

Mediating Role of Organisational Culture in the Relationship Between People Dimensions and Employee Engagement in the Telecom Sector in Abu Dhabi

Farhan Alvi ^{1,*}, 

¹Department of Business Administration, Swiss Business School, Zurich, Switzerland

Article History

Received: 15 February, 2026

Revised: 01 May, 2026

Accepted: 15 May, 2026

Published: 23 May, 2026

Abstract:

Introduction: The following research has examined the impact of people dimension on employee engagement in the Abu Dhabi's telecom sector. It also explored the mediating role of organisational culture in the relationship between people dimensions and employee engagement.

Methods: The research employed a quantitative design, collecting data from 385 employees at the largest telecom operators in Abu Dhabi. The data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire with purposive sampling, resulting in 385 valid responses. Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used as the analytical method to process the data.

Results & Discussion: The study revealed that Organisational Empowerment has the strongest positive impact on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.310$, $p = 0.000$). Customer Centricity presented a negative relationship with engagement ($\beta = -0.162$, $p = 0.035$), suggesting that focusing too much on customer needs may reduce engagement. The effect of Managerial Support on engagement is weak but positive ($\beta = 0.126$, $p = 0.075$). Organisational Culture has partial mediation effect, enhancing the relationship between Empowerment ($\beta = 0.505$, $p = 0.000$) and Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.267$, $p = 0.002$), as well as between Customer Centricity and engagement ($\beta = 0.189$, $p = 0.002$).

Conclusion: This research provides valuable insights for telecom companies in Abu Dhabi, focusing on the significance of empowerment and positive organisation culture to increase employee engagement that ultimately drive improved performance and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Customer centricity, managerial support, empowerment, organisational culture, employee engagement, telecom sector, Abu Dhabi.

1. INTRODUCTION

The telecommunication sector is one of the fastest-growing and most competitive industries globally (PWC, 2023), and the UAE is no exception. As one of the most technologically advanced nations in the Middle East, the UAE's telecom sector plays a vital role in driving the nation's economy (Modor Intelligence, 2025). Dominated by major players like Etisalat and Du, the sector is valued at approximately \$8.4 billion as of 2022, with a projected annual growth rate of 2% from 2022 to 2027 driven primarily by increasing demand for mobile services, digital technologies, and high-speed data solutions (Oxford Business Group, 2023). However, alongside technological advancements, people, dimensions, employee engagement, and organisational culture are essential to maintain the sector's competitive edge. In such a dynamic and rapidly evolving industry, fostering a positive workplace culture and high levels of employee engagement are crucial for innovation, productivity, and long-term success.

Sustaining this growth in a competitive market alongside market dynamism requires telecommunication companies to prioritise optimised human capital development alongside technological development (Schwarzburg, 2024). Employee engagement represents the emotional organisational commitment of workers, which directly impacts workplace performance and productivity measurements (Yousif Ali & Hasaballah, 2020). Engaged employees tend to innovate further with their duties to create better customer relationships while driving higher profits for the company (Deepalakshmi *et al.*, 2024). Organisations acknowledge the importance of employee engagement, yet most telecommunication operators struggle to sustain high engagement metrics. The Gallup State of the Global Workplace report-2021 shows that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has just 15% of workers who maintain full engagement at work (Gallup, 2021). Employee engagement levels in the region stand at a critical low point, which particularly affects telecommunications industry operations because they heavily depend on innovation coupled with customer service.

*Address correspondence to this author at Department of Business Administration, Swiss Business School, Zurich, Switzerland; E-mail: syed.farhan.alvi01@outlook.com



The UAE telecom sector faces the challenge of maintaining high levels of employee engagement amid rapid technological advancements and fierce market competition. While the sector has experienced substantial growth, employee engagement remains relatively low, impacting productivity, innovation and service quality. Previous studies, such as (Nwachukwu *et al.*, 2021; and Connolly *et al.*, 2017) have focused on the direct impact of key factors such as customer centricity, managerial support and empowerment on engagement but have not evaluated the mediating role of organisation culture. In such a dynamic and competitive industry, a positive organisational culture is important to increase employee motivation and commitment (Setrojoyo *et al.*, 2023). However, not much attention is provided to organisation culture with these dimensions to influence employee engagement, especially in the context of Abu Dhabi's telecom sector. The study aims to investigate how organisational culture, as a mediator, interacts with People Dimensions (Customer Centricity, Managerial Support, and Empowerment) to influence employee engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee engagement is a key driver of organisational performance, particularly in service sectors like telecommunications (Kadim, 2018). Employee engagement refers to the extent to which employees are emotionally connected, committed and involved in their work in the organisation (Yadav *et al.*, 2022). It is an important factor driving key performance outcomes that involve enhanced productivity, increased creativity and improved customer satisfaction (Turner, 2020). In the telecommunications sector, where competition is stiff and technological advancements are rapid, workplace engagement is a major driving factor behind organisational excellence (Atiku *et al.*, 2024).

Highly involved staff are more productive, creative, and innovative, and engagement is thus an integral ingredient in maintaining competitive advantage (Elidemir *et al.*, 2020). (Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of organisational culture on organisational performance in the telecom industry of Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The study demonstrated that dedicated employees are more likely to participate in knowledge-sharing activities, directly resulting in organisational success. In addition, dedicated employees enjoy higher customer loyalty, service quality, and efficiency (He *et al.*, 2021). Achieving high levels of employee engagement is not solely dependent on individual factors; it is also significantly influenced by external elements such as organisational culture and leadership. It indicates the organisation environment including values, norms, and practices influencing employee work experiences. It includes how leadership styles and cultural elements foster or hinder employees' emotional and cognitive commitment. Supportive culture and effective leadership develop conditions that increase engagement promoting trust, recognition and purpose (Parent & Lovelace, 2018). Hence, the understanding employee engagement requires considering both individual attributes and boarder organisation dynamics affecting motivation and involvement.

