

# Organisational Practices and Employee Engagement: A Case of a Malaysia Semiconductor Manufacturing Company

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## Abstract

Employee engagement at the workplace has been a significant discussion among researchers and academicians. Most companies believe that employee engagement is the primary concern because employee engagement can positively impact their organisations. Many factors contributed to the employee engagement rate, coming from both the employer and the employees. One of the essential contributions to Malaysia's GDP is in the manufacturing sector. Therefore, to better understand this industry, the employee engagement of this sector needed to be studied. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of organisational practices on employee engagement based on 76 sample respondents of a semiconductor manufacturing company based in Melaka, Malaysia. This paper uses a survey, SPSS and multiple regression analysis. The three dimensions of organisational practices, namely organisational culture, leadership style and compensation, explained 50.8 per cent of the variance in employee engagement. This study also evidences the significant relationship between organisational practices and employee engagement. This study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the important influence of organisational practices on employee engagement in a semiconductor manufacturing company. The management may use the findings to enhance organisational practices that lead to more engaged employees.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Organisational Culture, Leadership Style, Compensation, Manufacturing

## Introduction

Employee engagement is very important in every organisation. It seems necessary to learn information about employee engagement and develop a culture of engagement in a long-term and sustainable manner (Mansoor & Hassan, 2016). It shows that employee engagement is critical in every organisation and steps necessary to improve employee engagement among the workers at the workplace.

Employee engagement is an emotional investment of the workers towards their organisations, such as passion, involvement and motivation that employees bring to work

(Lalwani, 2020). All of these investments play essential parts in determining the employees' goals in working. Engaged employees need to identify that their goals and the organisations' goals are always aligned together. Every employee is the average individual who works with others to ensure the company is safe, efficient and prosperous. For example, Sousa (2015) illustrates that the brain (leadership) has more performance improvement resources at its fingertips to anticipate and boost interaction patterns. Therefore, the engagement needs to align between the brain (leadership) and the muscle (workers) for the worker's emotional benefits and performance.

Based on the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2019), the total number of employees engaged in the manufacturing sector for June 2019 was 1.08 million, an increase of 1.1 per cent or 11,668 employees from 1.07 million employees previously. This statistic shows a good impact because the number of employees engaged had increased only by a small percentage. Manufacturing is a fast developing industry, where the manufacturers will always encounter new problems and concerns every year (Lee et al., 2019). Indeed, some earlier studies have mentioned that leadership style, organisational culture, and compensation also play crucial roles in influencing employee engagement (Karthikeyan, Devi & Mirudhubashini, 2013).

All employers, especially manufacturing companies, should be alert about this employee engagement issue because the outcomes from their engagement can positively impact their organisations, such as employee loyalty and performing well when doing their tasks. For this reason, this study seeks to provide information on the organisational practices affecting employee engagement at the workplace in a semiconductor manufacturing company. Thus, this study examines the relationship between leadership style, organisational culture, compensation, and employee engagement.

### **Literature Review**

This study focuses on the factors affecting employee engagement among workers at the workplace. Three major factors affect employee engagement in an organisation. The first is leadership style. According to Lowe (2012), employee engagement, a by-product of leadership, is improved when the leader has a direct relationship with the employees. Secondly, organisational culture is one of the factors affecting employee engagement at the workplace. According to Sihombing & Liswandi (2019), organisational culture has an important impact on employee engagement. Lastly is compensation, such as reward and recognition. According to Haines III & St-Onge (2012), employee engagement and performance are directly affected by rewards and recognition.

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement concerns the employee's positive attitude or level of commitment and involvement to the organisation and its value (Shamila, 2013). It is about employees' positive feelings towards their jobs that motivate them to put more effort into their work (Sadiqe, 2014). At the moment, most organisations try to engage their workers and change how they manage their workers. Companies cannot survive for a long period without high levels of engagement from their workers. According to Molner (2020), engaged employees are more likely to remain with their current organisations.

Employee engagement is a feeling of employees' emotional commitment to the organisations and their actions to ensure that the organisations are successful; employees bound to the companies show concern, dedication, a spirit of accountability, and focus on results (Allen, 2014). All the company goals are achieved without difficulty when all the

workers have good employee engagement. It is because they complete every task successfully and adequately. Employee participation can be one of the reasons for employee engagement, but it does not guarantee that the workers engage among themselves.

