



Institute of Technology Management and Entrepreneurship

**CRITICAL FACTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN
ENHANCING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE UAE'S
EMPLOYEES**

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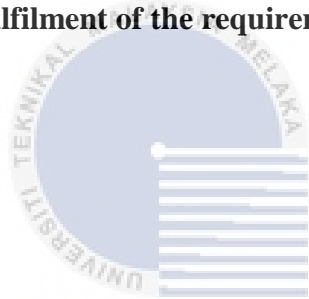
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JOB SATISFACTION AMONG THE UAE'S EMPLOYEES**

FATIMA RASHAD ABDULRAHMAN ALAFEEFI

**A thesis submitted
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**



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UNIVERSITI TEKNIKAL MALAYSIA MELAKA

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my highest acknowledgement to my beloved family for always being with me through all the hardship of my study by giving consistently support and encouragement.



ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction among employees is a critical objective for human resources departments, vital for the success of any organization. Job satisfaction specifically refers to an employee's contentment with their individual job roles, tasks, and responsibilities. It delves into how employees feel about the work they do, their immediate work environment, relationships with colleagues, and the tasks they are responsible for completing. Employee satisfaction, on the other hand, is a broader concept. It encompasses job satisfaction but extends to cover the overall satisfaction of an employee within the entire organization. Employee satisfaction takes into account not only the job itself but also various other factors such as the work culture, leadership, communication within the organization, opportunities for skill development, work-life balance, job security, benefits, and the organization's policies and practices. Employee satisfaction is gaining prominence, especially in the face of fierce talent competition. Disengaged employees can lead to dissatisfaction and ultimately a high turnover rate, hampering organizational growth. Despite this, there has been limited research on job satisfaction linked to employee engagement in the UAE. This study aims to develop an employee engagement model to enhance employee satisfaction within organizations. The study has three primary objectives. First, it seeks to identify the attributes of employee engagement that enhance job satisfaction among employees. Second, it aims to design an employee empowerment model that fosters job satisfaction within the organization. Third, it intends to validate the proposed model's effectiveness in enhancing overall employee satisfaction within the organization. The research follows a three-phase process-based design: analysis, design and development, and evaluation and testing. Conducted in the UAE, the study surveyed 381 respondents. Utilizing regression models, the data were analyzed to test six hypotheses. The results revealed three significant factors: working environment, leadership, and perceived organizational support. Conversely, training and development, rewards, and salary were found to be insignificant in influencing employee job satisfaction. The analysis demonstrated a robust relationship between the factors in the employee engagement model and employee job satisfaction, with an R-value of 0.781, validating the proposed model. In essence, the developed employee engagement model serves as a valuable reference for organizational leaders and management. It provides guidelines for improving the working environment, leadership, and organizational support, enabling effective employee engagement strategies to be implemented, ultimately leading to enhanced employee satisfaction within the organization.

MODEL PENGLIBATAN PEKERJA BARU UNTUK MENINGKATKAN KEPUASAN KERJA DI KALANGAN PEKERJA UAE

ABSTRAK

Kepuasan bekerja dalam kalangan pekerja sudah menjadi salah satu kunci kejayaan oleh semua bahagian pengurusan sumber manusia yang mana diakui menjadi elemen penting bagi sesebuah organisasi yang berjaya. Kepuasan pekerja kini meningkat kepentingannya yang mana persaingan untuk mendapatkan bakat yang terbaik masih meningkat. Pekerja yang tidak disantuni menyebabkan kepuasan kerja hilang yang mana membawa kepada peningkatan kadar berhenti kerja yang boleh merencatkan pembangunan organisasi. Walaubagaimanapun, sehingga kini, kajian berkenaan kepuasan bekerja dalam kalangan pekerja dengan pengurusan pekerja masih lagi terhad di UAE. Oleh itu, tujuan kajian ini dilaksanakan adalah bagi membangunkan model pengurusan pekerja untuk menambahbaik kepuasan kerja dalam kalangan pekerja di organisasi. Terdapat tiga objektif merangkumi kajian ini. Yang pertama adalah untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor pengurusan pekerja yang membawa kepada kepuasan kerja pekerja di organisasi. Kedua, adalah untuk membangunkan model pengurusan pekerja bagi menambahbaik kepuasan bekerja pekerja dan yang ketiga adalah untuk mengesahkan model yang dicadangkan bagi menambahbaik kepuasan kerja pekerja. Kajian ini mengadaptasi lakaran proses asas yang megandungi tiga fasa yang mana pertama adalah analisis, kedua adalah pembangunan model dan yang ketiga pengujian dan pengesahan model yang dibangunkan. Kajian ini dilaksanakan di UAE bersamaan anggaran sampel seramai 381 responden. Bagi membentuk model pengurusan kerja, data perlu dianalisis berdasarkan model regresi untuk menguji enam hipotesis. Hasil kajian menunjukkan hanya tiga faktor yang signifikan iaitu suasana kerja, kepimpinan dan penerimaan sokongan organisasi. Terdapat tiga faktor yang kurang signifikan iaitu latihan pembangunan, ganjaran dan gaji terhadap kepuasan bekerja bagi pekerja di organisasi. Berdasarkan pengujian hipotesis dan analisis, terdapat satu hubungan yang kuat antara model pengurusan pekerja dan kepuasan kerja pekerja dengan nilai-R 0.781 yang mengesahkan model yang dicadangkan. Secara keseluruhannya, model pengurusan pekerja yang dibangunkan boleh dijadikan panduan atau rujukan bagi sesebuah organisasid. Lebih-lebih lagi apabila pengurusan bekerja melibatkan suasana kerja, kepimpinan dan sokongan organisasi.