2.1. Hypotheses Development

H1: Customer centricity positively affects employee engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi

Customer centricity is a business strategy that focuses on building favourable experiences and long-term value for customers by putting their needs, wants, and satisfaction at the centre of organisational decisions and activities (Gupta & Ramachandran, 2021; Saeed, 2023). It means getting to know customers intensely, adapting products, services, and interactions to address their expectations, and building solid relationships to create loyalty and retention (Sparrow *et al.*, 2015). In contrast to product-centric strategies, customer centricity centres on one-on-one interaction, ongoing feedback, and responsiveness to changing customer needs. This strategy propels sustainable growth by aligning the operations, culture, and strategies of the firm with delivering superior customer value repeatedly (Rajagopal, 2020).

Customer centricity functions as a resource and a demand through the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model because it enhances or hinders employee engagement based on the job demands *versus* resource equilibrium (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In the JD-R model, customer centricity is both a resource and a demand that affects employee engagement (Sparrow *et al.*, 2015). As a resource, customer centricity motivates employees by giving those meaningful interactions, independence, and a sense of mission, potentially increasing motivation and engagement. Yet, when customer expectations are too high, it becomes a demand, inducing stress and burnout, and hence decreasing engagement. This balance is key between the requirements of the job (customer demands) and resources (caring leadership, training). A healthy environment encourages constructive employee engagement, while a lack of equilibrium results in disengagement and reduced performance (Gillet *et al.*, 2024).

The study of (MacGillavry & Sinyan, 2016) investigated the impact of customer centricity on employee engagement in DHL Freight. The findings of the study suggested that there exists a significant relationship between customer centricity and employee engagement. It shows that customer centred approach leads to higher engagement of employees and they are motivated towards catering to the customer needs. However, the study of (Ghlichlee & Bayat, 2021) reflected that employee engagement has an impact on customer centric approaches when testing these variables in the retail banking sector.

H2: Managerial support positively affects employee engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi

Managerial support is the extent to which managers give advice, resources, encouragement, and help to workers to allow them to finish tasks and develop their careers. It involves emotional, informational, and instrumental support to promote a good working environment, employee motivation, and performance. Managerial support involves direct communication, positive feedback, appreciation of efforts, and facilitating access to tools and training. This assistance is important in enabling employees to overcome obstacles, attain organisational objectives, and sustain job satisfaction, thereby leading to general organisational effectiveness and employee welfare (Aldabbas *et al.*, 2025).

According to the Social Exchange Theory positive manager-employee interactions establish a mutual connection that enhances employee perception of value and engagement. Managers providing support, respect, and fairness trigger valued resources for the employees, eliciting a sense of obligation to repay through higher commitment and involvement (Ahmad *et al.*, 2023). Such exchange reinforces employees' sense of value in the organisation, influencing their motivation and loyalty. This dynamic interaction fosters a positive work environment, ultimately resulting in enhanced performance and organisational success by aligning the interests of individuals and organisations through continuous, mutually rewarding interactions (Kilroy *et al.*, 2023). Managerial support, consisting of guidance, encouragement, and recognition from managers, is crucial to increase employee engagement (Aldabbas *et al.*, 2025). Managers who show emotional support while acknowledging employee work achieve better job satisfaction and employee motivation for improved engagement (Celestin *et al.*, 2024).

H3: Empowerment positively affects employee engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi

Organisations implement empowerment by providing employees with the freedom to make decisions and the necessary tools and resources to take ownership of their work-related choices. Employee involvement enhances when organisations provide authority and autonomy while offering essential resources to their staff, who thus demonstrate higher levels of organisational engagement (Okochi & Ateke, 2020). Empowered employees are more likely to feel responsible for their work, showing greater enthusiasm and commitment. According to the Empowerment Theory, employees feel more motivated when their professional competence and work meaning receive enhancement through empowerment practices. Studies such as (Shkoler & Kimura, 2020) emphasise empowerment's role in boosting engagement, particularly in jobs requiring decision-making autonomy. Meanwhile, (Lai *et al.*, 2020) argued that empowered employees tend to show higher engagement levels, especially in industries like telecommunications where creativity is essential for competitiveness. However, some studies have found contradictory results, suggesting that excessive empowerment without proper support can lead to confusion, stress, and disengagement. Employees may feel overwhelmed by the added responsibility, especially if they lack the necessary resources or guidance, negatively impacting engagement (Dennerlein & Kirkman, 2022).

H4a: Organisational culture mediates the relationship between customer centricity and employee engagement in Abu Dhabi's telecom sector

Organisational culture significantly shapes the relationship between Customer Centricity and Employee Engagement (Slabbert, 2018). A customer-centric culture aligns employees' values and behaviours to provide excellent customer service (Banović-Čurguz & Ilišević, 2018). When employees see their roles as integral to customer satisfaction, it boosts their emotional commitment to the organisation (Al-Kurdi *et al.*, 2020). According to Schein's Organisational Culture Theory, a strong, customer-focused culture helps employees feel more connected to the organisation's goals, enhancing engagement (Schein, 2010). This positive culture acts as a mediator by reinforcing the

connection between customer-centric practices and employee engagement, driving employees to deliver higher performance and customer satisfaction. However, the studies previously have not investigated the mediating effect of organisation culture between these variables, yet it can be justified using theoretical grounding.

H4b: Organisational culture mediates the relationship between managerial support and employee engagement in the Abu Dhabi telecom sector

Managerial Support is essential for employee engagement, but its effects are often shaped by the underlying organisational culture (Tyagi, 2021). When an organisation fosters a culture of support, trust, and respect, employees are more likely to feel valued by their managers, which enhances their overall engagement (Pougajendy *et al.*, 2024). A positive organisational culture ensures that managerial support is aligned with the values and norms of the organisation, creating a conducive environment for motivation and commitment. As highlighted by (Kithae, 2023), when a supportive culture exists, it strengthens the effects of managerial support by ensuring that employees feel appreciated and encouraged, leading to higher engagement and productivity. However, the studies previously have not investigated the mediating effect of organisation culture between these variables, yet it can be justified using theoretical grounding.

