**RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM - ABERTAY MBA PROGRAM**

**Student Name:**

**Supervisor Name:**

**Date:**

***Note:*** *The Research Proposal will be the foundation of the research work being undertaken by the student. The Proposal will be approx. 1500 words; the distribution of word count for each section is given below against each section title.* ***The research plan, annotated bibliography, timelines and the references will not be included in the word count.***

*You will write your answers in this given sheet itself.*

1. **Project (research topic) Title**

Examining the Significance of Involving Employees in Decision-Making and Its Impact on Employee Productivity in the UAE.

# 2. Introduction (300 words)

The recognition of employees and their participation in decision-making processes is a determinant of organizational performance and satisfaction among employees of ADNOC. In the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where the economy is growing fast and a multi-nationalized employee base could be seen needed, one needs to establish the importance of employee engagement in decision making. Companies in the UAE have also realized that employee engagement is not just a social responsibility issue of following the law or being nice, but it can also be potent in improving the business.

In terms of the workforce, the UAE has a multi-national employee population, and thus a high proportion of foreign employees. This diversity comes with its own set of dynamics which may be a challenge or an advantage depending on the organization and its goals towards promoting a healthy organizational culture and healthy working relationships. Employee engagement is crucial to tap into the employee capital, which is the talent and experience within the workforce, which would be helpful in improving decision-making processes.

Even though these benefits cannot be debated, organizations operating in the UAE currently encounter some issues in engaging employees in decision making. Factors like the organizational culture that may entail top-down management, lack of appropriate communication channels and channels of informing the subordinates and lack of adequate training that affects the organization’s communication structures are some of the barriers to employee engagement. The above challenges could result in poor participation of the employees in their respective tasks, low morale and hence poor performance.

Aim:

To examine the significance of involving employees in decision-making and its impact on their productivity within UAE-based organizations like ADNOC.

Objectives:

* To investigate the current level of employee involvement in decision-making in UAE organizations.
* To assess the impact of employee involvement on productivity.
* To identify best practices for enhancing employee involvement in decision-making.

# 3. Background and Purpose of the Research (600 words)

Employees’ participation in managerial decisions has come a long way for the last few decades and is now a crucial concept used in contemporary management theories and practices. Earlier, the management of organizations used to make all important decisions and employees were hardly involved (Galeazzo, Furlan and Vinelli, 2020). This hierarchical system frequently resulted in the employees’ alienation and low morale. Thus, the focus on change that more participative management systems imply have demonstrated that the active participation of the employees in decision making could bring a variety of tangible organizational gains, such as increases in both productivity and satisfaction at work, as well as increases in organizational commitment of the employee (Wang, Hou and Li, 2022).

These theoretical frameworks include the PDM theory and the JCM so as to establish the relationship between employee participation and productivity. PDM theory postulates that employees should be empowered to participate in managerial decisions since their motivation and performance would improve due to employees’ perceived responsibilities in implementing the decisions (Islam and Azad, 2021). Similarly to this, the JCM proposes that job enrichment – some components of which include the involvement of job is enriched; involvement enhances intrinsic motivation which in turn boost up the up the work performance (Teuber, 2019).

Studies have shown that employee participation has a positive impact in organizational performance. For instance, Kim (2002) showed that employees’ engagement in the decision-making procedures increased the levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Miller (2024) also discovered that policies encouraging decision making by the employees promoted increased innovation and improved financial performance. Moreover, Wagner’s meta-analysis also supported the hypothesis that PDM leads to improved performance and organizational commitment (Tian and Zhai, 2017).

The second factor that defines organizational practices in the UAE regards the overall cultural environment of the state. There is diversity in employee’s population in the country through a number of expatriate staff from different cultures. This diverse situation per se should be considered as mixed blessing regarding employees’ involvement (Al Mazrouei and Pech, 2015). On the one hand, cultural peculiarities may become an obstacle to understanding each other, which in turn implies significant problems with participation. On the other hand, the indicated diversity may be beneficial when the organization learns to decide with its help, to involve more perspectives and strategies (Anjorin, Jansari and Nazir, 2018).

