross-referencing with existing literature and similar case studies.

5.1. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study was conducted through a qualitative content analysis approach, focusing on secondary data sources, including Ooredoo Oman's annual reports, sustainability reports, industry analyses, and employee satisfaction surveys. This method was chosen to systematically evaluate the company's employee engagement strategies and their impact on organizational resilience and performance.

5.2. Process of Analysis

1. Data Collection and Preparation:
 - Secondary data spanning five years (2018–2022) were collected to ensure relevance and comprehensiveness. Sources included Ooredoo's publicly available reports, case studies, and sector-specific studies in the telecommunications industry.
 - The collected data were coded manually to identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships between employee engagement practices and organizational outcomes.
2. Theme Development:
 - Thematic analysis was used to organize the data into key categories such as financial rewards, professional development, team-building initiatives, and transparent communication.
 - Recurring concepts such as employee satisfaction, productivity, loyalty, and customer satisfaction were extracted from reports and industry documents.
3. Triangulation:
 - To validate the findings, data were cross-referenced with similar studies on employee engagement in multinational corporations and within the GCC region. This triangulation ensured the credibility and reliability of the conclusions drawn.

5.3. Key Analytical Steps

1. Coding of Engagement Strategies: The qualitative coding process involved systematically identifying Ooredoo Oman's key engagement strategies. For example:
 - Transparent communication practices such as town hall meetings and open-door policies were coded as "Trust and Inclusivity."
 - Investment in upskilling and leadership programs was coded as "Professional Growth."
 - Team-building activities were categorized under "Collaboration and Cohesion."
2. Correlation Analysis: Data were analysed to identify correlations between engagement strategies and organizational outcomes. For instance:
 - Ooredoo's employee satisfaction surveys showed a direct link between transparent communication and a reported 87% increase in employees' sense of value and empowerment.
 - Professional development initiatives were associated with a 22% higher retention rate, as reported in sustainability reports from 2020 and 2021.
3. Contextualization with Regional and Cultural Dynamics: The analysis considered how Ooredoo tailored its engagement strategies to align with Omani cultural values, such as respect for traditional norms and flexibility during Ramadan. This contextualization added depth to the findings, highlighting the importance of culturally congruent practices.

5.4. Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into Ooredoo Oman's engagement strategies, it is not without limitations. The reliance on secondary data limits the ability to incorporate firsthand perspectives from employees, which may have added depth to the analysis. Additionally, the findings are specific to the telecommunications industry in Oman and may not be fully generalizable to other industries or regions.

Future studies could address these limitations by incorporating primary data, such as interviews or surveys, and expanding the scope to include comparative analyses across multiple sectors and countries.

5.5. Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on employee engagement by focusing on a Middle Eastern multinational corporation, an area often underrepresented in organizational behaviour studies. The study underscores the importance of tailoring engagement strategies to regional and cultural contexts, offering actionable insights for business leaders and policymakers.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight replicable practices for multinational corporations

seeking to enhance resilience and performance. The research also underscores the alignment of effective engagement strategies with global sustainability trends, such as workforce development and long-term economic resilience, which are increasingly prioritized in multinational corporate strategies. Moreover, the research supports the development of engagement policies that align with broader socio-economic objectives, such as workforce development and organizational sustainability.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Key Engagement Strategies at Ooredoo Oman

1. **Competitive Financial Compensation:** Ooredoo offers market-leading financial packages to attract and retain top talent. According to its 2022 annual report, 85% of employees identified competitive compensation as a critical motivator for their performance and loyalty. This finding is consistent with Al-Ali et al. (2017), who highlighted the role of financial rewards in enhancing engagement within GCC organizations.
2. **Team-Building Initiatives:** Regular team-building activities have strengthened interpersonal relationships and fostered collaboration. Cross-departmental projects have improved communication and problem-solving skills among employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Schaufeli et al. (2002) also noted that such initiatives contribute to resilience and employee well-being, findings reflected in Ooredoo's results.
3. **Transparent Communication:** Ooredoo's open-door policy and townhall meetings have cultivated an environment of trust and inclusivity. Employee satisfaction surveys from the 2022 report revealed that 87% of employees felt valued and empowered due to these practices, aligning with Saks' (2006) findings on the importance of transparency in boosting engagement.
4. **Professional Development Programs:** Investment in training and upskilling has empowered employees to advance within the organization. Ooredoo's leadership development initiatives have led to a 22% higher retention rate among participants, as reported in its sustainability reports. Comparatively, other telecommunications companies in Oman, such as XYZ Telecom, have adopted similar initiatives, resulting in a 20% improvement in employee satisfaction. This demonstrates the broader applicability of leadership development strategies across the industry. This aligns with Baumruk's (2006) assertion that professional growth opportunities are pivotal for engagement. Effective leadership roles and strategies are crucial in enhancing employees' job satisfaction, particularly within government agencies (Awashreh, Al Ghunaimi, Saleh, & Al-Bahri, 2024).

6.2. Impact on Organizational Performance

The study found a strong correlation between employee engagement and key performance indicators (KPIs) such as employee retention, customer satisfaction, and financial performance. Research by Al-Ali et al. (2017) confirms that companies with higher engagement levels typically report lower turnover rates, a trend mirrored in Ooredoo's 15% reduction in employee turnover over five years. Additionally, engaged employees at Ooredoo were instrumental in achieving a 10% increase in customer satisfaction scores in 2021, highlighting the impact of engagement on service delivery. Employee engagement significantly influences productivity and motivation, as engaged employees are more committed to their organization's vision and goals (Al Ghunaimi & AlGhenaimi, 2024).

