

From Clan to Market to Hierarchy: Examining How Organizational Culture Shapes Engagement across Multinational Subsidiaries

Konstantinos Biginas¹, Antonia Koumproglou^{1*}, Vlasios Sarantinos²

¹Royal Docks School of Business and Law, University of East London, United Kingdom; k.biginas@uel.ac.uk;
akoumproglou@uel.ac.uk

²College of Business and Law, The University of the West of England, United Kingdom; V.Sarantinos@uel.ac.uk

*Corresponding Author: akoumproglou@uel.ac.uk

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is increasingly recognised as a critical determinant of multinational performance, yet evidence on how engagement is shaped by local culture remains fragmented. This study integrates Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework with the Job Demands–Resources model to examine culture-specific engagement mechanisms in three subsidiaries of a single multinational corporation (located in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus). An explanatory mixed-methods design was employed, combining survey data (N = 450) and semi-structured interviews (n = 30). Quantitatively, structural equation modelling revealed that market culture most strongly predicted engagement in the UK ($\beta = 0.38$), clan culture in Greece ($\beta = 0.41$), and, less often emphasized in Western samples, hierarchy culture in Cyprus ($\beta = 0.33$). Qualitative themes of autonomy, relational belonging, and procedural clarity explained why these cultural archetypes serve as salient job resources in their respective contexts. By combining multi-group structural modeling with explanatory interviews within a single multinational corporation, the study shows that cross-national differences are not merely comparative patterns but reflect distinct resource-meaning mechanisms through which employees interpret culture. The findings challenge universal engagement prescriptions, demonstrating that identical HR practices can carry different motivational implications across cultural settings. Tailoring engagement strategies to locally legible resource configurations is therefore essential for maximizing workforce commitment in multinational operations.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Employee engagement, Cross-cultural management, Multinational corporations, JD-R model, Hofstede's cultural dimensions

1. Introduction

Employee engagement is widely regarded as a cornerstone of organizational performance and resilience, with consistent evidence linking higher engagement to stronger outcomes across settings [1]. The challenge becomes more intricate in multinational corporations that operate across heterogeneous cultural environments where the same practice can energize one workforce and fall

flat in another [2]. Understanding how organizational culture shapes engagement across distinct national contexts is, therefore, an essential step toward developing strategies that travel well without losing local meaning.

Organizational culture is commonly described as the system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that guides behavior in organizations. Schein's multilayered account clarifies how artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions align to shape everyday action, while Hofstede's cultural dimensions illuminate how national value systems condition organizational practices and employee expectations [3], [4]. A widely used typology derived from the Competing Values framework distinguishes clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy profiles, which provides a pragmatic vocabulary for comparing cultural patterns in multinational settings [5].

Employee engagement has evolved as a distinct construct in organizational research. Kahn's foundational work conceptualizes engagement as a state of psychological presence enabled by meaningfulness, safety, and availability [6]. The Job Demands–Resources perspective extends this view by proposing that engagement arises when adequate resources, such as autonomy, support, and feedback, counterbalance demands, many of which are embedded in the organization's culture and routines [7]. These frameworks suggest that culture is not a backdrop to engagement but one of its active ingredients.

Prior studies point to systematic associations between culture profiles and engagement. Clan cultures emphasize belonging and trust and often nurture affective commitment, while market cultures prioritize results and incentives that can channel energy into goal pursuit. The Competing Values tradition offers the structure for these comparisons, and validation work supports its application in varied organizational contexts [5], [8]. Yet much of the evidence comes from single-country samples or homogeneous industries, which limits what we can infer about how national value systems interact with organizational culture to produce engagement.

The absence of integrated cross-national analyses has left several questions unresolved. Meta-analytic and comparative work shows that societal values moderate how resources translate into motivation, which implies that the same nominal resource can acquire different meanings across cultures [2], [9]. This underlines the need to test whether familiar culture–engagement relationships hold beyond their original contexts and to explain the mechanisms through which employees interpret engagement in different places.