While the role of employee involvement has been acknowledged to be of paramount significance by scholars and firms alike, several organizations in UAE face challenges in adopting appropriate approaches to workplace participation. Some of the difficulties that may be met include the utilization of pyramidal organizational systems, cultural issues, and the absence of solutions to the communication problem (Keyton, 2010). For instance, culture dimensions theory by Hofstede notes that UAE offers high scores relating to power distance, thus suggesting the nations’ favorable working attitude concerning structured authority structures (Wale, 2023). This cultural attribute can negatively affect employee participation s and reduce the impact of participative management practices (Khassawneh and Elrehail, 2022).

In order to overcome these challenges, this research can have a goal of ascertaining the current level of employee participation in the decision-making processes within the organizations in UAE as well as its effects on productivity. Using the assessment of current practices and notations of best practices, the study aims at giving direct commendations of ways of improving employee involvement. The sources to be used in the research methods are journals, research articles, business related reports and case studies concerning the topic under study.

With regards to the UAE, business environment is one of the most vibrant environments in the world due to; high economic growth, diverse workforce, and promotional culture of innovation and competitiveness. UAE Vision 2021 outlines the general framework for the development of the country’s economy, stressing the role of human capital and innovation as key resources (UAE, 2021). Thus, the engagement of the employees in the decision-making process is highly important for organizations that are aiming to meet such high objectives in the given environment.

# 4. Research question (or statement of the problem for consultancy-based projects)

1. What is the current level of employee involvement in decision-making in UAE organizations?
2. How does employee involvement in decision-making impact productivity?
3. What are the best practices for involving employees in decision-making processes?

# 5. Overview of the Research Design (400 words)

1. Give out your research philosophy, research approaches and the methodology you will follow to conduct the research.

To achieve the research objective, the study will use an interpretivist research philosophy because it is ideal for the investigation of the objectification of the subject at the workplace where employees’ participation in decision-making processes occurs. The use of self-reflective data gathers the participants’ understanding of their experiences, consistent with the qualitative study. Interpretivism focuses on the context and the subjective meaning people give to their experiences which makes it significant when seeking to understand the impact of employees’ involvement in productivity.

The research method will be of the exploratory nature where authors will use case study research strategy mainly targeting ADNOC, a large and influential organization in UAE. This methodology allows for a detailed examination of the specific context of ADNOC, thus offering detailed information as to how and in what ways the practices of employee involvement affect productivity in this particular context. The use of case-studies is justified especially for researching multifaceted realities in context and offers the opportunity to gain comprehensive insight into the respective matters.

1. Give out the methods of collecting your primary data, discuss the population and sampling methods you will use, by justifying the same.

Data collection is the process of gathering data relevant to the research problem from sources that is original rather than secondary research data, which has already been analyzed by someone else; the following are the types of the primary data: Primary data will be gathered through interviews, approximately ten employees from ADNOC will be interviewed. Semi structured interview schedules in the form of questionnaires will be used in the interviews. This approach is semi-structured meaning that while there is a set list of questions, the respondents are free to offer elaborate responses Hence, when designing the questions, the researcher is free to pose questions in a specific manner such that they elicit extensive responses while at the same time guiding the participants to certain areas of focus in response to the questions posed. Semi-structured interviews are very suitable for understanding participants’ experiences and views more elaborately.

* Population: Decision makers in the organization Including new and experienced ADNOC employees.
* Sampling Method: In this study, purposive sampling shall be employed to obtain participants who possess adequate background knowledge regarding the research topic and decision-making process in ADNOC. This method helps to achieve a population sample that can afford to give informed opinions on the research topic.
* Justification: Purposive sampling is suitable for qualitative studies in which researchers wish to obtain detailed information from people who are closely related to the phenomena being investigated. The method targets only those employees who possess some background in the decision-making process, in order to provide the author with certain, context-sensitive information, which might help understand the effects of involving employees in the efficiency increase.

