

Mediating Role of Top Management Support Between Intrinsic Motivation Factors Towards Employee Engagement in Oman's Private Universities

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Abstract

Employee engagement has recently been a popular topic in business and management research. Current research connecting the concepts of employee motivation and engagement has focused on survey analysis and the employee perspective, investigating the factors that are important to employees in their engagement at work. This study aims to develop a deeper understanding of how top management in Oman's private universities perceives intrinsic motivation's influence on employee engagement. The study focuses on administrative employees in eight private universities in Oman, with an estimated data-gathering sample of 371. The PLS-SEM method was used to explore the relationship between the variables. According to the results, all proposed hypotheses were significantly accepted. This research contributes to the body of knowledge on employee engagement by providing empirical evidence that can be used to improve the performance of private universities in Oman. Additionally, the study's methodology can be applied by modifying the variables used to assess employee engagement improvement and success.

Keywords: *Top Management Support, Employee Engagement, Intrinsic Motivation, Relationships with Co-Workers, Employee Well-Being.*

Introduction

Over the past decade, Oman has witnessed significant growth in its private higher education sector, with the number of private universities increasing from one in 2005 to over 50 in 2020 (Agha, 2017). This growth has been driven by both public and private initiatives, such as the Ministry of Higher Education's commitment to establishing a world-class higher education system and the interest of private investors in establishing new universities (Kruss et al., 2015). The government is heavily investing in the private higher education sector to achieve its goal of becoming a knowledge-based economy. This includes establishing regulatory frameworks, improving education quality, providing financial support, and promoting collaboration between the public and private sectors. Furthermore, the government is working on enhancing research and educational facilities, funding faculty development, and investing in educational technology (George, 2006).

Despite this growth, the private higher education sector in Oman still faces challenges in effectively managing employees and ensuring high levels of workplace satisfaction and productivity (Mustafa at al., 2021). Employee engagement rates are low, leading to decreased motivation and performance (Hassanein & Özgit, 2022). Therefore, addressing this issue is crucial for the long-term success and sustainability of private universities in Oman.

To overcome these challenges, it is important to cultivate a culture of employee engagement within private universities. This can be achieved by encouraging creativity, initiative, and the open sharing of ideas. Effective communication and feedback systems should be implemented, along with resources for training and development (Lee & Kwak, 2012). Tailored solutions should be developed based on employees' needs, and technology can be utilised for monitoring and feedback. Employers should provide meaningful work, a positive working environment, career development opportunities, and recognition (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Additionally, understanding and promoting employee motivation through autonomy and self-drive is crucial. Providing training and development opportunities will help employees feel valued, ultimately

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increasing their commitment and engagement (Moulik & Giri, 2022). Overall, fostering an environment of intrinsic motivation is essential for the long-term success of private universities in Oman.

Although the impact of employee motivation on organisational productivity and dedication has been well-documented, there is limited research on the interaction between intrinsic variables and employee engagement (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). This study aims to explore the perspectives of top management on the impact of intrinsic motivation on employee engagement in the private higher education sector in Oman. Understanding these factors is important for improving employee engagement and retention in the sector.

To foster an environment where employees have a sense of purpose and meaning in their work, top management should actively listen to employees, take their feedback seriously, provide opportunities for learning and growth, and implement employee recognition and rewards programs. Additionally, meaningful communication, trust, and collaboration should be encouraged. By doing so, employees will feel more invested in their work, leading to increased motivation and productivity. This study examines the role of top management support in influencing employee engagement and how it affects intrinsic motivation. The findings can have practical implications for managers in various industries, helping them identify sources of intrinsic motivation and develop strategies to promote employee engagement.

