



EXPLORATION OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN BUILDING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES IN BEKASI CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement in multinational companies in Bekasi City. The approach used was qualitative with exploratory descriptive methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using NVivo software to identify key themes. The results showed that adaptive, communicative, and participatory global leadership can increase employee trust and engagement. In addition, an inclusive, collaboration-oriented organizational culture that upholds the value of integrity has proven to be an important factor in creating a conducive work environment. This study also found a synergy between global leadership and organizational culture in strengthening employee engagement, both emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. However, there are still challenges in implementation that are not evenly distributed across all levels of the organization. Therefore, companies need to develop an integrated strategy by strengthening cross-cultural leadership and internalizing organizational values. This study provides theoretical and practical contributions to the development of human resource management in multinational companies.

Keywords: Global Leadership, Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement, Multinational Enterprises

INTRODUCTION

Management is a systematic process involving planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. In the era of globalization, the concept of management has undergone significant development, placing human resources as a strategic organizational asset. This is because an organization's competitive advantage is no longer determined solely by technology or capital, but by the quality and involvement of employees in carrying out organizational activities. Therefore, modern management approaches are increasingly oriented toward increasing employee engagement as part of an organization's sustainability strategy.

Employee engagement is a crucial topic in human resource management studies. Employee engagement reflects an employee's level of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral commitment to the organization and their work. Employees with high levels of engagement tend to demonstrate better performance, high loyalty, and positive contributions to achieving organizational goals. According to Rohman and Gunawan (2023), employee engagement can be enhanced through active participation in organizational processes, including decision-making. Meanwhile, Wulandari and Firdaus (2024) state that communication, leadership, and teamwork play a crucial role in shaping optimal employee engagement.

In multinational companies, employee engagement becomes more complex due to the diversity of cultures, values, and backgrounds of the workforce. Bekasi, as one of Indonesia's largest industrial centers, is a strategic location for various multinational companies operating in various sectors. The multicultural work environment in multinational companies demands adaptive and inclusive human

resource management. Cultural differences often pose a challenge to creating equitable employee engagement, necessitating a managerial approach capable of bridging these differences.

One of the main factors influencing employee engagement is global leadership. Global leadership refers to a leader's ability to manage cross-cultural teams, understand differences in values, and create a vision that is accepted by all members of the organization. According to Saputra (2024), leadership style has a significant influence on employee engagement, with effective leaders able to increase employee motivation and participation in the organization. Transformational leadership and leadership that adapts to global cultures are important factors in increasing employee engagement in a multinational environment.

Organizational culture is also a crucial factor in building employee engagement. Organizational culture reflects the system of values, norms, and habits that develop within an organization and influence employee behavior. A strong and positive organizational culture can enhance employees' sense of belonging and attachment to the organization. Amanu and Gulo (2024) state that organizational culture has a significant influence on employee engagement, particularly in creating a conducive and collaborative work environment. Meanwhile, Ramadhani and Deka (2023) emphasize that organizational culture also plays a role in encouraging employee participation in teamwork and decision-making.

A simple survey conducted through observation and informal interviews with several employees at a multinational company in Bekasi City revealed varying levels of employee engagement. Some employees demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to their work, while others showed low levels of attachment to the organization. This situation is thought to be influenced by differences in leadership styles that are not yet fully adaptive to cultural diversity, as well as organizational culture that has not been evenly internalized.

This research is crucial for in-depth exploration of the role of global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement in multinational companies in Bekasi City. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management science and practical contributions to companies in improving sustainable employee engagement.

Current research shows that multinational companies, including those operating in Bekasi City, face challenges in maintaining employee engagement amidst the dynamics of globalization and workforce diversity. Digital transformation, changes in post-pandemic work patterns, and increasing employee expectations for flexible and inclusive work environments are factors influencing engagement. On the one hand, companies have adopted modern management practices and global leadership, but on the other hand, their implementation has not been fully optimized. This aligns with the findings of Wulandari and Firdaus (2024), who stated that even though organizations have good communication and leadership systems, employee engagement is still influenced by the consistency of

implementation and the quality of interactions between individuals. Furthermore, Rohman and Gunawan (2023) also emphasized that employee engagement is influenced not only by formal policies but also by the extent to which employees feel valued and involved in organizational processes.