H4c: Organisational culture mediates the relationship between empowerment and employee engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi

Empowerment gives employees the autonomy and resources to make decisions, directly influencing engagement (Afram *et al.*, 2022). However, the effectiveness of empowerment is heavily influenced by the organisational culture in which it is implemented (Ljubica *et al.*, 2022). A culture that encourages autonomy, values creativity, and promotes responsibility supports the empowerment process and enhances its effects on employee engagement. According to (Connolly *et al.*, 2017), a culture of empowerment makes employees feel more invested in their work, leading to greater engagement. When the organisational culture aligns with empowerment practices, it ensures that employees are empowered and motivated to take ownership of their roles, resulting in increased organisational commitment and performance. However, the studies previously have not investigated the mediating effect of organisation culture between these variables, yet it can be justified using theoretical grounding.

Organisational Culture is the common set of values, norms, and practices that direct employees' actions and interactions. It plays a major role in mediating the relationship between different organisational drivers (such as customer focus, managerial support, and empowerment) and employee engagement. Positive culture supports the effect of these drivers by synchronising employees' attitudes with the organisational objectives (Kithae, 2023). Schein's Organisational Culture Theory highlights that culture influences how employees think about their work and affects their attitudes and behaviour. If organisational culture is customer-centric, managerially supported, and empowering, it positively impacts employee engagement (Schein, 2010).

2.2. Conceptual Framework

Fig. (1) presents the conceptual model of the study that are representing the hypothesis developed above. The independent

variables of the study as elaborated above are customer centricity, managerial support and empowerment while dependent variable is employee engagement. The mediating variable of the study is organisation culture. The framework is supported with the Job-Demand model and Schein’s organisational culture theory.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has employed survey-based data collection to evaluate the influence of people dimension on employee engagement within the telecom industry of Abu Dhabi. The research has targeted employees who work within the telecom industry in Abu Dhabi. The study employed survey-based data collection to evaluate the influence of people dimensions on employee engagement within the telecom industry of Abu Dhabi. The research targeted 600 employees working within the telecom sector, drawn from various departments such as technical support, customer service, operations, and management. Purposive sampling was applied to ensure a representation of employees across different roles and organisational levels. A total of 420 responses were collected, resulting in a response rate of 70%. After data cleaning, 35 responses were excluded due to missing or incomplete data, leaving 385 valid responses for analysis. Five of the 420 responses were identified as outliers due to extreme values and excluded from the dataset. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 385 valid responses, sufficient to ensure reliable and valid results and provided statistical power for data analysis.

Data collection was carried out using a structured survey questionnaire (Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed to capture the study's primary variables: people dimensions (independent variables), organisational culture (mediating variable), and employee engagement (dependent variable). The survey included 5-point Likert-scale closed ended questionnaire, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of the factors influencing employee engagement.

The data was analysed using Partial Least Squares- Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which was chosen for its ability to test both direct and indirect relationships and mediating effects

among the investigated variables. It involves two where the first stage involves measurement model evaluation using confirmatory factor analysis to confirm reliability and validity of the constructs and the second stage includes path analysis or structural model to test the hypothesis.

All research procedures followed strict ethical protocols to ensure process validity and research integrity. Participants were provided with informed consent, and the study's objectives, tasks, and the option to withdraw without consequences were clearly explained. The confidentiality of responses was maintained, as all data was anonymised to protect participant privacy. Additionally, participants were assured that their personal information would remain undisclosed, and data security practices ensured that the data was securely stored, with access restricted to authorized personnel only. The study findings have been communicated in aggregate form to guarantee the anonymity of all participants.

As shown in Table 1, the demographic profile of the participants includes a diverse representation of employees across various roles and departments within the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi. The sample comprises 220 male (57.14%) and 165 female (42.86%) participants. In terms of age, most participants fall into the 25-44 age range, with 120 participants (31.17%) in the 25-34 age group and 135 participants (35.06%) in the 35-44 age group. The sample also includes a broad range of job positions, with Customer Service employees making up 28.57% (110 participants), followed by Technical Support (25.97%, 100 participants), Operations (24.68%, 95 participants), and Management (20.78%, 80 participants).

Regarding length of employment, the largest group has been employed for 1-3 years (33.77%, 130 participants), with 120 participants (31.17%) employed for 4-6 years. The education level of the participants indicates that most hold an undergraduate degree (41.56%, 160 participants), followed by postgraduate degrees (36.36%, 140 participants). This diverse demographic representation ensures that the study captures various perspectives on employee engagement, people dimensions, and organisational culture in the telecom sector.



Fig. (1). Conceptual framework.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the participants.

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 385)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	57.14%
	Female	165	42.86%
Age Group	18-24	45	11.69%
	25-34	120	31.17%
	35-44	135	35.06%
	45-54	70	18.18%
	55+	15	3.90%
Job Position	Technical Support	100	25.97%
	Customer Service	110	28.57%
	Operations	95	24.68%
	Management	80	20.78%
Length of Employment	Less than 1 year	40	10.39%
	1-3 years	130	33.77%
	4-6 years	120	31.17%
	7-10 years	60	15.58%
	More than 10 years	35	9.09%
Education Level	High School	40	10.39%
	Undergraduate Degree	160	41.56%
	Postgraduate Degree	140	36.36%
	Doctorate	25	6.49%
	Other	20	5.19%

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Measurement Model Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

To evaluate the reliability and validity of the latent variables, the study employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The measurement model was assessed by examining each construct's factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (ρ_a), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Factor loadings measure the strength of the relationship between the observed indicators and their respective latent variables. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability assess the internal consistency and reliability of the constructs, while AVE evaluates the extent to which the construct explains the variance of its indicators. The results of the CFA confirm that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties, with all the factor loadings, reliability values, and AVE exceeding the acceptable thresholds (Baharum *et al.*, 2023).

Table 2 displays the measurement model results from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The factor loadings for all indicators are above 0.80, indicating strong relationships between the indicators and their respective latent variables. Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct exceed 0.80, suggesting high internal consistency and reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2019). The Composite Reliability scores also support the constructs' reliability, with values above 0.80. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is above the threshold of 0.50, demonstrating good convergent validity, meaning that the constructs explain a substantial portion of the variance in the observed indicators.