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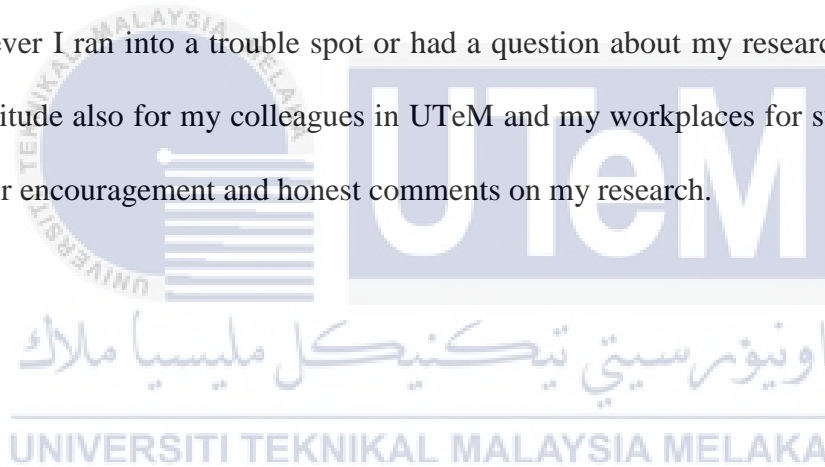


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

POS	-	Perceived Organizational Support
UGT	-	Use and Gratifying Theory
CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
PLS-PM	-	Partial Least-Squares Path Modelling
IT	-	Information Technology
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
OPR	-	Organization-Public Relationship
ERP	-	Explaining Company Resource Planning
HRD	-	Human Resources Development
SEM	-	Structural Equation Modelling
TAM	-	Technical Adoption Model
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
VIF	-	Variance Inflation Factor

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Ali Abdulla, N. A. (2020). The influence Factor of Individual Readiness for UAE Privatization. *Test Enginnering*, 24, 12476–12482.

Ali Abdulla, N. A., et al., (2024). The Conceptual Framework of Readiness for Change Towards Privatisation Job in Public Organization. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(7), 971–980.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This research aims to explore the intricate relationship between job engagement and employee satisfaction within the unique context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In a globalized world where the workforce is a cornerstone of organizational success, understanding the dynamics that drive job engagement and satisfaction is paramount. This exploration is particularly crucial in the context of the UAE, a nation characterized by rapid economic growth, diverse cultural influences, and a competitive job market.

The background of this study delves into the historical and contextual aspects of employee satisfaction within the UAE, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors that have shaped the work environment in the region. The problem statement articulates the specific challenges faced by organizations in ensuring employee satisfaction, setting the stage for the research questions that guide this study. These questions are carefully crafted to address the identified gaps in the existing literature, focusing on the nuances of job engagement and satisfaction in the UAE.

The research objectives outline the overarching goals of this study, emphasizing the need to unravel the complexities of job engagement and satisfaction within the UAE's unique sociocultural milieu. The research scope defines the boundaries within which this study operates, specifying the sectors, demographics, and organizational contexts that are included in the analysis.

Acknowledging the significance of this research is crucial, and this study aims to shed light on critical insights that can inform organizational policies, enhance managerial strategies, and contribute to the broader academic discourse. By clarifying key terms and concepts, this research ensures a shared understanding of the terminology used throughout the study. The organization of the research chapter provides a roadmap, outlining the structure of the subsequent chapters and how each section contributes to the overarching research objectives.