1. Discuss ethics, reliability and validity measures you are going to adopt in your research work.

* Ethics: The study will respect ethical consideration in a way that will respect participants rights and anonymity. Participation consent shall be sought from all participants and they shall be brief on the objective of the study, their role and that they have the option of withdrawing their participation in the study at any given time. Participant identification will be concealed through use of aliases and all data kept secure to participants’ requests.
* Reliability: To ensure reliability in the study, the interview guide is designed to be pre-tested on a few participants before administering them to the main sample so as to gauge the language comprehension and efficiency. Interviews will be standardized in terms of the questions that will be asked during the interview and the procedure that will be followed while conducting the interview.
* Validity: There are several ways by which the validity of the research undertaken will be ensured. The situation where the findings from one participant will be compared with the findings from the other participants to increase the validity of the research and to come up with more generalized conclusion will employ data triangulation. Furthermore, member checking will also entail using samples to confirm the finding as preliminary results will be presented to members for their opinions.

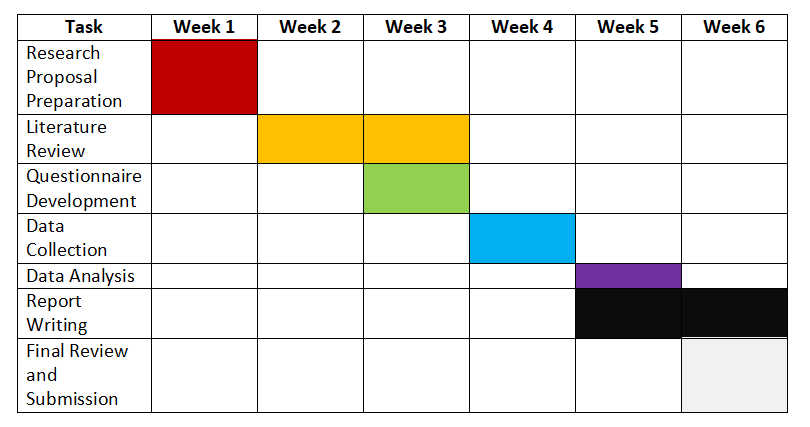
# 6. Limitations of the research design (200 words)

There are some potential limitations that have to be disclosed concerning this kind of research design. First, the proposed study will have a sample size of about 10 participants and this is from ADNOC only hence limiting external generalizability. The major limitation is that the sample size was small and thus it was challenging to generalize the findings to other organizations or sectors in UAE. Further, the concentration only on ADNOC as a subject of the study may not be sufficiently generalizable to other organizations in UAE due to various existing organizational cultures, structures and practices. This specificity brings about information that could only be relevant to ADNOC making generalizations on other organizations may not be possible.

The research method as a qualitative venture gives way to subjectivity in collection of data and their analysis as the participants’ responses are colored by their personal bias. In addition, there are threats of interviewer and participant malevolence as the study uses self-generated information and participants can be influenced give culturally appropriate responses. Lastly, the culturally diverse background of the UAE’s employees could be a limitation when it comes to understanding how the concept of employee participation regards decision making is received and managed across various cultures. The following limitations have to be taken into account while evaluating the results of the study on its history, methods and recommendations.

**Appendix to the Research Proposal**

# 1. Research plan and timelines of thesis submission



# 2. Annotated Bibliography of planned reading

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Wale, H. (2023). Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory. [online] Corporate Finance Institute. Available at: https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/management/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions-theory/ [Accessed 1 Aug. 2024].

Wang, Q., Hou, H. and Li, Z. (2022). Participative Leadership: A Literature Review and Prospects for Future Research. Frontiers in psychology, [online] 13. doi:https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.924357.

# 3. Consents/ Ethical Approval

Attach the approved Ethical Approval form.