In summary, the measurement model in Fig. (2) has satisfactory psychometric properties. High factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and AVE values confirm that the constructs of the research are reliable and valid and can be used for analysis. Customer Centricity, Empowerment, Employee Engagement, Managerial Support, and Organisational Culture have high internal consistency and convergent validity.

The discriminant validity using HTMT ratio is shown in the Table 3 through the correlations among the latent variables. The values of HTMT are fairly low, meaning that each construct is unique, with Empowerment correlating highest with Organisational Culture (0.733) and Customer Centricity correlating lowest with Employee Engagement (0.276).

4.2. Direct Effects

The direct effects table shows the direct relationships between the independent variables (People Dimensions) and the dependent variable (Employee Engagement), as well as the direct relationships between the mediator (Organisational Culture) and other variables.

The path analysis results (Table 4) reveal several important relationships between the latent variables in this study. Customer Centricity has a negative effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = -0.162, P = 0.035$), suggesting that an increase in customer-centric practices may slightly reduce employee engagement. Although the effect is weak, it is statistically significant at the 5% level. However, Customer Centricity positively influences

Organisational Culture ($\beta = 0.189, P = 0.002$), implying that a focus on customer satisfaction can foster a positive culture within the organisation. This relationship is moderate but significant. Empowerment has a much stronger positive effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.310, p = 0.000$), indicating that giving employees more autonomy and authority significantly enhance their engagement. Furthermore, Empowerment also has a very strong effect on Organisational Culture ($\beta = 0.505, p = 0.000$), suggesting that empowering employees helps to build a culture that values autonomy and creativity. In contrast, Managerial Support shows a marginally significant positive effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.126, p = 0.075$), with a weak relationship that approaches significance, but is not robust. The effect of Managerial Support on Organisational Culture is not significant ($\beta = 0.068, p = 0.235$), indicating that managerial support does not play a significant role in shaping the culture. Finally, Organisational Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.267, p = 0.002$), demonstrating that a positive organisational culture strongly influences employee engagement.

Table 2. Measurement model using CFA.

Latent Variables	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Customer Centricity	CC1	0.880	0.851	0.853	0.771
	CC2	0.899			
	CC3	0.854			
Empowerment	E1	0.892	0.894	0.905	0.825
	E2	0.928			
	E3	0.880			
Employee Engagement	EE1	0.911	0.883	0.885	0.811
	EE2	0.933			
	EE3	0.880			
Managerial Support	MS1	0.812	0.811	0.816	0.727
	MS2	0.903			
	MS3	0.841			
Organisation Culture	OC1	0.907	0.901	0.901	0.835
	OC2	0.930			
	OC3	0.904			

Table 3. Discriminant validity.

-	Customer Centricity	Employee Engagement	Empowerment	Managerial Support
Employee Engagement	0.276	-	-	-
Empowerment	0.718	0.495	-	-
Managerial Support	0.620	0.343	0.550	-
Organisation Culture	0.614	0.477	0.733	0.467

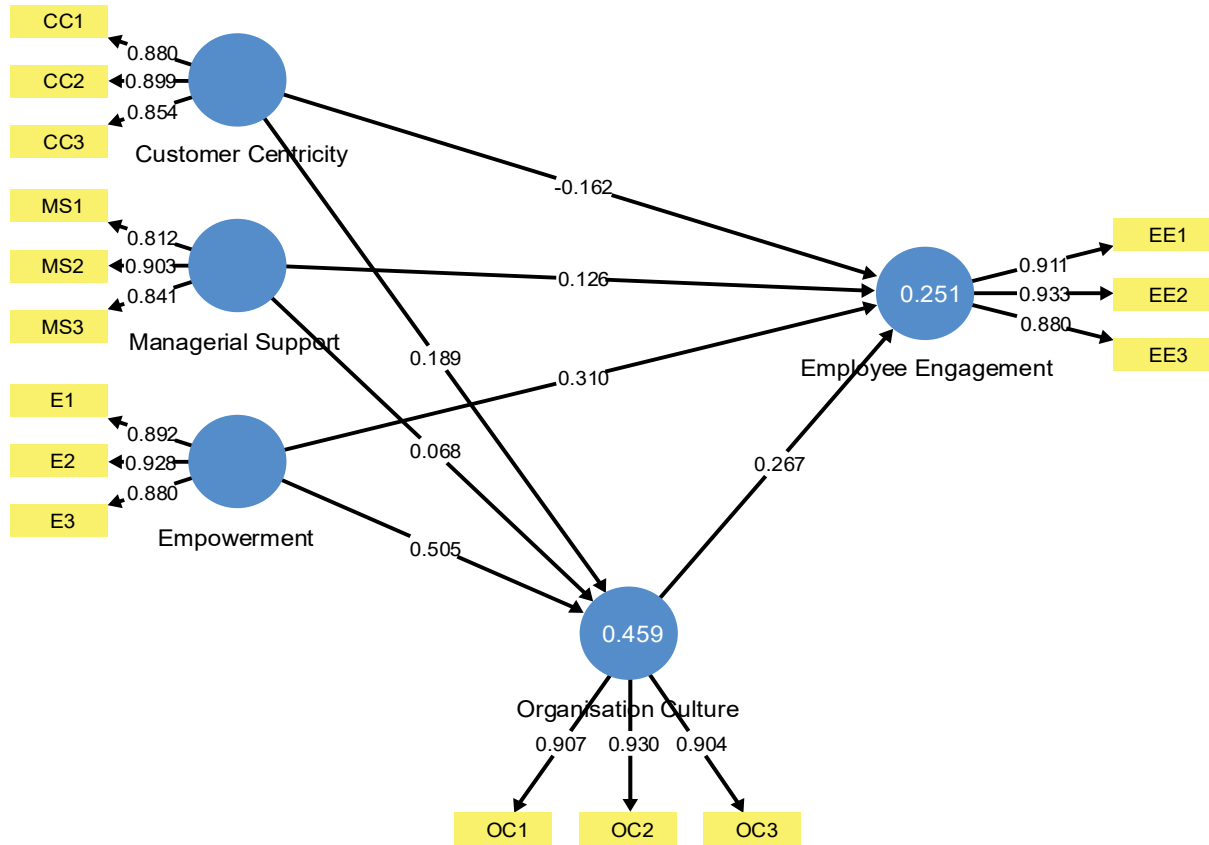


Fig. (2). Measurement model using CFA (showing factor loading, path coefficient, and R-squared).