This study takes up that agenda through a comparative investigation in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus. The United Kingdom represents a context characterized by high individualism and relatively low power distance in which autonomy and explicit performance signals often carry motivational weight [4]. Greece offers a contrasting setting, with stronger collectivist tendencies and higher uncertainty avoidance, foregrounding relational bonds and communal safety as potential resources [4], [10]. Cyprus, while sharing Mediterranean roots, exhibits a strong orientation to formal structure and social hierarchy, which can shape how employees experience clarity and fairness at work [11]. These cases provide meaningful variation for testing whether culture–engagement patterns travel and how they are refracted through national meaning systems.

This study contributes to cross-national engagement research in three ways. First, it moves beyond prior comparative studies that mainly document whether culture profiles differ across countries or whether national culture moderates resource–engagement links at an aggregate level. Instead, it theorizes organizational culture types as locally legible bundles of job resources and explains how employees in different national contexts interpret these resources as credible, motivating, or constraining. Second, by comparing three subsidiaries of the same multinational corporation in relatively similar European institutional settings, the design sharpens inference about cultural meaning systems while reducing confounding variation from wider organizational and regulatory heterogeneity. Third, the explanatory mixed-methods design adds novel explanatory power by linking cross-national differences in structural paths to employee sensemaking, showing not only that clan, market, and hierarchy cultures relate differently to engagement across sites, but also why these relationships emerge through belonging, performance visibility, and procedural clarity, respectively.

The research pursues three aims that flow from these gaps. First, it assesses how distinct cultural dimensions relate to employee engagement across the three countries. Second, it examines how employees describe and make sense of engagement in each setting, connecting statistical associations with lived experience. Third, it integrates the cultural and engagement frameworks to explain cross-national variation in outcomes and to derive implications for practice. The design combines quantitative modeling with qualitative thematic analysis to link general patterns to local interpretation with methodological rigor [12] – [14].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualizing Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement

Organizational culture and employee engagement form a mutually shaping system that guides behavior and sustains motivation. Culture is the pattern of shared assumptions and values that gives members a sense of identity and orients collective action, while engagement reflects the depth of employees' energetic, cognitive, and emotional investment in their roles [3], [6], [15]. In practice, these domains are entwined. Cultures that communicate clear expectations and meaningful purpose create the conditions in which employees bring fuller attention and effort to their work, and engaged employees in turn reinforce cultural signals through everyday routines and interactions [1], [3], [7].

Foundational frameworks clarify how these links operate. Schein conceptualizes culture as layered into artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions that together shape how people interpret situations and decide what is appropriate to do [3]. Hofstede's comparative lens shows how national value systems condition organizational practices and expectations, which matters when organizations span borders and must translate cultural cues across sites [4]. Within organizations, the Competing Values tradition provides a practical vocabulary for cultural profiles that emphasize collaboration, innovation, control, or results, and validation work supports its use for diagnosis and comparison [5], [8]. On the engagement side, Kahn defines engagement as psychological presence grounded in meaningfulness, safety, and availability, while subsequent work operationalizes this state

through vigor, dedication, and absorption [6], [15].

The Job Demands–Resources perspective integrates these strands by proposing that engagement arises when available resources counterbalance demands and enable goal attainment. Resources such as autonomy, social support, feedback, and fair recognition are often embedded in culture and are transmitted through norms and leadership behavior [7]. When employees experience their culture as supportive and enabling, they are more likely to sustain effort and persistence, with downstream effects on performance and retention across diverse settings [1], [7], [9]. Comparative evidence further suggests that societal values shape how resources are interpreted and used, which implies that the same formal practice can produce different engagement patterns across countries [2], [9].

Several cultural levers sit at the intersection of these mechanisms. Value alignment strengthens trust and encourages employees to invest themselves more fully in their roles. At the same time, open communication lets people test ideas and ask for help without fear, which supports the psychological safety needed for engagement [3], [6], [7]. Leadership that models transparency and recognition reinforces these norms and helps convert organizational values into daily experiences that matter to motivation and persistence [1], [7]. The result is a coherent context in which employees see why their work matters, feel able to contribute, and receive cues that their contributions are noticed.