Furthermore, top management can engage their workers, especially younger workers, by giving monetary compensation. Because of a lack of monetary compensation, younger workers leave their organisations even if the occupation is consistent with their needs and desires (Butler, Brennan-Ing, Wardamasky, & Ashley, 2014). Moreover, organisations that have greater employee engagement automatically have greater profits. Organisations with highly engaged employees experience increased customer satisfaction, profits and employee productivity (Ahmetoglu et al., 2015; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2014; Vandenabeele et al., 2011).

Employee engagement is also known as employee's operational excellence (Devi, 2009; Scott et al., 2010). Employees' commitment levels will always be high with their current organisations when they are highly satisfied with their working environments. Most of the research has shown results indicating that lower levels of engagement will have lower efficiency and effectiveness of the organisations (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Due to this, low levels of engagement in the organisation becomes a bristly challenge for the employers.

### **Leadership Style**

Good leadership offers employee growth, vision and direction (Souba, 2011). They know their responsibilities and take the employee engagement issue as an important thing to achieve organisational goals. In addition, communication has an important part to play in employee engagement (Welch, 2012). Leadership style will be effective when there is good communication between the leader and the employees in the workplace. According to Nichols & Erakovich (2013), ensuring work engagement and empowerment plays a significant role in employee involvement. Both parties, the leader and employee, must play their good parts because it will automatically lead to employee involvement and engagement.

Furthermore, Fehr & Gelfand (2012) implies that an organisation's culture includes the core values, beliefs, and standards of its leader. Therefore, leaders need to create an environment where all workers feel appreciated and engaged among themselves at the workplace. Leaders shape culture by embracing core organisational principles and creating a supportive atmosphere for effective communication and employee engagement (Men & Stacks, 2013). Leaders influence to connect emotionally with their workers, depending on their leadership abilities.

On the other hand, leadership style needs to be improved daily to ensure their workers are engaged to maintain performance and achieve organisational goals. Business leaders must engage their employees to make or keep their profits (Kortmann, Gelhard, Zimmermann, & Piller, 2014). It shows that the bond between employees and leaders is essential for employee engagement and increased organisational profits.

Hence, this is one of the factors that affect employee engagement at the workplace. A study was undertaken by Nichols & Erakovich (2013) in which they state that leaders who are authentic influence the engagement of their employees. According to this statement above, the leadership style in every organisation plays an important role to achieve employee engagement among their workers. It is because a good leader can lead the employees to engage when doing their jobs. Therefore, there is a relationship between employee engagements based on leadership style.

H1: There is a significant relationship between leadership style and employee engagement.

**Organizational Culture**

Based on Sihombing & Liswandi (2019), organisational culture is a system in which members recognise the meaning that distinguishes one organisation from other organisations. The distinguishing value that the workers hold should be collectively understandable to the veterans and the company's new leaves. It is due to the culture of the company changing unpredictably, according to the top management.

Organisations must provide a psychologically safe workplace to improve employee engagement (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). All organisations need to develop training and development programs that are aimed at skills to influence employee engagement. Service training increases engagement and directly affects profits (Granatino et al., 2013).

On the other hand, how an individual feels satisfied and enthusiastic in work-related activities fosters employee engagement (Nasomboon, 2014). If the organisation provides an excellent organisational culture, the employees will automatically work under good working conditions. Furthermore, good employee engagement depends on how well workers get along, communicate and participate in the work environment (Lyons & Mattare, 2011). Thus, if organisations want to have a strong employee engagement, they need to involve themselves directly with the activities that provide a strong bond between the employees and the employer.

Next, according to (Haque & Aslam, 2011), the elements of trust and justice are important in creating a pleasant work environment that ultimately enhances employee engagement. Other than bonding, the aspects of trust and fairness are also important in having good employee engagement. Thus, without trust between the employee and the employer, some employees might feel hard-pressed to open up about their work performance problems.

In addition, to create a positive social-emotional working environment, positive feedback is a factor (Atwater et al., 2007). They stated that an effective feedback system within an organisation would maintain trust between the company and its employees, provide support, and be responsive to employee discrepancies that may help improve and strengthen employee engagement.

According to Sihombing & Liswandi (2019), organisational culture has a significant influence on employee engagement. Thus, organisational culture could be one of the factors that affect employee engagement at the workplace. Therefore, there is a relationship between employee engagement based on organisational culture.