The study will use quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. The results will contribute to a better understanding of employee engagement in Oman's private higher education sector and provide valuable insights for managers in these universities.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is gaining importance among HR administrators, corporate leaders, and academics (Ahmed et al., 2023; Eldor & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017; Holland, Cooper, & Sheehan, 2017; Shuck et al., 2017). The concept of employee engagement was introduced by Kahn (1990), who defined it as employees who feel connected to their colleagues and bosses, work diligently, and are enthusiastic about achieving organisational goals. Kahn identified three factors that influence employee engagement: feeling at home at work, having access to necessary resources, and finding value in their work (Kahn, 1990). Other researchers have described engaged employees as those who contribute both physically and mentally to the company's success. They are emotionally invested, enjoy their work, and come up with innovative ideas to break the routine (Ganapathy-Coleman, 2020). Engaged employees also demonstrate dedication, morale, teamwork, and focus on their tasks (Byrne et al., 2016; Saks, 2019; Tillott et al., 2013). According to most definitions, employee engagement is a positive state of mind characterised by engagement and absorption in one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2002). It has been found to positively impact individual job outcomes and a negative impact on attrition risk. In recent years, researchers have shown increased interest in studying employee engagement due to its potential influence on organisational efficiency and success (Smith & Macko, 2014; Alenzi et al., 2022). However, the focus on organisational success has sometimes led to confusion with other workplace behaviours, such as loyalty and happiness (Shuck et al., 2017). Overall, employee engagement is crucial to an organisation's success, and research has focused on understanding its antecedents and influencing factors. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute to organisational goals and demonstrate increased productivity and adaptability (Hicks & Knies, 2015).

This study concluded that employee engagement in private universities in Oman is a complex issue influenced by various factors. Recently, Omani universities have emphasised employee engagement as a crucial element in their strategy to create a high-performing educational institution. They recognise its significance in achieving organisational goals and fostering collaboration, creativity, and innovation. Effective employee engagement strategies typically involve empowering employees, promoting ownership and accountability, and providing effective leadership. Universities must also prioritise job satisfaction, compensation, and benefits while creating a supportive and appreciative environment that values employees' contributions. Additionally, universities should ensure that the physical and social working environment fosters productivity, creativity, and collaboration, with ample space, facilities, and resources.

University management must continuously put effort into sustaining employee engagement to ensure motivated and productive employees, ultimately fulfilling the institution's educational mission.

Top Management Support

Numerous researchers have examined the concept of "top management support," and it is widely acknowledged as one of the most critical factors for organisational progress (Hung et al., 2010). Top management support refers to the endorsement and involvement of the highest-ranking executives in initiatives and implementing strategies (Garrett Jr & Neubaum, 2013).

Flynn et al. (1995) and Powell (1995) assert that top management involvement is crucial as it significantly impacts the overall strategic direction of the organisation (Flynn et al., 1995; Powell, 1995). In recent scholarly literature, the importance of top management support has been further emphasised. According to the prevailing opinion, top management support needs to be demonstrated and communicated actively by sharing the organisation's goals and vision within the company (Demirbag et al., 2006; Fotopoulos & Psomas, 2009; Turkeyilmaz et al., 2010). Managers should also focus on aligning quality goals with the vision, establishing a quality and performance development culture, and reducing resistance to change. Top management holds the most crucial decision-making position within the organisation. Moreover, it is critical to create a conducive learning and working environment (Noe & Wilk, 1993). Top management is responsible for cascading the organisation's vision to all employees, allocating budgetary resources for educational activities, and inspiring employees to innovate and solve problems (Al Shaar et al., 2015; Umble et al., 2003).

Several previous studies have highlighted the success of organisations due to effective top management support. For instance, Young and Jordan (2008) concluded that top management support is the most significant critical success factor in project success (Young & Jordan, 2008). This finding is also supported by Feng and Zhao (2014), who studied manufacturing organisations in China and highlighted the essential role played by top management support in improving supply chain management (Feng & Zhao, 2014). Similarly, Yunus et al. (2016) found that top management support is crucial in achieving the vision of public-private organisations in Klang Valley, Malaysia. This study demonstrates that adequate top management support facilitates change communication and focuses on attaining the desired vision. Therefore, this study aligns with the belief in the importance of effective top management support in determining an organisation's successful marketing strategy (Yunus et al., 2016).

Top management refers to the highest-ranking executives in positions such as chairman, chief executive officer, managing director, and similar roles. They are responsible for overseeing the entire organisation. Numerous studies have examined the roles of top management and its support in business success. In China, top management actively encourages employees to conserve energy in various industries such as mining, petroleum processing, chemical product manufacturing, general machinery manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade (Zhang et al., 2018).