Culture is not fixed. Organizations learn and adapt as environments change, and cultural profiles can be intentionally diagnosed and reshaped through focused interventions that realign values, practices, and routines [3], [5]. Understanding how these shifts alter the availability and meaning of key resources remains essential for explaining variation in engagement and for designing interventions that travel across national settings without losing local relevance [1], [2], [9]. Overall, the literature indicates that the strongest engagement emerges where cultural signals, work design, and social resources form a consistent narrative that employees can recognize and trust [1], [3], [7].

2.2 Linking Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement: Evidence and Contradictions

Research increasingly portrays culture and engagement as mutually reinforcing forces that shape motivation and effectiveness. Within the Competing Values tradition, clan, market, and adhocracy profiles emphasize different logics of collaboration, performance, and innovation, and these emphases often map onto distinct engagement patterns in practice [5], [8]. Clan-like contexts cultivate trust, inclusion, and shared purpose, which align with the psychological conditions that enable employees to invest their energy and attention at work. Market-oriented contexts privilege clarity of goals, feedback, and rewards that can channel effort toward results where performance signals are salient. Adhocracy settings invite experimentation and idea generation, which sustains engagement through autonomy and creative challenge. These relationships do not arise in a vacuum. They are mediated by the resources that cultures embed in everyday routines and by how employees interpret those resources in their setting [7]. The Competing Values framework is widely used and offers a practical vocabulary, but it should be treated as a diagnostic heuristic rather than a complete account of cultural dynamics. The typology compresses complex value patterns into a snapshot and can understate hybridity, since subsidiaries often display blended configurations that differ across functions and shift as environments change. These limits matter in multinational settings where

competing demands for flexibility and control can coexist, so interpretation should remain sensitive to ambidexterity and to leadership processes that manage cultural tensions over time [42]-[44].

Evidence supports these mechanisms across multiple designs. Meta-analytic work links cultural emphases on adaptability and learning to innovative behavior, which is commonly accompanied by higher vigor and dedication when individuals experience autonomy and meaningful challenge [16]. Studies of leadership show that cultures which normalize supportive, future-focused behaviors strengthen engagement and, in turn, innovative work behavior, suggesting a pathway from cultural signals to motivation and then to discretionary effort [17]. Human resource architectures can reinforce the same path. When practices align selection, development, feedback, and recognition with the organization's espoused values, employee engagement becomes the conduit through which HRM translates into stronger performance outcomes [18]. Internal communication plays a complementary role by helping employees make sense of goals and constraints, increasing felt inclusion and encouraging sustained participation in change efforts [19]. These findings indicate that culture shapes the supply of job resources such as autonomy, feedback, social support, and recognition, and that engagement grows where these resources are coherent and credible [1], [7].

The Job Demands-Resources perspective offers a parsimonious mechanism, yet its application across cultures warrants explicit boundary conditions. Scholars caution that what counts as a demand or a resource is not culturally neutral, since autonomy, feedback intensity, and formalization can be experienced as supportive or stressful depending on expectations about authority, uncertainty, and norm enforcement. Cross-cultural JD-R work, therefore, benefits from careful attention to measurement equivalence and from interpretation that treats resource effects as contingent when cultural moderation is theoretically plausible [45], [7], [2].

At the same time, comparative research cautions against universal claims. Cross-national analyses show that societal values moderate how resources are interpreted and used. The same formal practice can invite ownership in one context while failing to signal safety or fairness in another [2], [9]. This helps explain contradictory findings across regions and industries: collaborative rhetoric may not translate into engagement if employees do not perceive authentic support, and performance-heavy systems can energize effort in settings that prize individual agency yet dampen motivation when relational security is prioritized. The implication is that culture–engagement links are contingent on local meaning systems and on the design of work itself.