H2: There is a significant relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement.

**Compensation**

Predominantly, compensation falls into two parts, which are financial and non-financial. Financial compensation includes pay, wages, salary, allowances or other benefits which involve the direct capital payment to employees. In contrast, non-financial consists of the benefits voluntarily given by organisations indirectly to the employees, such as dental care, vacation leave, retirement scheme, and insurance (Rashid et al., 2011). Next, compensation would play an important role in attracting and managing an employee's satisfaction (Patnaik & Padhi, 2012). Therefore, compensation can be a tool to engage employees based on their job performances to assess employee performance. When employers reward workers, a sense of indebtedness develops, promoting loyalty and commitment (Sanneh & Taj, 2015).

On the other hand, there are two main monetary incentives: pay rise and stock option. Pay-for-performance incentives will differ across management levels according to their responsibilities and are structured to motivate every employee (Chung et al., 2008). The proper administration of compensation systems, such as pay rise, would positively affect employee engagement. It acts as a strong motivator to improve the efforts and performances of the employees (Frey et al., 2013). However, stock options compensate employees for joint performance improvements and, therefore, employees can share the rewards only by making more extraordinary efforts (Hochberg & Lindsey, 2010).

It takes flexibility, intrinsic incentives and power to achieve employee engagement (Bolman & Deal, 2014). Competency and recognition are encouraged when leaders provide opportunities for employees to communicate problems they may experience or provide input on workplace operations (Hsieh, Lin & Lee, 2012). Better rewards and recognition systems in the organisation will create harmony and a sense of work enjoyment.

This study also investigates the relationship between compensation and employee engagement. Hence, compensation is one factor that affects employee engagement at the workplace; thus, a relationship between employee engagement based on compensation can be a hypothesis.

H3: There is a significant relationship between compensation and employee engagement.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study uses descriptive research to study the factors affecting employee engagement among employees at the workplace. Furthermore, the type of investigation is correlational because three independent variables indicate the factors affecting employee engagement among employees at the workplace, namely leadership style, organisational culture and compensation. In addition, the extent of researcher interference is minimal, and the time horizon in this study is cross-sectional. The unit of analysis of this study is the employee.

### **Population and Sampling**

In this study, the referred population comprises 93 employees from a semiconductor manufacturing company in Melaka, Malaysia. From the 93 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 76 questionnaires were received. This study used the quota sampling technique of non-probability sampling. The result's accuracy is not affected or interfered due all the respondents were from the selected population.

This research used a questionnaire. The variables in the questionnaire are a close-ended set of questions and are analysed using statistical and numerical methods called The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22. The questionnaire form was designed in Google Form since most employees prefer to answer the questionnaire online. The researchers had sent out an email to all employees in the company. The researchers did a follow-up by reminding them to submit the questionnaire.

The questionnaire prepared in this research consists of five categories, namely, A, B, C, D and E and there is a total of 32 items altogether. Section A consists of the respondent's profile; sections B, C and D cover the independent variables of leadership, organisational culture and compensation, respectively. Section E comprises questions regarding the dependent variable of this research, which is Employee Engagement. Sections B to E use a 5-

point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), adapted from previous research.

### Findings

Table 1 shows Cronbach's Alpha values, which proved that all the items are reliable to present the particular variables in this research. Henceforth, the items are appropriate to be used to express the variables.

Table 1

*Result of Reliability Analysis*

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Leadership	7	0.845	Good
Organisational Culture	8	0.796	Moderate
Compensation	5	0.821	Good
Employee Engagement	8	0.867	Good

Table 2 displays the profiles of the survey respondents. More than half of the survey respondents are female (52.6%), and the balance of 47.4% are male. Other than that, most of the respondents aged below 25 years old (52.6%); meanwhile, the other survey respondents are as follows: aged between 25-30 years old (20 respondents- 26.3%), ages ranging from 31-36 years (13.2%) and only 7.9% of the respondents are 43 years old and above. It also indicates that this company has 40 employees with less than two years' experience, two up to five years' experience consisting of 16 employees and six up to 9 years also composed of 12 workers. This company also has eight loyal employees who have worked for more than ten years in the organisation. In addition, most of the employees in this company are diploma holders (47.4%) and degree holders (39.5%). There is only 1% having education levels above the degree level, and 9% are from the secondary level only. The secondary level consists of those mainly from the production line, who work based on experience. Furthermore, most of the workers in the organisation are Malay workers (77.6%) and Chinese workers (21.1%). Surprisingly, there is only one Indian (1.3%) worker in this organisation. Additionally, in terms of marital status, most of the respondents are single, which indicates 69.7% of the respondents' total, while the rest are married at 30.3%.