Problems that arise in this context include the uneven implementation of global leadership that adapts to cultural diversity, as well as the weak internalization of organizational culture across all employee levels. Some employees still experience communication gaps with superiors, a lack of clarity in the organization's vision, and minimal participation in decision-making. Saputra (2024) revealed that a mismatch between leadership style and employee needs can significantly reduce engagement levels. Furthermore, Amanu and Gulo (2024) showed that a weak organizational culture will impact employee ownership and commitment to the organization. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to identify specific factors that hinder employee engagement, so that multinational companies in Bekasi City can formulate more effective strategies to increase employee engagement sustainably.

Several studies reinforce the importance of global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement. A study by Saks (2023) showed that employee engagement is significantly influenced by the quality of the relationship between superiors and subordinates and the perceived organizational support of employees. Another study by Karatepe et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership in a cross-cultural context can increase employee engagement by enhancing trust and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, Kim and Park (2023) emphasized that an adaptive and inclusive organizational culture plays a crucial role in creating a work environment that encourages employee engagement, particularly in multinational companies. Furthermore, research by Nguyen et al. (2025) revealed that the success of global leadership is largely determined by the leader's ability to manage cultural diversity and build effective communication. Furthermore, recent research by Al-Hawari et al. (2024) also showed that employee engagement is influenced by a combination of leadership factors, organizational culture, and the employee's overall work experience. Thus, these research findings further emphasize that employee engagement is the result of a complex interaction between global leadership and an effective organizational culture.

Based on research, there are several *research gap* which still requires further study. Most previous studies tend to examine employee engagement partially, for example, focusing only on the influence of leadership or organizational culture separately, without integrating both variables into a comprehensive analytical framework. Furthermore, the research contexts used are generally general or limited to domestic organizations, so there are not many that specifically examine multinational companies with high levels of cultural diversity, particularly in industrial areas such as Bekasi City. Wulandari and Firdaus (2024) emphasize communication and teamwork, while Rohman and Gunawan (2023) focus on participation in decision-making. Meanwhile, Saputra (2024) and Amanu and Gulo (2024) highlight the role of leadership and organizational culture, but have not yet explored

in depth how cross-cultural global leadership interacts with organizational culture in shaping employee engagement. Thus, there remains a research gap in integrating global leadership and organizational culture perspectives in the dynamic context of multinational companies.

The novelty of this study lies in its simultaneous and in-depth examination of the relationship between global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement in multinational companies in Bekasi City. This study not only fills a gap in the literature by presenting a specific local context but also offers a more integrative approach by considering cross-cultural dynamics as a key variable in modern management practices. Furthermore, this study seeks to qualitatively explore employees' experiences and perceptions of the implementation of global leadership and the internalization of organizational culture, thus hopefully producing more contextual and applicable findings. Thus, this study is expected to provide new contributions both theoretically in the development of human resource management science and practically as a basis for formulating strategies to increase employee engagement in multinational companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Leadership

Global leadership emphasizes a leader's ability to manage cultural diversity, build a cross-border vision, and create organizational effectiveness in an international context. Global leaders are required to possess *cultural intelligence* and a high ability to adapt to differences in values and norms. Effective leadership will increase employee trust and engagement in multinational organizations. According to Mendenhall et al. (2023), global leadership plays a crucial role in the success of cross-cultural organizations, while Bird and Stevens (2024) emphasize the importance of intercultural competence in enhancing the effectiveness of global leadership.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is a system of values, norms, and beliefs that shape the behavior of organizational members. A strong and adaptive culture can create a conducive work environment and increase employees' sense of belonging to the organization. In multinational companies, organizational culture serves as a glue that unites diverse employees. Schein (2023) states that organizational culture influences employee mindsets and actions, while Hofstede et al. (2024) emphasize that national cultural differences must be managed through an inclusive organizational culture to increase employee engagement.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement describes a psychological state in which individuals have an emotional, cognitive, and behavioral attachment to their work and organization. Engaged employees demonstrate optimal performance, high loyalty, and positive contributions to the organization. Engagement is influenced by leadership, culture, and the work environment. Saks (2023) asserts that organizational support and good working relationships increase engagement, while Albrecht et al. (2024) state that integrated management strategies can strengthen employee engagement sustainably.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods are a crucial part of the research, explaining the approaches, procedures, and techniques used to obtain and analyze research data. In this study, a qualitative approach was chosen to explore in-depth the phenomenon of global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively and contextually understand the meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences of employees in a multinational corporate environment.