In terms of indirect effects for mediation analysis, Empowerment appears to have the strongest and most significant indirect effect on Employee Engagement through Organisational Culture, given its large effect on both variables as shown in Table 5. In contrast, Customer Centricity's indirect effect on Employee Engagement is likely weak, as the direct effect of Customer Centricity on engagement is negative. Furthermore, the indirect effect of Managerial Support through Organisational Culture is negligible due to the non-significant relationships in both paths. Overall, Empowerment exerts the most significant and impactful effect on Employee Engagement and Organisational Culture, while Managerial Support and Customer Centricity have weaker and less significant effects, particularly when considering their indirect impacts.

The Total Effects (Table 6) shows that Employee Engagement results from the combined influence of People Dimensions together with Organisational Culture. The impact of Customer Centricity on Employee Engagement turns out to be negative yet unimportant ($\beta = -0.111, p = 0.153$) whereas its effects on Organisational Culture are both significant and positive ($\beta = 0.189, p = 0.002$). This shows that customer-oriented practises benefit organisational culture development. An organisation finds that empowerment generates the maximum positive influence on Employee Engagement ($\beta = 0.445, p = 0.000$) and Organisational Culture ($\beta = 0.505, p = 0.000$). These findings demonstrate that

employee empowerment increases engagement levels and strengthens cultural values in the company. Employee Engagement receives substantially significant positive support from Managerial Support measures ($\beta = 0.144, p = 0.044$) but Organisational Culture shows no meaningful impact from this variable ($\beta = 0.068, p = 0.235$). The results indicate Organisational Culture has a strong positive relationship to Employee Engagement at the 0.002 significance level ($\beta = 0.267$). This finding demonstrates why organisations must establish positive organisational cultures to improve employee engagement. The study reveals Empowerment stands as the dominant force which increases employee engagement together with organisational culture though Customer Centricity and Managerial Support demonstrate reduced engagement effects. The analysis of mediation indicates partial mediation of Organisational Culture between People Dimensions and Employee Engagement. Empowerment has a strong impact on engagement both directly and indirectly through culture, whereas Customer Centricity has negative direct impact on employee engagement but organisational culture positively mediates the relationship. The insignificance of total effect indicates the complex dynamics of this variable which can be further better examined using different other variables or factors affecting it as well. Managerial Support's mediation is small. This suggests direct actions and cultural building are crucial for improving engagement.

Table 4. Direct effects.

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values
Customer Centricity -> Employee Engagement	-0.162 **	2.112	0.035
Customer Centricity -> Organisation Culture	0.189 **	3.080	0.002
Empowerment -> Employee Engagement	0.310 ***	3.879	0.000
Empowerment -> Organisation Culture	0.505 ***	8.731	0.000
Managerial Support -> Employee Engagement	0.126 *	1.783	0.075
Managerial Support -> Organisation Culture	0.068	1.188	0.235
Organisation Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.267 ***	3.038	0.002

Note: ***: Significance at 1%, **: Significance at 5%, *: Significance at 10%

Table 5. Indirect effects.

	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values
Customer Centricity -> Organisation Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.050**	2.386	0.017
Empowerment -> Organisation Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.135 ***	2.782	0.005
Managerial Support -> Organisation Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.018	1.008	0.314

Note: ***: Significance at 1%, **: Significance at 5%, *: Significance at 10%

Table 6. Total effects.

	Path Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values
Customer Centricity -> Employee Engagement	-0.111	1.430	0.153
Customer Centricity -> Organisation Culture	0.189 ***	3.080	0.002
Empowerment -> Employee Engagement	0.445 ***	6.550	0.000
Empowerment -> Organisation Culture	0.505 ***	8.731	0.000
Managerial Support -> Employee Engagement	0.144**	2.012	0.044
Managerial Support -> Organisation Culture	0.068	1.188	0.235
Organisation Culture -> Employee Engagement	0.267***	3.038	0.002

Note: ***: Significance at 1%, **: Significance at 5%, *: Significance at 10%

4.3. Model Explanatory Power

Table 7 above shows the explanatory power of the model. Employee engagement shows R-Square of 0.251. It indicates that the people dimension variables such as customer centricity, empowerment and managerial support explains 25.1% variation in employee engagement. Furthermore, organisation culture has R-Square of 0.459 showing that customer centricity, empowerment and managerial support explain 45.9% of variation in the organisation culture.

Table 7. Explanatory power.

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Employee Engagement	0.251	0.243
Organisation Culture	0.459	0.455

5. DISCUSSION AND HYPOTHESIS ASSESSMENT

The main aim of this study was to explore the impact of people dimensions, customer centricity, empowerment, and managerial support, on employee engagement in the telecom industry of Abu Dhabi, and evaluate the role of Organisational Culture as a mediator in such relationships. The aim was not only to learn about the direct impacts of these variables on employee engagement, but also about how much organisational culture serves as a conduit strengthening or influencing these effects.

The results of the analysis provided several noteworthy findings. Empowerment proved to be the strongest predictor of Employee Engagement with clear direct and indirect effects through organisational culture. This supports that when employees are entrusted with autonomy, authority, and resources, they are more engaged and committed towards work. The strong positive effect of empowerment on organisational culture also indicates that empowering practices are building a culture that is appreciative of creativity and autonomy, leading to increased engagement. This is supported through (Lai *et al.*, 2020; Okochi & Ateke, 2020; and Shkoler & Kimura, 2020), which highlights the pivotal role of empowerment in fostering engagement through higher responsibility and purposeful work.