Yang and Zhang (2018) define top management support as the belief held by top management that customer relationships are highly important, exchanging and communicating valuable knowledge with customers is vital to the enterprise, and additional resources are readily provided when needed. This research focuses mainly on the software, machinery, and transportation product industries in various countries, including Brazil, China, Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Taiwan.

Hsu et al. (2018) explain top management support as having a clear focus on tasks and objectives, actively participating in the execution of tasks to ensure success, contributing ideas to tasks, and valuing positive employee feedback. This research addresses information technology (IT) organisations, computer and peripheral industries, semiconductors, photonics, electronic components, telecommunications, and network equipment companies in Taiwan explicitly (Hsu et al., 2019).

This study concludes that top management support is crucial for the success of any organisation. In private universities in Oman, top management support acts as a mediator between the university's academic operations and its external stakeholders, such as students, faculty, and employers. It ensures the university runs efficiently by providing resources and support for academic initiatives and promoting its vision and mission. Top management support is essential in meeting the university's academic goals and objectives. This involves setting and monitoring academic standards, developing curriculum and assessment tools, and ensuring all faculty and staff collaborate to achieve the university's goals. Additionally, top management supports the university's mission to create a conducive learning environment for student success.

Moreover, top management support addresses the needs of external stakeholders. This includes assisting faculty and staff in research projects, pursuing grants and funding opportunities, and engaging in collaborative initiatives with employers to develop relevant curricula. Additionally, top management gives students a platform to voice their opinions and contribute to the university's overall success. Ultimately, top management support is necessary for successfully implementing strategic plans. It ensures the proper allocation of resources and the timely achievement of goals. Top management also collaborates with external stakeholders to meet their requirements and provide the best possible education for students.

Employee Motivation

Motivation is the mental energy that drives goal-oriented thoughts and actions. It involves a combination of internal and external factors that determine the direction, intensity, and effectiveness of our behaviour towards achieving a clear objective (Hussein et al., 2021; Shahzadi et al., 2014). Motivation is described as the driving force that initiates and shapes work-related activities in the workplace. It is influenced by various factors such as individual differences, cultural and social environment, and job characteristics. Motivation plays a crucial role in organisational behaviour by inspiring employees and enhancing their performance. When employees are motivated, they are more likely to be committed, innovative, and productive, leading to overall organisational effectiveness. Motivation is essential for attracting, retaining, and engaging employees as it aligns their actions with organisational goals and encourages them to go above and beyond (Lindner, 1998). Intrinsic motivation, which includes non-monetary rewards such as recognition, respect, and opportunities for growth, is significant in driving behaviour towards achieving goals.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something for the enjoyment and satisfaction it brings rather than for a specific outcome. It is linked to employees wanting to create a positive mood, which can enhance learning and information sharing (Hao, Farooq, & Zhang, 2018). Some practices are motivating for employees, while others are not, as motivation varies from person to person. Extrinsic motivators, such as rewards, may be more effective in inspiring employees compared to intrinsic motivators (Singh, 2016). Previous research has found that intrinsic rewards are seen as more reliable than extrinsic rewards (Ajmal et al., 2015). Intrinsic motivation can be seen as the satisfaction an employee derives from their job, while others define it as the fulfilment obtained from completing tasks. This study focuses on how top managers in the private sector perceive intrinsic motivating factors in employee engagement. Previous research suggests that employees in the private sector are more motivated by opportunities for growth, autonomy, monetary incentives, and status rather than the value or engagement of their work. However, cash incentives are still crucial in motivating private-sector employees, and factors like leadership, societal contributions, and promotion prospects are also valued. There is a need to understand the specific motivators for private-sector employees, especially considering the perspective of senior executives.

This study concluded that intrinsic variables play a significant role in the performance of private universities in Oman. These internal factors, including student enrollment, faculty composition, curriculum design, and resource availability, are crucial to consider. Private universities in Oman face a range of intrinsic factors that affect their performance. These universities must attract and retain quality students and faculty, maintain a diverse and effective curriculum, and ensure adequate resources. By analysing these intrinsic factors, the effectiveness of the university can be determined. Therefore, universities must consider these variables when developing strategies to enhance their performance.