In conclusion, this chapter not only sets the stage for the comprehensive exploration that follows but also underscores the vital importance of understanding the relationship between job engagement and employee satisfaction in the UAE. Through a meticulous analysis of these factors, this research endeavors to offer valuable insights, fostering a workplace environment where employees are not only engaged but also satisfied, ultimately contributing to the success and growth of organizations in the UAE.

1.2 Research Background

In the highly competitive landscape of today's business world, the significance of cultivating enduring employee satisfaction cannot be overstated. Job contentment, characterized by a deep sense of fulfillment and enjoyment derived from one's work, not only propels high-quality contributions but also stands as a cornerstone for organizational productivity. Conversely, neglecting job satisfaction leads to diminished employee loyalty and elevated turnover rates, challenges that can undermine the foundation of any successful enterprise (Davidescu et al., 2020).

Employers and top management play pivotal roles akin to captains navigating a complex and dynamic journey. Their responsibilities extend far beyond mere decision-making; they are the architects of robust employee engagement, a factor intricately woven

into the fabric of a company's triumph. According to Gallup, organizations boasting highly engaged employees witness a remarkable 21% increase in profitability. Sun and Bunchapattanasakda (2019) underscore the tangible nature of employee engagement, which goes beyond abstract sentiments and encompasses concrete behaviors. Successful companies recognize the importance of engaging their workforce, conducting surveys, and offering incentives, thereby embedding employee involvement as a central element of their strategic framework. Engaged employees, distinguished by their passion, purpose, presence, and energy, epitomize the essence of positive job satisfaction (Suher, 2017). Moreover, employee commitment, serving as a precursor to job satisfaction, forms the bedrock of organizational performance. This understanding aligns seamlessly with established research findings, enriching the landscape of job satisfaction literature (Idris et al., 2018).

In this study, the spotlight is firmly set on the public sector, delving into the intricate interplay of employee engagement and job satisfaction within governmental organizations. The distinctive challenges faced by the public sector necessitate a nuanced approach. By narrowing the focus to this specific domain, the research endeavors to provide targeted insights and pragmatic recommendations. The goal is not only to deepen the understanding of the unique dynamics shaping employee satisfaction in the public sector but also to shed light on effective employee engagement strategies tailored specifically to governmental contexts

The study seeks to contribute substantively to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the multifaceted nature of employee engagement within public sector organizations. By dissecting the components of job satisfaction and engagement, the research aims to uncover actionable insights that can empower governmental entities to enhance their organizational effectiveness. In doing so, this study endeavors to offer practical

solutions and valuable perspectives that can drive positive change in the public sector's work environments, fostering greater job satisfaction and overall productivity.

1.3 Problem Statement

The intensifying competition for talent in the UAE's job market has placed employee satisfaction at the epicenter of concerns for companies within this Gulf Cooperation Council nation. Emphasizing the nation's dedication to stability, security, and prosperity, the UAE's Vision 2021 report articulates a comprehensive approach to sustainable development. This approach encompasses economic, cultural, environmental, and social factors, underscoring the need for a seamless integration of these elements. Traditionally, companies have heavily relied on financial incentives such as wages and benefits to augment their competitiveness. However, a staggering revelation by the UAE cabinet has laid bare a significant challenge: a staggering 21% employee turnover rate (Harhara, Singh and Hussain, 2015), intensifying the urgency for organizations to retain their skilled workforce.

In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the landscape of employee satisfaction and turnover in the UAE (Moussa and Ali, 2022). The sudden shift to remote work, coupled with economic uncertainties, highlighted the need for a more nuanced approach to employee well-being. The pandemic underscored the importance of holistic strategies that incorporate a positive work environment, continuous training, effective leadership, fair compensation, and robust organizational support. Organizations that embraced these elements not only navigated the challenges presented by the pandemic effectively but also demonstrated resilience, setting the stage for sustainable success in the post-pandemic era, aligning seamlessly with the objectives outlined in the UAE's Vision 2021 report.

Despite diligent efforts to discern the reasons behind employee departures, voluntary turnovers, and promotion decisions, a pervasive issue continues to plague UAE organizations low job satisfaction among their employees (Al Mazrouei and Bakri, 2023). This persistent problem can be attributed to the absence of effective employee engagement strategies. While offering high wages is a common tactic employed by UAE organizations, it is crucial to recognize that job satisfaction transcends financial rewards. Employees invest a substantial portion of their lives in their jobs and aspire for fulfillment beyond mere monetary compensation (Hijazi, Kasim and Daud, 2017). Meaningful engagement, which involves employees in challenging projects, provides incentives, and nurtures a supportive, low-stress environment, are indispensable factors that empower employees to make significant contributions to a company's success (Sopiah et al., 2020).