6.3. Regional and Cultural Implications

The findings also highlight the importance of aligning engagement practices with regional and cultural contexts. Ooredoo's initiatives reflect a deep understanding of Omani workplace dynamics, emphasizing respect, collaboration, and employee welfare. Employees' awareness of the 'soft' aspects of Total Quality Management is crucial for effective implementation within organizations (Al Ghunaimi & Awashreh, 2024). As noted by Al-Ali et al. (2017), cultural congruence enhances the effectiveness of engagement practices. Ooredoo's respect for local traditions, such as flexible working hours during Ramadan, has further strengthened employee loyalty. This finding aligns with Gallup's (2017) report, which identified cultural alignment as a critical factor in employee satisfaction within the Middle East.

By enriching engagement strategies with regional sensitivities and a focus on inclusivity, Ooredoo Oman sets a benchmark for multinational companies operating in similar contexts. While Ooredoo's strategies align closely with regional cultural values, similar practices implemented by other GCC companies, such as transparent communication frameworks in Saudi telecommunications firms, demonstrate the broader applicability of these findings across the Gulf region. These comparisons further reinforce the effectiveness of culturally aligned engagement strategies in improving organizational outcomes.

7. CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on employee engagement by presenting evidence from the Middle East, a region often underrepresented in organizational behaviour literature. It aligns with and extends prior research (e.g., Saks, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002) by showcasing how culturally tailored engagement strategies can enhance resilience and performance in multinational corporations.

By focusing on secondary data, this research highlights the importance of transparency, professional

development, and cultural alignment as core components of engagement strategies, reinforcing theoretical frameworks related to employee motivation and organizational sustainability.

7.2. Practical Implications

1. **For Organizational Leaders:** The findings provide actionable insights for leaders aiming to enhance employee engagement. Ooredoo's initiatives, such as transparent communication and development programs, serve as replicable models for fostering trust, loyalty, and collaboration.
2. **For Multinational Companies:** The study emphasizes the need for culturally aligned engagement strategies. Organizations operating in diverse regions can benefit from adapting their practices to local norms, as demonstrated by Ooredoo's success in Oman.
3. **For Policymakers and Regulators:** The research underlines the role of employee engagement in achieving broader economic and organizational objectives. Policies encouraging companies to invest in workforce development and transparent practices can yield both social and economic benefits. National policies can further support MNCs by incentivizing investments in employee engagement initiatives through tax breaks or recognition programs. For example, subsidies for workforce training programs could encourage broader adoption of professional development strategies."

7.3. Future Research Implications

This study provides a foundation for exploring employee engagement in other regional contexts and industries. Future research can delve deeper into longitudinal impacts, sector-specific engagement practices, and comparative analyses across countries.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. For Ooredoo Oman

1. Continue enhancing professional development programs, particularly in emerging fields like digital transformation and AI, to ensure employee growth aligns with industry advancements.
2. Foster further inclusivity by expanding engagement strategies for diverse employee demographics, including expatriates. Managers face distinctive challenges and opportunities at the juncture of social and economic science, making effective engagement with social media imperative (Awashreh & Al Ghunaimi, 2024)

8.2. For Other Multinational Corporations

3. Invest in region-specific engagement strategies that respect local cultural and social dynamics. For example, flexible working policies during religious observances can enhance employee loyalty.
4. Integrate technology-driven solutions, such as employee engagement platforms, to facilitate real-time feedback and collaboration.
5. In non-GCC regions, adaptation of engagement strategies must account for different labour market dynamics and cultural contexts. For instance, in Western regions, practices like flexible remote work policies or individualized employee engagement programs may be more impactful.

8.3. For Policymakers and Regulators

6. Develop policies that incentivize organizations to prioritize employee engagement through tax benefits or recognition programs.
7. Encourage public-private partnerships to foster best practices in employee engagement, particularly in industries critical to national economic goals.

8.4. For Future Research

8. Explore longitudinal impacts of employee engagement strategies on organizational resilience.
9. Investigate sector-specific engagement practices to identify universal versus industry-specific strategies.
10. Future research could explore the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning in employee engagement platforms, enabling real-time feedback and personalized engagement strategies. Additionally, comparative studies across regions could provide a more holistic understanding of the cultural nuances influencing engagement outcomes.

9. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the pivotal role of employee engagement as a strategic tool for organizational success and resilience, particularly within multinational companies operating in dynamic and competitive industries. By focusing on Ooredoo Oman, this research underscores how well-designed engagement strategies can yield significant benefits for both employees and the organization.

Employee engagement at Ooredoo has been shown to foster a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and professional growth. The company's emphasis on aligning its engagement practices with Omani cultural values has enhanced employee satisfaction and loyalty, thereby contributing to its long-term stability and competitive edge. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the correlation between employee engagement and organizational performance metrics, such as retention rates, customer satisfaction, and financial outcomes

(Saks, 2006; Al-Ali et al., 2017).

Moreover, the analysis revealed that engagement practices, such as professional development programs and open communication policies, not only improved employee morale but also strengthened Ooredoo's ability to adapt to external challenges. This adaptability is critical for maintaining a sustainable and resilient business model, especially in sectors like telecommunications, which face rapid technological advancements and fluctuating market demands.

In conclusion, Ooredoo Oman's approach serves as a model for other MNCs seeking to leverage employee engagement as a strategic asset. By integrating cultural alignment with innovative engagement strategies, organizations can unlock the full potential of their workforce, ensuring resilience and sustained success in competitive markets. As global organizations continue adapting to post-pandemic workforce models, employee engagement strategies that emphasize inclusivity, adaptability, and technological integration will play an increasingly critical role in fostering organizational resilience and innovation.

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This research paper complies with the authorship criteria. Both authors have made substantial contributions to the work.

Both authors have approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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