On the contrary, Customer Centricity demonstrated a mixed relationship. Though it was positively and significantly associated with Organisational Culture, its direct association with Employee Engagement was negative. The positive indirect effect *via* culture partially balances this negative direct impact. This balanced finding aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model explanation presented by (Gillet *et al.*, 2024), where customer-centric practices serve as both resources and demands encouraging employees when well managed but threatening to induce stress and disengagement when demands outstrip resources. It speaks to the fine line organisations need to walk to leverage customer centricity optimally without overexerting employees.

Managerial Support had a marginally significant direct impact on Employee Engagement and a non-significant impact on

Organisational Culture, with minimal mediation through culture. Nevertheless, the overall effect of managerial support on engagement was positive, showing that managerial behaviours directly have a positive effect on engagement but might do so largely through direct interpersonal relationships rather than influencing the broader culture. This is in line with the Social Exchange Theory approach (Kilroy *et al.*, 2023) as well as the conclusions of (Aldabbas *et al.*, 2025) emphasizing the critical role of immediate manager-employee support in generating motivation and commitment.

Organisational Culture itself had a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement, reinforcing its pivotal position as the driver of an environment in which people feel valued and engaged in the organisational agenda. The partial mediation effect seen here suggests that although culture serves to amplify the contribution of people dimensions to engagement, direct relationships are not irrelevant. The result reinforces Schein's Organisational Culture Theory (Schein, 2010) wherein culture is argued to facilitate employee attitude and behaviour. Table 8 represents the summary of the hypotheses based on the results obtained below.

Implications of the findings are significant for Abu Dhabi telecom sector management. Empowerment needs to be a top-down priority as a strategic instrument for stimulating employee engagement and developing a robust organisational culture. Customer focus strategies need to be balanced with sufficient resources and support to avoid the negative impact on engagement. Managerial support is still crucial but supplemented by culture-construction initiatives to optimize its application. Organisations need to ensure a supportive culture that aligns people dimension practices with engagement objectives, hence achieving sustainable competitive advantage through committed and motivated employees. Furthermore, customer centricity has shown the complex dynamic indicating the implication that telecom sector employees must consider customer centric approaches carefully and ensure that their approach towards customers centric aspect is strong.

Table 8. Summary of hypotheses.

Developed and Tested Hypotheses	Status
H1: Customer Centricity positively affects Employee Engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi	Rejected
H2: Managerial Support positively affects Employee Engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi	Accepted
H3: Empowerment positively affects Employee Engagement in the telecom sector of Abu Dhabi	Accepted
H4a: Organisational Culture mediates the relationship between Customer Centricity and Employee Engagement in Abu Dhabi's telecom sector.	Partial Mediation
H4b: Organisational Culture mediates the relationship between managerial support and Employee Engagement in Abu Dhabi's telecom sector.	Partial Mediation
H4c: Organisational Culture mediates the relationship between empowerment and Employee Engagement in Abu Dhabi's telecom sector.	Partial Mediation

CONCLUSION

This research studied the impacts of People Dimensions Customer Centricity, Managerial Support, and Empowerment on Employee Engagement in the telecom industry in Abu Dhabi, with a focus on the mediating effect of Organisational Culture. The findings reveal that Empowerment is the strongest driver of employee engagement, having strong direct and indirect effects through organisational culture. Empowering workers through autonomy and resources creates a culture of creativity and accountability, which enhances engagement. In contrast, Customer Centricity had a negative direct impact on engagement but a positive effect on organisational culture, which may indicate that customer focus can build culture but that cause stress and disengagement, as would be predicted by the Job Demands-Resources model. Managerial Support had a weak positive effect on engagement with minimal impact on organisational culture, which suggests managerial action directly influences engagement but has limited potential to influence culture. These results underscore the necessity for balanced customer focus practices, firm empowerment strategies, and supportive managerial practices to facilitate ongoing employee commitment.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The policy implications of the research are important to managers in the telecom industry and HR practitioners working in Abu Dhabi and comparable markets. Having recognised Empowerment as a major driver of employee engagement, organisations are motivated to adopt policies that give employees more autonomy, decision-making powers, and resource access. These practices can promote motivation, creativity, and commitment, contributing to increased productivity and innovation. The research also emphasises the need for balancing Customer Centricity with supportive employee provisions so that burnout and disengagement are avoided, encouraging managers to develop customer-centric strategies that are sustainable and employee-friendly. In addition, while Managerial Support has a lesser influence on culture, its direct positive influence on engagement emphasises the worth of good, supportive leadership and communications. Overall, this study provides actionable recommendations for creating a positive organisational culture that supports people-focused initiatives, allowing telecom operators to sustain competitive edge through an energised, engaged, and resilient workforce.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTION

This research's limitation implies different future directions. The study's cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences, reflecting need for longitudinal studies in capturing changes in employee engagement over time. The focus on Abu Dhabi's telecom sector restricts generalisability. Hence, future studies can explore different industries and geographic regions for broader applicability. Furthermore, relying on self-reported survey data may reveal bias, hence incorporating qualitative methods can enhance validity. Finally, evaluating other potential mediators or

moderators like leadership styles, technological change or employee wellbeing can provide comprehensive understanding of factors shaping employee engagement. Furthermore, as study revealed the complex dynamic of the customer centricity, it is important to consider various other factors that can be involved in the relationship of customer centricity and employee engagement. The future researchers can consider different moderating or mediating variables that can intervene with this dynamic.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	=	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	=	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
EE	=	Employee Engagement
JD-R	=	Job Demands-Resources
OC	=	Organisational Culture
PD	=	People Dimensions
PLS-SEM	=	Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling

AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The entire work including conceptualization, methodology, analysis, software work, writing, and editing/proofreading before final submission was done by F.A.

ETHICAL APPROVAL & INFORMED CONSENT

Participants were provided with informed consent, and the study's objectives, tasks, and the option to withdraw without consequences were clearly explained. The confidentiality of responses was maintained, as all data was anonymised to protect participant privacy. Additionally, participants were assured that their personal information would remain undisclosed, and data security practices ensured that the data was securely stored, with access restricted to authorized personnel only. The study findings have been communicated in aggregate form to guarantee the anonymity of all participants.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data will be made available on reasonable request by contacting the corresponding author [F.A.].