Research Approaches and Types

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive exploratory approach. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of social phenomena, particularly those related to employee perceptions and experiences of global leadership and organizational culture. According to Creswell and Poth (2023), qualitative research focuses on understanding the meanings constructed by individuals within specific social contexts. Furthermore, an exploratory approach allows researchers to identify new patterns that have not been widely studied in the context of multinational companies in Bekasi City.

Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted at a multinational company located in Bekasi City, one of the largest industrial areas in Indonesia. The location was selected based on the high diversity of the workforce and the complexity of cross-cultural management. The research period was two months, from November to December 2025. This timeframe was deemed sufficient for in-depth data collection through interviews and observations.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques in this study include in-depth interviews (*in-depth interview*), participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with employees and managers to obtain information regarding their experiences working in a multinational environment. Observations were conducted to directly understand the social interactions and culture of the

organization. Documentation was used to supplement data in the form of company reports or internal policies. According to Flick (2024), the use of various data collection techniques in qualitative research aims to increase the validity and depth of the data.

Data Analysis Techniques (NVivo)

Data analysis was conducted using NVivo software to systematically manage and analyze qualitative data. NVivo assists researchers in coding data, identifying themes, and visualizing relationships between categories. The analysis process involves data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. According to Jackson and Bazeley (2023), NVivo enables researchers to increase transparency and accuracy in qualitative data analysis, particularly in research involving large amounts of text data.

Data Validity Techniques

The validity of the data in this study was tested using triangulation techniques of sources and methods. Triangulation was carried out by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency of information. In addition, *member checking* by asking informants to verify the interview results. Lincoln and Guba (2023) stated that the validity of data in qualitative research can be increased through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research result

This study presents empirical findings obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation at a multinational company in Bekasi City. Analysis was conducted using NVivo to identify key themes related to global leadership, organizational culture, and employee engagement. These results provide a concrete picture of organizational dynamics based on employees' experiences and perceptions in a multicultural work environment.

Table 1. Global Leadership Themes in Multinational Enterprises

| No | Category | Aspect | Description |
|-----------|-------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1 | Global Competence | Cultural Understanding | Leaders are able to understand and adapt to the diversity of work cultures. |
| 2 | Communication | Interaction | There is open communication between leaders and cross-cultural employees. |
| 3 | Leadership Style | Motivation | Leaders promote a shared vision and inspire work. |
| 4 | Decision Making | Participation | Employees are involved in the decision-making process |

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Table 1 shows that global leadership in multinational companies in Bekasi City is characterized by cultural adaptability, open communication, and a leadership style that encourages participation.

Informants revealed that leaders who understand cultural differences tend to build trust more easily. Furthermore, employee involvement in decision-making fosters a sense of appreciation, strengthening working relationships and increasing overall engagement within the organization.

Table 2. Organizational Culture in Encouraging Employee Engagement

| No | Category | Aspect | Description |
|----|-----------------------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Organizational Values | Integrity | The organization upholds work ethics and honesty |
| | Work Interaction | Collaboration | Strong teamwork is established between employees |
| 2 | Work environment | Inclusivity | The company values diversity of backgrounds |
| 3 | Commitment | Loyalty | Employees demonstrate a sense of belonging to the organization |

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Table 2 illustrates that organizational culture plays a crucial role in creating a conducive work environment. The values of integrity and collaboration are the foundation for building harmonious working relationships. An inclusive work environment provides space for employees to develop without cultural barriers. This fosters a sense of belonging to the organization, which ultimately positively impacts employee engagement in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

Table 3. Forms of Employee Involvement in the Organization

| No | Category | Aspect | Description |
|----|-----------------------|---------------|---|
| 1 | Emotional Involvement | Enthusiasm | Employees show enthusiasm in working |
| 2 | Cognitive Engagement | Focus | Employees have full attention to their work |
| 3 | Behavioral Engagement | Participation | Employees are active in organizational activities |
| 4 | Loyalty | Commitment | Employees have a desire to stay in the organization |

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Table 3 shows that employee engagement is reflected in emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. Engaged employees not only demonstrate work ethic but also exhibit high levels of focus and active involvement in organizational activities. Loyalty is one tangible manifestation of this engagement, demonstrating a long-term commitment to the company. This demonstrates that employee engagement is a combination of attitudes and concrete actions in the workplace.