Table 2

*Result of Descriptive Analy*

Item	Label	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	40	52.6
	Male	36	47.4
Age	Below 25 Years	40	52.6
	25-30 Years	20	26.3
	31-36 Years	10	13.2
	43 Years and Above	6	7.9
Years of Experience	Less than 2 Years	40	52.6
	2 to 5 Years	16	21.1
	6 to 9 Years	12	15.8
	10 Years and Above	8	10.5
Education Level	Secondary	9	11.8
	Diploma	36	47.4
	Bachelor	30	39.5
	Above Degree Level	1	1.3
Race	Malay	59	77.6
	Chinese	116	21.1
	Indian	1	1.3
Marital Status	Single	53	69.7
	Married	23	30.3

Table 3 illustrates the strength of the associations between the independent variables and the dependent variable. For this study, all those independent variables are significant with the dependent variable, which is employee engagement. In addition, leadership style, organisational culture and compensation show that the strength of the association is moderate as it portrays ( $r=0.620$ ), ( $r=0.653$ ) and ( $r=0.511$ ), respectively. Thus, all the independent variables have significant correlations and moderate associations with employee engagement as the dependent variable for this study.

Table 3

*Pearson Correlation*

	Employee Engagement	Leadership Style	Organisation Culture	Compensation
Employee Engagement				
Leadership Style	0.620**			
Organisational Culture	0.653	0.713**		
Compensation	0.511**	0.424**	0.521**	

Table 4 shows that the results show an F-value of 24.799 with a significance value of 0.000. It means that the model is statistically fit and significant. However, the R-Square result indicates a value of  $R^2=0.508$ . Thus, this means that all three independent variables in this study: leadership style, organisational culture and compensation, explains 50.8% of the variance in the dependent variable. The remaining 49.2% of the variance in the dependent variables is unexplained, or other independent variables and factors are not examined in this study.

Table 4

*Result of Multiple Regression*

<b>Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement</b>			
Independent Variables	Standardised (BETA)	Coefficient	Sig.
Leadership Style	0.292		0.42
Organisational Culture	0.335		0.016
Compensation	0.213		0.009
F-Value	24.799		
R-Square	0.508		

The result for leadership style, the first independent variable for this study, is 0.016 (1.6%), below the 5% significance level. Therefore, the leadership style variable is significant. Hence, leadership style is positively related to employee engagement. Furthermore, the result for organisational culture, the second variable, is 0.009(0.9%), below the 5% significance level. Therefore, the organisational culture variable is significant and positively related to employee engagement. In addition, the result for compensation, which is the last independent variable for this variable, is 0.032 (3.2%), which is below the 5% significance level. Hence, the compensation variable is significant and positively related to employee engagement.

The beta uses the standard unit for all the variables in the equation and indicates the same as the unstandardised beta value expressed as the standard deviation. By referring to Table 4, as leadership style increases by one standard deviation, employee engagement increases by 0.292 of a standard deviation. Next, as organisational culture increases by one



standard deviation, employee engagement increases by 0.335. Moreover, as compensation increases by one standard deviation, employee engagement increases by 0.213 of a standard deviation. Therefore, the most important and strongest independent variable would be organisational culture, as the magnitude of the corresponding standardised coefficient is the largest, with a beta weight of 0.335. The second important variable in this study is the leadership style variable, with a beta weight of 0.292. The third would be the compensation variable with a beta weight of 0.213.

There are three hypotheses, namely H1, H2 and H3, tested for this study. Based on the multiple linear regression, there are significant relationships among the predictors, namely leadership style, organisational culture and compensation, with employee engagement at a significant level below 0.05. Hence, these hypotheses have been supported, and the results are summarised in Table 5. Based on the analysis from this research, it has been revealed that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and employee engagement. In addition, there is a significant relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement. Also, there is a significant relationship between compensation and employee engagement. Therefore, this shows that all the hypotheses are accepted in this research.