FUNDING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Declared none.

DECLARATION OF AI

During the preparation of this work the author used ChatGPT for editing purposes. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Demographics

- 1) Gender
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
- 2) Age
 - a) 18-24
 - b) 25-34
 - c) 35-44
 - d) 45-54
 - e) 55+
- 3) Job Position
 - a) Technical Support
 - b) Customer Service
 - c) Operations
 - d) Management
- 4) Length of Employment
 - a) Less than 1 year
 - b) 1-3 years
 - c) 4-6 years
 - d) 7-10 years
 - e) More than 10 years
- 5) Education Level
 - a) High School
 - b) Undergraduate Degree
 - c) Postgraduate Degree
 - d) Doctorate
 - e) Other

Section B: People Dimension

Rate the following statements based on the following scale

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree

Customer Centricity	1	2	3	4	5
The organisation prioritizes customers' needs in all decision-making processes.					
Employees are encouraged to understand and address customer concerns effectively.					
Customer satisfaction is considered a key measure of organisational success.					
Managerial Support	1	2	3	4	5
My manager provides timely guidance and assistance when I face work challenges.					
I feel supported by management in my professional development and growth.					
Management recognises and appreciates employees' contributions regularly.					
Empowerment	1	2	3	4	5
I have the authority to make decisions relevant to my job responsibilities.					
The organisation encourages employees to take initiative and be innovative.					
I feel confident in my ability to influence work outcomes.					

Section C: Employee Engagement

	1	2	3	4	5
I am enthusiastic about my work and committed to the organisation's goals.					
I feel motivated to put in extra effort beyond my job requirements.					
I actively participate in activities that improve the workplace environment.					

Section D: Organisation Culture

	1	2	3	4	5
The organisation fosters a culture of collaboration and mutual respect.					
Innovation and creativity are valued and encouraged in this organisation.					
Communication within the organisation is open and transparent.					

REFERENCES

- Afram, J., Manresa, A., & Mas Machuca, M. (2022). The impact of employee empowerment on organisational performance: The mediating role of employee engagement and organisational citizenship behaviour. *Intangible Capital*, 18(1), 96–119. <https://doi.org/10.3926/ic.1781>
- Ahmad, R., Nawaz, M. R., Ishaq, M. I., Khan, M. M., & Ashraf, H. A. (2023). Social exchange theory: Systematic review and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1015921. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1015921>
- Ahmed, M., & Shafiq, S. (2014). The Impact of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance: A Case Study of Telecom Sector. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research: A Administration and Management*, 14(3). Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323799766_The_Impact_of_Organizational_Culture_on_Organizational_PerformanceA_Cas_e_Study_on_Telecom_Sector
- Al Kurdi, B., Alshurideh, M., & Alnaser, A. (2020). The impact of employee satisfaction on customer satisfaction: Theoretical and empirical underpinning. *Management Science Letters*, 10(15), 3561–3570. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.6.038>
- Aldabbas, H., Pinnington, A., Lahrech, A., & Blaique, L. (2025). Extrinsic rewards for employee creativity? The role of perceived organisational support, work engagement and intrinsic motivation. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 17(2), 237–260. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-08-2022-0165>
- Atiku, S. O., Itembu-Naunyang, K. A., & Oladejo, O. M. (2024). Inclusive Leadership and Employee Engagement as Critical Drivers of Sustainability in Telecommunication Companies. *Administrative Sciences*, 14(6), 126. <https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14060126>
- Baharum, H., Ismail, A., Awang, Z., McKenna, L., Ibrahim, R., Mohamed, Z., & Hassan, N. H. (2023). The study adapted instruments based on Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate measurement models of latent constructs. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(4), 2860. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20042860>
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>
- Banović-Čurguz, N., & Ilišević, D. (2018). Customer-centric culture as enabler of digital transformation. *2018 41st International Convention on Information and Communication Technology, Electronics and Microelectronics (MIPRO)*, 0400–0404. <https://doi.org/10.23919/mipro.2018.8400076>
- Celestin, M., Vasuki, M., Sujatha, S., & Kumar, A. D. (2024). Enhancing Employee Satisfaction and Engagement to Boost Productivity: The Role of Leadership, Culture, and Recognition Programs. *International Journal of Computational Research and Development*, 9(2), 67–74. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13871930>
- Connolly, L. Y., Lang, M., Gathegi, J., & Tygar, D. J. (2017). Organisational culture, procedural countermeasures, and employee security behaviour: A qualitative study. *Information & Computer Security*, 25(2), 118–136. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICS-03-2017-0013>
- Deepalakshmi, N., Tiwari, D., Baruah, R., Seth, A., & Bisht, R. (2024). Employee Engagement And Organizational Performance: A Human Resource Perspective. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(4), 5941–5948. <https://doi.org/10.53555/kuey.v30i4.2323>
- Dennerlein, T., & Kirkman, B. L. (2022). The hidden dark side of empowering leadership: The moderating role of hindrance stressors in explaining when empowering employees can promote moral disengagement and unethical pro-organizational behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 107(12), 2220. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13871930>
- Elidemir, S. N., Ozturen, A., & Bayighomog, S. W. (2020). Innovative Behaviors, Employee Creativity, and Sustainable Competitive Advantage: A Moderated Mediation. *Sustainability*, 12(8), 3295. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12083295>
- Gallup. (2021). *State of the Global Workplace: 2021 Report*. Available from: <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3552998>
- Ghlichlee, B., & Bayat, F. (2021). Frontline employees' engagement and business performance: The mediating role of customer-oriented behaviors. *Management Research Review*, 44(2), 290–317. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-11-2019-0482>
- Gillet, N., Morin, A. J. S., & Blais, A.-R. (2024). A Multilevel Person-Centered Perspective on the Role of Job Demands and Resources for Employees' Job Engagement and Burnout Profiles. *Group & Organization Management*, 49(3), 621–672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011221100893>
- Gupta, S., & Ramachandran, D. (2021). Emerging market retail: Transitioning from a product-centric to a customer-centric approach. *Journal of Retailing*, 97(4), 597–620. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2021.01.008>
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1), 2–24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- He, J., Morrison, A. M., & Zhang, H. (2021). How high-performance HR practices and LMX affect employee engagement and creativity in hospitality. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 45(8), 1360–1382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348021996800>
- Kadim, N. H. (2018). *Determinant factors of service oriented organizational citizenship behavior among employees in a telecommunication company* [Universiti Utara Malaysia]. Available from: <https://etd.uum.edu.my/id/eprint/7388>