Intrinsic Motivation with Employee Engagement

While some research has looked at the relationship between employee engagement and employee motivation, most studies have examined them separately (Putra, Cho, & Liu, 2017). Putra et al. (2017) used a model of intrinsic motivation to investigate how employees in the industry perceive intrinsic motivation and how it affects their commitment to work. Their survey indicated that both intrinsic motivational factors influenced employee work engagement.

There have been few studies that have explored the connection between work motivation and employee engagement. Rich et al. (2010) conducted research where they tested a model where intrinsic motivation and employee engagement were examined as mediators rather than as two variables in a predictor-outcome relationship. This provides further justification for investigating the link between work motivation and employee engagement (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010).

Employee engagement is driven by perceptions of psychological meaningfulness, security, and availability at work (Hernandez & Guarana, 2018), which involves recognising the job as a place to meet various needs, including extrinsic needs like money and prestige and intrinsic needs like satisfaction and personal challenge. Understanding this concept strengthens the connection between employees' willingness to work and the workplace or the work itself, resulting in increased commitment and effort from employees.

Based on this analysis of studies on intrinsic motivation, top managers can identify specific motivational factors and assess how these factors impact employee engagement (Putra et al., 2017). By considering these principles, we can conclude that the intrinsic variables discussed in this analysis are relationships with subordinates and employee well-being. These factors are unique to each individual and can drive internal behaviour.

Relationships with Co-workers: Previously, employee relationships were considered an essential factor in workplace interactions and were suggested to be highly valued by employees. This emphasis on relationships can be attributed to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the need for belongingness includes social contact, friendship, intimacy, and devotion. Positive professional experiences, especially with co-workers and top management, can positively influence motivation in employees. However, if an employee feels that they are being treated unfairly compared to their colleagues, it can lead to demotivation. Interpersonal relationships at work contribute to psychological protection and significance, as identified by Kahn (1990). Psychological protection refers to employees feeling secure in their job commitment without facing negative consequences. Trustworthy and respectful relationships, as well as open communication and cooperation, contribute to psychological safety and employee happiness. Positive interactions with colleagues also contribute to the social significance an employee feels at work.

Employee Well-Being: Employees rated well-being as the most important factor in predicting engagement, according to a survey by Towers Perrin (2008). Feeling safe and healthy at work, both mentally and emotionally, is essential for job inspiration. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs supports this, as protection needs correspond to the need for employees to feel secure and well (Maslow, 1943). This includes physical well-being, mental protection, and a balanced workload. A stable work environment, free from physical or mental discomfort, positively impacts employee motivation.

Psychological availability, as described by Kahn (1990), is another key factor in employee engagement. It is related to a work-life balance and an employee's ability to handle various work and personal pressures. Demands on physical and mental resources, as well as factors outside of work, influence psychological availability (Kahn, 1990).

May et al. (2004) highlight the importance of top management in creating a work-life balance and addressing employees' emotional and physical well-being. By reducing work-related expectations and providing support, top management can enhance psychological availability and engagement. The care shown by top executives for both physical and mental well-being has a significant impact on employee engagement.

According to Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002), employees feel indebted to their bosses for the opportunities they provide. They suggest that top management serves as a representative of the company, enhancing perceptions of organisational support (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). As Saks (2006) states, the exchange arrangement between employees and the organization greatly influences employee engagement. In return for support and opportunities, employees reciprocate by being more engaged and efficient.

Conceptual Framework

Employee engagement is crucial for a company's success and is closely tied to top management. Employees' efforts and level of engagement play a vital role in determining the organisation's achievements. Therefore, top management must create an environment fostering engagement, recognition, and motivation. They should also prioritise trust and openness, encouraging employees to express their opinions. Additionally, top management must provide opportunities for employee growth and constantly strive to create an environment that boosts engagement, motivation, and productivity.