In the midst of this challenge, there exists a substantial gap in the UAE's research landscape. Many studies tend to overlook a critical dimension employee engagement attributes (Al Nuaimi, 2020). These attributes, encompassing a positive work environment, continuous training, effective leadership (Alshehhi, Abuelhassan and Nusari, 2019), fair compensation (Abdelwahed, Soomro and Shah, 2023), and robust organizational support (Ababneh, 2020), significantly influence employees' contentment (Allen, Shore and Griffeth, 2003). It is because a positive work environment, continuous training opportunities, effective leadership, fair compensation, and robust organizational support are integral elements that profoundly influence employees' contentment. A supportive workplace, where employees are treated with respect and have a healthy work-life balance, fosters a sense of belonging and security, enhancing their motivation and creativity. Continuous training not only keeps employees updated but also demonstrates the organization's investment in their professional growth, boosting confidence and job satisfaction (Udin, Dananjoyo and Isalman, 2022). Effective leadership provides clear guidance, recognition, and mentorship,

creating a culture of trust and collaboration. Fair compensation, coupled with transparent performance appraisals and comprehensive benefits, ensures that employees feel valued, enhancing morale and loyalty. Robust organizational support, including efficient policies and a responsive HR department, signifies that the company cares about employees' well-being, fostering a sense of stability and contentment (Alosani, Yusoff and Al-Dhaafri, 2020). Together, these factors create an environment where employees are not just satisfied but deeply engaged, leading to increased productivity, creativity, and long-term organizational success.

While existing studies, such as the works of Al Nuaimi, (2020), Mehmood et al. (2023), recognize the importance of these factors, past studies have often discussed these elements in isolation, lacking a comprehensive model tailored specifically for the UAE. Addressing this research gap is not just essential; it's imperative for UAE organizations striving to create a workplace environment where employees not only stay but also flourish. By comprehensively understanding the intricate interplay of these engagement attributes and their profound impact on overall job satisfaction, organizations can design meticulously tailored strategies. These strategies, firmly grounded in empirical research, have the potential to nurture an environment where employees are not just content but deeply engaged. This heightened engagement, in turn, translates into increased productivity, a culture of innovation, and enduring success in the long run, establishing a benchmark for workplaces not just in the UAE but globally.

1.4 Research Questions

To tackle out the research gaps, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. What is the medium of employee engagement to enhance the employees' job satisfaction within the organization?

- ii. How can an employee engagement model be designed to enhance the employees' job satisfaction within the organization?
- iii. How can the proposed model be evaluated in improving employee satisfaction?

1.5 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to propose a new employee empowerment model for enhancing employee's job satisfaction of the organization. Basically, our research aimed to achieve the following objectives :

- i. To determine the medium of employee engagement aimed at enhancing employees' job satisfaction within the organization.
- ii. To develop an employee engagement model tailored to enhance employees' job satisfaction within the organization.
- iii. To evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed model in improving employee satisfaction within the organization.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis conducted based on the literature findings which in line with the first objective of the research. The hypothesis formulated are:

- i. There is a significant relationship between working environment and employee's job satisfaction
- ii. There is a significant relationship between training development and employee's job satisfaction
- iii. There is a significant relationship leadership and employee's job satisfaction.
- iv. There is a significant relationship between rewards or recognition and employee's job satisfaction.

- v. There is a significant relationship between salary and employee's job satisfaction.
- vi. There is a significant relationship between perceived organization support and employee's job satisfaction.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of Study

The primary focus of this research is to explore employee job satisfaction within the organization and understand how employee engagement contributes to enhancing overall job satisfaction. Specifically, the research aims to investigate the impact of employee empowerment strategies on organizational profitability and stability through the lens of employee job satisfaction. While the population of public employees in Abu Dhabi's intelligent government sector is large, the practical constraints of comprehensively surveying all individuals necessitate a sample size that suits the research objectives. However, not all employees are eligible to provide comprehensive responses to the research questions. Therefore, the sample was deliberately selected from the unit level, encompassing managers and executives directly engaged in intelligent government initiatives. The criteria for sample selection align with the research questions and are grounded in evidence from the existing literature. It is imperative to acknowledge that the scope of this research is delimited by the constraints inherent in the sample size and selection criteria, emphasizing the need to generalize findings within these specified parameters.

1.8 Significant of Study

In the context of exploring the relationship between employee engagement and employee satisfaction in the UAE, this research will significantly contribute to the existing body of knowledge. By delving into the intricate dynamics of holistic employee engagement