Discussion

This discussion outlines the interpretation of the research findings by linking them to theory and previous empirical findings. The primary focus is analyzing the role of global leadership and organizational culture in building employee engagement in multinational companies in Bekasi City. Using a thematic approach, this discussion provides an in-depth understanding of the relationships between variables and their implications for modern human resource management practices.

1. Global Leadership and Employee Engagement

The research findings indicate that global leadership plays a significant role in increasing employee engagement. Leaders who understand cultural differences and employ effective communication are proven to be able to build more harmonious working relationships. In the context of multinational companies, this ability is crucial because workforce diversity can be both a strength and a challenge. This finding aligns with research by Saks (2023), which states that the quality of the relationship between superiors and subordinates is a key factor in increasing employee engagement. Furthermore, Karatepe et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership can increase engagement by increasing intrinsic motivation and trust. The results of this study also indicate that leaders who involve employees in decision-making can increase their sense of belonging to the organization. Thus, global leadership serves not only as a director but also as a facilitator of employee engagement in complex organizations.

2. Organizational Culture as a Foundation for Engagement

Organizational culture has been shown to be a key foundation for building employee engagement. Organizational values such as integrity, collaboration, and inclusivity create a conducive work environment for employee development. This study found that a strong organizational culture encourages employees to feel valued and a part of the organization. This finding aligns with Kim and Park (2023) who stated that organizational culture plays a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement, particularly in the context of global companies. Furthermore, Amanu and Gulo (2024) also found that a positive organizational culture significantly impacts employee engagement. An inclusive culture enables employees from diverse cultural backgrounds to work harmoniously and productively. Therefore, organizational culture serves not only as a corporate identity but also as a driving mechanism for sustainable employee engagement.

3. Synergy of Global Leadership and Organizational Culture

The interaction between global leadership and organizational culture is a crucial factor in shaping employee engagement. Effective leadership can strengthen the implementation of organizational cultural values, while organizational culture provides direction and a framework for leaders in decision-making. This study found that the synergy between these two variables creates a more adaptive and change-responsive work environment. This finding is supported by Nguyen et al. (2025), who stated that cross-cultural communication is an important mediator in the relationship between global leadership and employee engagement. Furthermore, Al-Hawari et al. (2024) also emphasized that the combination of leadership and organizational culture can improve the overall employee work experience. Thus, an organization's success in increasing employee engagement depends heavily on the harmony between global leadership and the organizational culture implemented.

4. Practical Implications for Multinational Enterprises

The results of this study provide important practical implications for multinational companies, particularly in Bekasi City. Companies need to develop global leadership training programs that focus on improving cross-cultural competencies and interpersonal communication. Furthermore, strengthening an inclusive and collaborative organizational culture should be a top priority. These findings align with Wulandari and Firdaus (2024), who emphasize the importance of communication and teamwork in increasing employee engagement. Rohman and Gunawan (2023) also stated that employee participation in organizational processes can significantly increase engagement. Therefore, companies need to create policies that encourage active employee involvement, such as discussion forums, involvement in decision-making, and strengthening organizational values. An integrated strategy between leadership and organizational culture will be able to increase employee engagement sustainably.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that global leadership and organizational culture play a crucial role in building employee engagement in multinational companies in Bekasi City. Effective global leadership is characterized by a leader's ability to understand cultural diversity, establish open communication, and involve employees in the decision-making process. This has been shown to increase employee trust, motivation, and emotional attachment to the organization. Furthermore, a strong, inclusive, and collaboration-oriented organizational culture is the main foundation for creating a work environment conducive to employee engagement.

This study also found a synergistic relationship between global leadership and organizational culture in increasing employee engagement. Adaptive leadership can strengthen the implementation of organizational cultural values, while organizational culture provides direction and consistency in employee work behavior. Employee engagement is not only reflected in emotional aspects, but also in active participation and long-term commitment to the organization. However, several challenges remain, such as the uneven implementation of global leadership and the suboptimal internalization of organizational culture across all company lines. Therefore, multinational companies need to develop integrated strategies through cross-cultural leadership training, strengthening organizational values, and increasing employee participation. Thus, employee engagement can be continuously improved to support organizational performance and competitiveness.

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