Creating a positive work environment requires proactivity from top management. This can be achieved by establishing clear expectations, offering feedback and recognition, promoting team-building activities, and setting concrete goals. Treating employees with respect and expressing appreciation enhances their morale and makes them feel valued. According to Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics (2009), studies show that no one style of top management support is suitable for all situations. Successful leaders adapt their approach to help their employees perform well in different settings (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). This aligns with contingency leadership theory, as Yukl et al. (2013) explained, which emphasises the importance of flexible and adaptive leadership. It allows leaders to diagnose a situation and identify behaviours that are likely to be productive (Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, & Prussia, 2013). Top management support is crucial for organisational success. The theory states that a leader's style effectiveness depends on the situation, and they should be able to adjust accordingly to their team's needs and the work environment. Effective leaders assess their team and situation, adapting their approach accordingly. Top management plays a vital role in providing resources, guidance, and support to help leaders understand the situation, identify team strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appropriate strategy. They can also provide necessary resources, such as technology, training, and financial support. Without top management support, leaders may struggle to develop effective strategies or lack the resources needed to implement them.

Moreover, top management should foster a culture of trust and open communication through regular meetings, encouraging feedback and dialogue with employees. This builds trust and collaboration, which is crucial for employee motivation and engagement. Intrinsic motivation, driven by personal satisfaction, is also vital. Top management can nurture this by granting employees autonomy, challenging tasks, feedback, recognition, and rewards. This encourages employees to be intrinsically motivated, leading to higher job satisfaction and increased productivity.

In summary, factors such as relationships with co-workers and well-being support employee engagement. Top management must prioritize these factors to improve performance in the higher education sector. Figure 1 below shows the proposed conceptual framework.

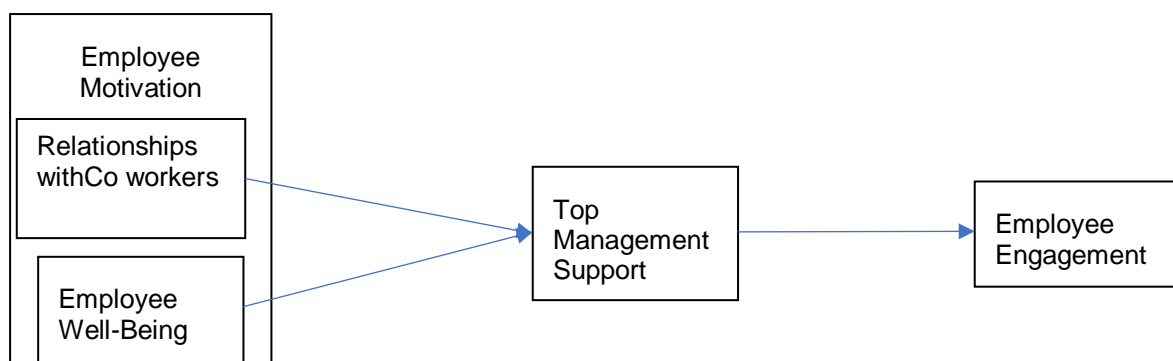


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The following research hypothesis will be evaluated through statistical analysis in this study:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between relationships with co-workers and employee engagement in Oman's private universities.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement in private universities of Oman.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between top management support and employee engagement in Oman's private universities.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant relationship between relationships with co-workers and top management support in Oman's private universities.

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant relationship between employee well-being and top management support in Oman's private universities.

Hypothesis 6: Top management support mediated the relationship between relationships with co-workers and employee engagement in Oman's private universities.

Hypothesis 7: Top management support mediated the relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement in Oman's private universities.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative research method and developed a hypothesis using a cross-sectional design. This approach allows the researcher to study the connection between variables at a specific point in time. It is a quick and inexpensive method that can involve a large number of participants of various ages. The study aims to analyse the mediating influence of both independent and dependent variables. Statistical tests were used to validate the correlations between variables and support the theoretical framework. The target population for this study is administrative employees in 8 private universities in Oman. The total population is 2200, and a sample size of 327 was calculated. The measurement items for the study were modified from existing scales in the literature. The survey questionnaire had two sections - one for demographic information and another for measuring the variables. A cover letter and explanation of the research's goal and respondent anonymity were included.

Data Analysis

The main reason for using demographic data was to ensure accuracy. Data was collected from 371 respondents, with 60.1 percent being male and 39.9 percent being female. The majority of respondents (48 percent) were between 31-40 years old, with a Master's degree (43 percent). Table 1 provides more details on the descriptive analysis results for each variable studied. Mean values ranged from 3.9484 to 4.0852, and standard deviations ranged from 0.79197 to 0.84872. PLS-SEM analysis was used, as indicated by Hair et al. (2016) (Hair, Sarstedt, Matthews, & Ringle, 2016). Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of reliability, was high for all variables, exceeding the recommended standard of 0.70 (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Overall, the questionnaire used in this study can be considered reliable.