Leadership and management systems often determine which side of this contingency prevails. Transformational behaviors that model transparency, articulate purpose, and recognize contributions amplify the cultural cues that matter to engagement and can help reconcile tensions between innovation and control by framing change as shared work [17]. HRM practices that are internally consistent and visibly fair provide the scaffolding through which culture is enacted day to day, making it easier for employees to see how their contributions fit the broader whole [18]. Where communication is regular and two-way, employees are more likely to feel informed and valued, and this perception sustains effort during periods of uncertainty [19]. In aggregate, these mechanisms support the view that culture, leadership, and systems align to supply the resources specified by the

Job Demands–Resources perspective, while also explaining why identical practices yield different engagement profiles across countries and sectors [2], [7], [9].

The consequences extend beyond momentary attitudes. Engagement that is anchored in consistent cultural signals and supported by aligned people systems predicts performance and retention, and it frequently coexists with positive discretionary behaviors that lift collective effectiveness [1], [18]. The literature, therefore, converges on a practical conclusion. Culture does not mechanically produce engagement. It does so when its promises are experienced as real in the daily flow of work, and when those promises resonate with the values and expectations of the people who live them.

2.3 The Multinational Challenge: Cultural Convergence, Divergence, and Engagement Practices

Multinational corporations operate across cultural contexts that invite both convergence toward a common corporate identity and divergence toward locally meaningful practices. Engagement sits at the center of this tension because employees draw motivation from resources that are supplied by culture and interpreted through national value systems [2], [7], [9]. A corporate narrative that promises clarity, fairness, and shared purpose can travel widely, yet employees in different locations evaluate those promises through distinct lenses shaped by societal norms. Effective engagement practice in multinationals, therefore, depends on finding a workable balance between standardized cultural signals and adaptations that preserve local meaning [3], [5].

Two complementary lenses deepen this multinational logic. Institutional theory explains how host-country rules and taken-for-granted norms shape which HR practices are perceived as legitimate and how authority is enacted, creating pressures for isomorphism alongside corporate control. Subsidiaries can therefore face institutional duality, responding simultaneously to headquarters expectations and host-country legitimacy demands, altering the credibility of culture signals for employees [47]–[49]. Cultural tightness-looseness further explains variation in the strength of norms and tolerance for deviation, which can influence whether structure is interpreted as coordination support or as constraint, even when the formal practice is similar across sites [46]. These alternative perspectives are not treated here as substitutes for the focal framework but as boundary-setting lenses. Institutional theory helps explain whether subsidiary practices are experienced as legitimate under host-country conditions, while cultural tightness-looseness clarifies how strongly norms are enforced and how much deviation is tolerated in everyday work. These perspectives qualify any universal reading of the Job Demands–Resources model by indicating that the motivational value of autonomy, hierarchy, or support depends not only on resource availability but also on normative legitimacy and enforcement strength. The present study, therefore, retains Hofstede and JD-R as the primary integrative scaffold while using institutional and tightness-looseness perspectives to specify when similar cultural resources may carry different meanings across subsidiaries.

Organizational culture can unify dispersed units and influence individual attitudes and behavior when its messages are consistent and credible. Cultures that communicate a convincing sense of purpose and provide visible support tend to foster energy and persistence, which shows up as stronger

engagement during routine operations and periods of change [1], [7]. The same culture must also fit local expectations. Comparative evidence shows that societal values moderate how key resources such as autonomy, feedback, and recognition are interpreted, which means that identical practices can energize one workforce and leave another unconvinced [2], [9]. Multinationals that diagnose these differences and adjust implementation rather than intent are better able to sustain engagement across sites [3], [5], [8].

Standardization has advantages when it clarifies goals and norms. Clear expectations and reliable performance signals can focus effort in settings where individual agency and explicit rewards are valued [5], [7]. Yet unmodified global templates risk crowding out local cues that employees use to judge safety, fairness, and belonging. Where relational security and voice are central, engagement grows when communication is two-way, and recognition practices affirm contribution in locally appropriate ways [1], [19]. The lesson is not to choose convergence or divergence in the abstract, but to design culture so that global commitments are translated through local meaning systems.