- Kilroy, J., Dundon, T., & Townsend, K. (2023). Embedding reciprocity in human resource management: A social exchange theory of the role of frontline managers. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 33(2), 511–531. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12468>
- Kithae, P. P. (2023). Interplay between Technology and Culture in Driving Change for Employee Satisfaction. *Organizational Culture-Cultural Change and Technology*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.112905>
- Lai, F.-Y., Tang, H.-C., Lu, S.-C., Lee, Y.-C., & Lin, C.-C. (2020). Transformational leadership and job performance: The mediating role of work engagement. *Sage Open*, 10(1), 2158244019899085. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019899085>
- Ljubica, J., Littrell, R. F., Warner-Söderholm, G., & Minelgaite, I. (2022). Empower me or not? Influence of societal culture. *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, 29(1), 114–146. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCSM-05-2021-0091>
- MacGillavry, K., & Sinyan, P. (2016). Focusing on the Critical Link Between Employee Engagement and Customer Centricity at DHL Freight. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence*, 35(4), 6–16. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joe.21680>
- Modor Intelligence. (2025). *Telecom Industry in UAE Size—Industry Report on Share, Growth Trends & Forecasts Analysis (2025—2030)*. Available from: <https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/analysis-of-the-telecom-sector-in-the-united-arab-emirates-industry>
- Nwachukwu, C., Chládková, H., Agboga, R. S., & Vu, H., M. (2021). Religiosity, employee empowerment and employee engagement: An empirical analysis. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 41(11), 1195–1209. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-03-2021-0060>
- Okochi, K., & Ateke, B. W. (2020). Employee empowerment: A strategy for optimizing employee performance. *Nigerian Journal of Business and Social Review*, 11(2), 125–137. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368449588_Employee_Empowerment_A_Strategy_for_Optimizing_Employee_Performance
- Oxford Business Group. (2023). *The Report: Abu Dhabi 2023*. Available from: <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/reports/uae-abu-dhabi/2023-report/>
- Parent, J. D., & Lovelace, K. J. (2018). Employee engagement, positive organizational culture and individual adaptability. *On the Horizon*, 26(3), 206–214. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-01-2018-0003>
- Pougajendy, S., Mathiazhagan, A., & Karunamurthy, A. (2024). The Role of Organizational Culture in Driving Employee Engagement: Insights and Implications. *Quing: International Journal of Multidisciplinary Scientific Research and Development*, 3(3), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.54368/qijmsrd.3.3.0009>
- PWC. (2023). *The Leadership Agenda*. Available from: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/c-suite-insights/the-leadership-agenda.html>
- Rajagopal, A. (2020). Transforming entrepreneurial business design: Converging leadership and customer-centric approach. *Journal of Transnational Management*, 25(2), 128–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15475778.2020.1734418>
- Saeed, S. (2023). A customer-centric view of E-commerce security and privacy. *Applied Sciences*, 13(2), 1020. <https://doi.org/10.3390/app13021020>
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (Vol. 2). John Wiley & Sons. Available from: <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2404590>
- Schwarzburg, D. (2024). Five Strategies To Drive Innovation In A Fast-Paced Market. *Forbes*. Available from: <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2024/12/04/five-strategies-to-drive-innovation-in-a-fast-paced-market/>
- Setrojoyo, S. M., Rony, Z. T., Sutrisno, S., Naim, S., Manap, A., & Sakti, B. P. (2023). The effect of intrinsic motivation, organizational culture on employee performance with organizational commitment as an intervening variable. *International Journal of Professional Business Review: Int. J. Prof. Bus. Rev.*, 8(7), 52. <https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i7.2436>
- Shkoler, O., & Kimura, T. (2020). How does work motivation impact employees' investment at work and their job engagement? A moderated-moderation perspective through an international lens. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 487698. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00038>
- Slabbert, H. (2018). *The Influence of Employee Engagement on Customer Experience in a Customer Centric Climate and Culture*. University of Johannesburg (South Africa). Available from: <https://hdl.handle.net/10210/292386>
- Sparrow, P., Hird, M., & Cooper, C. L. (2015). Customer Centricity and People Management. In *Do We Need HR?* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137313775_3
- Turner, P. (2020). *Employee Engagement in Contemporary Organizations Maintaining High Productivity and Sustained Competitiveness*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/978-3-030-36387-1.pdf>
- Tyagi, N. (2021). Aligning organizational culture to enhance managerial effectiveness of academic leaders: An interface for employee engagement and retention. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(7), 1387–1404. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2020-0447>

- Yadav, A., Pandita, D., & Singh, S. (2022). Work-life integration, job contentment, employee engagement and its impact on organizational effectiveness: A systematic literature review. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 54(3), 509–527. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ICT-12-2021-0083>
- Yousif Ali, M. S., & Hasaballah, A. H. A. (2020). Assessing the effect of organizational cultural values and employee's engagement on performance excellence. *International Journal of Management*, 11(4), 108-126. Available from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3600700>

Cite as: Alvi, F. (2026). Mediating Role of Organisational Culture in the Relationship Between People Dimensions and Employee Engagement in the Telecom Sector in Abu Dhabi. *Advance Journal of Business Management and Social Science*, 2(1), 1–14, Article ID: CM2621101023. <https://doi.org/10.65080/ajbmss.v2i1.CM2621101023>