Table 1. Results of Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Relationships with Co-workers	4.0852	4.0852	0.882
Employee Well-Being	.82493	.82493	0.852
Top Management Support	3.9655	3.9655	0.843

Employee Engagement	.80706	.80706	0.919
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Hypothesis Testing

The main aim of Smart PLS is to minimise errors and maximise the explained variation in dependent variables. This is achieved by analysing the size and significance of route coefficients through the structural model. Bootstrapping is necessary to evaluate the structural model in PLS-SEM. Smart PLS is used to evaluate the developed hypotheses and presents the results of the bootstrapping technique, including significance level and t-statistics. Table 2 displays the research hypotheses analysed in the structural model.

Table 2. Hypothesis Results

Hypotheses	Relationship	T-Statistics	P-Value	Results
H1	RWC → EE	2.681	0.007	Accept
H2	EWB → EE	3.855	0.000	Accept
H3	TMS → EE	7.957	0.000	Accept
H4	RWC → TMS	3.157	0.002	Accept
H5	EWB → TMS	2.151	0.032	Accept
H6	RCW → EE	2.767	0.006	Accept
	TMS → EE	7.678	0.000	
	RCW → TMS	3.069	0.002	
H7	EWB → EE	3.810	0.000	Accept
	TMS → EE	7.678	0.000	
	EWB → TMS	2.146	0.032	

P-Value < 0.001, P-Value < 0.01, P-Value < 0.05

Note: Relationships with Co-workers (RWC), Employee Well-Being (EWB), Top Management Support (TMS), and Employee Engagement (EE).

Hypothesis 1: In Oman's private universities, a study has identified a significant connection between relationships with co-workers and employee engagement. The study discovered a statistically significant positive relationship (T-Statistics = 2.681) between co-workers and employee engagement, with a significance level of $P < 0.001$. Therefore, the research hypothesis is confirmed. The study concluded that having good relationships with co-workers is correlated with higher levels of employee engagement. For instance, an investigation in Oman revealed that employees who maintained positive relationships with their co-workers were more satisfied with their jobs and were more committed. This ultimately resulted in increased levels of employee engagement. Additionally, the study found that individuals with positive co-worker relationships were more likely to stay in their current jobs, emphasising the importance of fostering good relationships for employee engagement. These findings highlight the significance of building strong connections with co-workers, as it contributes to a positive work environment that promotes employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Employee well-being and employee engagement are closely related concepts in the workplace. A study conducted in private universities of Oman found a significant positive relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement. The results showed that employees who feel supported and valued by their organizations are more likely to be engaged in their work. To promote employee well-being and increase engagement, private universities in Oman have implemented various initiatives such as employee wellness programs, stress management programs, and work-life balance initiatives. These efforts have been found to have a positive impact on employee engagement. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of prioritizing employee well-being in order to enhance engagement and performance. The

study has found a significant positive (T- Statistics = 3.855) relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement. The relationship is observed to be statistically significant with significance level ($P < 0.001$).

Hypothesis 3: The study found a significant positive relationship (T-Statistics = 7.957) between top management support and employee engagement in private universities in Oman. This relationship was observed to be statistically significant at a significance level of $P < 0.001$, leading to the acceptance of the research hypothesis. Overall, the study concluded that there is a strong positive correlation between top management support and employee engagement. The study also revealed that top management support has a significant impact on employee satisfaction, commitment, and job performance. Specifically, the more support provided by the top management, the higher the level of employee engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. Additionally, the study showed that the relationship between top management support and employee engagement was stronger when the top management had a clear vision, effectively communicated it, and provided necessary resources and support to help employees achieve organizational goals. These findings align with previous research indicating that organizations with strong leadership and management support are more likely to have highly engaged employees.

Hypothesis 4: The study in Oman's private universities has found a significant positive relationship between relationships with co-workers and top management support. The research hypothesis is accepted, indicating that a correlation exists between co-worker relationships and higher levels of support from top management. Strong relationships among co-workers are associated with increased support from top management, while poor relationships may result in a lack of necessary resources for the university's success. The relationship is observed to be statistically significant (T- Statistics = 3.157) with significance level ($P < 0.001$).