Table 5

*Hypothesis Summary*

<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Statement of Hypotheses</b>	<b>Result</b>
H1	There is a significant relationship between leadership style and employee engagement.	ACCEPTED
H2	There is a significant relationship between organisational culture and employee engagement.	ACCEPTED
H3	There is a significant relationship between compensation style and employee engagement.	ACCEPTED

In summary, the items used are reliable as most of the Cronbach's Alpha values are in a good range. Hence, the hypotheses testing of all the independent variables have been accepted with associations among the variables, which are leadership style ( $r=0.620$ ), organisational culture ( $r=0.653$ ) and compensation ( $r=0.511$ ), even though the associations are moderate. In the regression analysis, organisational culture seems to have the strongest beta value, indicating a value of 0.335. Hence, it has become the most influential independent variable towards employee engagement in this semiconductor manufacturing company.

**Conclusion**

Based on the results, all three factors have significant relationships with employee engagement. Firstly, previous research has stated that a good leadership style can create an environment where all the workers feel appreciated and engaged (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). Therefore, a good leadership style in the organisation is very important for the workers to enhance their employee engagement at the workplace.

Moreover, this study has also found that organisational culture influences employee engagement among workers. Parent & Lovelace (2015) clarify that building employee engagement calls for many dimensions of a progressive organisational culture. In conclusion,

good culture and environment in the workplace can lead to good employee engagement among the workers, who can work efficiently.

Furthermore, this research has also found that compensation has a positive influence on employee engagement. Inayat (2018) described compensation as a positive predictor of employee engagement while role fit and availability of adequate resources are positive for meaningfulness and psychological availability. Therefore, employees can feel appreciated and engaged among themselves when they get fair rewards and recognition.

### **Limitations of Study**

There were a few limitations that occurred during the process of conducting this study. Firstly, this research was conducted in only one organisation which was a semiconductor manufacturing company. Thus, the outcomes may not represent the views and perceptions of all employees and employers about employee engagement. It is because the sample that had been used only focused on a specific factory. Hence, this research could be expanded to more respondents to gain more accurate research outcomes.

Secondly, the limitation of this research can be seen with the variables. The researcher only indicated three independent variables: leadership style, organisational culture, and compensation, verified with employee engagement. Other variables could also be tested to predict factors affecting employee engagement at the workplace.

### **Recommendations**

Future researchers need to research other independent variables regarding the factors affecting employee engagement at the workplace. There are more independent variables that can support the dependent variable. One of the independent variables is learning and development, which can be seen in the study by (Mansoor & Hassan, 2016). They stated that learning and development is a key strategy to improve workforce capabilities and competencies to sustain successful organisations. Then, learning and development can improve employee confidence, morale and efficiency, building the capability to take added responsibility, boosting career progression resulting in financial gain. A study conducted by Mansoor & Hassan (2016) indicates that learning and development positively affect employee engagement.

Furthermore, organisational policies can also be viewed as one of the independent variables. A study undertaken by Gupta et al (2015) states that organisational policies positively affect employee engagement. Organisational policies are a key factor for employee engagement because this variable consists of the leaders' rules, regulations, and frameworks. When the organisation has an excellent organisational policy, employee engagement can automatically exist and improve day by day at the workplace.

Another recommendation is in regards to the predictors of employee engagement. Firstly, creating a better work-life balance is very important because it can impact employees' physical, mental and emotional health. Even from observations of (Larasati & Hasanati, 2019), they identify that organisations need to provide more benefits for their workers. Their top management needs to develop other exciting benefits and work-life balance. Thus, this enhances employees' motivation and automatically increases employee engagement among them at the workplace.

In addition, it is recommended to top management and leaders have high leadership skills to handle their workers. Leadership style is one important variable regarding employee engagement. Such that, members of the top management need to improve and ensure that

their leadership skills are good enough to manage and control their workers. When leaders can create good leadership strategies, the planning can be planned without significant errors or changes (Schooley, 2019). All the organisations want to reach the maximum results for their companies. Most organisation leaders plan to enhance productivity and profitability. Not to be forgotten, a high employee engagement rate needs to be one of the organisation's goals to be achieved by the end of each year of operation.

In conclusion, this study has successfully explored and determined the relationships among three main independent variables. The three independent variables were leadership style, organisational culture and compensation, and the dependent variable was employee engagement. By analysing the findings based on this study, it was also revealed that leadership style, organisational culture and compensation influenced employee engagement in this semiconductor manufacturing company.

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