Hypothesis 5: There is a significant correlation between employee well-being and top management support in private universities in Oman. The study confirmed a positive relationship between employee well-being and support from top management, with statistically significant results (T-Statistics = 2.151, $P < 0.001$). This research conclusion aligns with previous surveys and reports that consistently show higher levels of employee satisfaction, motivation, and engagement when top management provides support. Support can be in the form of training opportunities, resources for learning, and work-life balance assistance. Management needs to foster a positive culture of trust and appreciation and ensure access to resources for handling stress, health issues, and career development. Creating a supportive environment leads to increased productivity and engagement, ultimately improving overall well-being in the workplace.

Hypothesis 6: Top management support plays a crucial role in fostering positive relationships between co-workers and employee engagement in private universities in Oman. The study found a significant positive relationship (T- Statistics = 2.767, 7.678, 3.069) between co-workers and employee engagement, with a significance level. Therefore, the research hypothesis is supported. Based on these findings, the study concludes that managers can contribute to a cooperative and supportive work environment by demonstrating their commitment to the success of their employees. This can lead to increased morale, job satisfaction, and overall enthusiasm for work. Additionally, top management support can provide the necessary resources and guidance for employees to manage their relationships with co-workers effectively. Clear expectations and guidance from managers can facilitate better understanding and collaboration among co-workers. Furthermore, promoting open communication and collaboration can help build a culture of trust and respect, leading to more positive relationships and higher levels of employee engagement.

Hypothesis 7: The study in Oman's private universities found that top management support plays a crucial role in promoting employee well-being and engagement. The study observed a significant positive relationship between employee well-being and engagement. This suggests that when employees are supported by top management, they are more likely to be engaged in their work. Top management support can be provided in various ways, such as offering flexible work schedules and health insurance plans. Furthermore, creating a culture of trust, respect, and open communication between leaders and employees can also foster employee well-being and engagement. Providing training and development opportunities

and clearly communicating company goals can further motivate employees and improve their engagement. Finally, top management can act as role models by demonstrating a commitment to employee well-being and engagement, thus creating a culture that values and supports these aspects. The study has found a significant positive (T- Statistics = 3.810, 7.678, 2.146) mediating relationship between employee well-being and employee engagement.

Conclusion

Higher education development is seen as a vital aspect of Oman's future. The importance of higher education in Oman has been widely acknowledged and discussed in literature. Oman's 2020 vision aims to enhance higher education institutes that offer diverse programs in various fields to meet the country's development and sustainability needs. To achieve this, the development of human resources is a key concern of Sultan Qaboos. However, education poses challenges that necessitate the implementation of policies and mechanisms.

This study aims to investigate the impact of top management support in mediating the relationship between intrinsic motivation on employee engagement in private universities in Oman. A sample of 378 administrative employees from 8 Omani private universities was selected.

The study concludes that top management support is crucial in creating an engaging environment that encourages optimal employee performance. Additionally, providing appropriate rewards and recognition, as well as acknowledging employees' achievements, is vital for motivating them. Clear communication of goals, expectations, and feedback is also essential for maintaining employee engagement. Finally, ensuring a safe and secure work environment and promoting work-life balance play a significant role in employee engagement. The statistical results of this study allow for broader conclusions to be drawn. The findings address the research questions posed.

Furthermore, the findings from this study have practical implications for managers and researchers in various industries, especially in education. Managers must establish supportive relationships with their employees, encouraging problem-solving, skill development, fairness, consistency, integrity, open communication, and genuine concern. Additionally, fair compensation based on job performance, experience, and qualifications is essential to enhance engagement and productivity. Creating suitable working environments that are clean, comfortable, and safe also contributes to employee engagement. Managers can motivate employees by providing direct compensation such as increased wages, salaries, bonuses, tips, and commissions.

Finally, the study's results highlight effective top management support in Oman's private sector and provide opportunities for managers and leaders to improve their support and drive positive social change. This knowledge can lead to improved employee motivation and engagement, potentially inspiring them to make a difference in their communities and organisations. Practising management support in private organisations can actively enhance employee engagement.

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