Leadership and people systems often decide whether this translation succeeds. Transformational behaviors that articulate purpose, model openness, and recognize contributions amplify the cultural cues that matter to motivation and can bridge differences between innovative aspirations and the need for control in complex environments [17]. Human resource architectures that align selection, development, feedback, and reward with espoused values provide the scaffolding through which culture is enacted each day, and engagement frequently mediates the link between these systems and performance [18]. Internal communication complements these mechanisms by helping employees make sense of priorities and constraints, strengthening inclusion and encouraging sustained participation during uncertainty [19].

The rise of remote and hybrid work intensified these demands. Distributed settings place a premium on resources that JD-R identifies as pivotal for engagement, including autonomy, high-quality feedback, social support, and recognition delivered through reliable channels [7]. In practice, this means designing roles that grant latitude while maintaining evident interdependence, building rhythms that combine asynchronous progress with predictable coordination, and ensuring that local leaders can adapt practices without diluting core cultural commitments [2], [7], [9]. Where these elements cohere, engagement can be maintained across distance and difference.

The strategic implication is straightforward. Culture does not need to be identical everywhere to be integrative. It needs to be legible, fair, and convincingly lived in each place. Multinationals that treat engagement as a function of both global intent and local interpretation, and that align leadership, HRM, and communication with this dual focus, are more likely to realize the performance and retention benefits associated with sustained employee motivation across varied cultural landscapes [1], [17], [18], [19].

3. Research Design

This study employs an explanatory mixed methods design to examine how organizational culture relates to employee engagement in multinational corporations operating in the United Kingdom,

Greece, and Cyprus. The purpose is not only to test whether associations exist but also to clarify the mechanisms underlying their variation across sociocultural and organizational settings. The approach reflects established practice in rigorous qualitative and quantitative integration, in which qualitative interpretation deepens, and challenges statistical patterns, and methodological choices align with clear theoretical commitments [12].

The United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus were selected through theory-driven, purposive sampling rather than convenience sampling. The three cases share a European regional setting and a common multinational corporate platform, which reduces variation stemming from broad institutional, regulatory, and organizational differences, yet they vary in precisely those cultural dimensions most relevant to the study, namely individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. This configuration approximates a most-similar-systems design and allows the analysis to isolate culturally patterned differences in the meaning of organizational resources more credibly than a globally heterogeneous sample would. Practical access enabled data collection, but it was not the primary rationale for case inclusion. The trade-off is that inference is strongest for comparable multinational subsidiaries operating in relatively similar European institutional environments, and broader generalization should be treated as an empirical question for future research rather than assumed [50], [51].

The inquiry unfolds in two linked phases. The quantitative phase identifies the relational structure among core variables and provides generalizable estimates using validated instruments for culture and engagement, and structural modeling to test hypothesized paths. Culture is profiled with the Competing Values framework and its diagnostic instrument, while engagement is assessed with a short-validated measure that captures vigor, dedication, and absorption [5], [8], [15]. Model specification and evaluation follow contemporary guidance on measurement quality and structural relations and are implemented with established software for latent variable analysis [13], [14]. The subsequent qualitative phase explores how employees make sense of culture and engagement in their local contexts, enabling statistical associations to be interpreted considering lived experience. Analysis follows reflexive thematic principles that emphasize transparency, analytic depth, and attention to context [12].

The design is anchored in a dual theoretical scaffold. National culture is operationalized through widely used dimensions that capture individualism and collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance. These constructs shape expectations about authority, autonomy, and coordination, and they provide the basis for cross-national comparison [4]. Engagement is conceptualized within the Job Demands–Resources perspective, where motivation emerges when resources such as autonomy, social support, and feedback counterbalance demands embedded in work design and cultural routines [7]. These frameworks inform instrument selection and hypothesis development, and they guide the interpretive strategy for integrating numerical patterns with narrative accounts.

Coherence across phases is supported by attention to validity and reliability. The quantitative phase includes checks of internal consistency and construct validity, and it uses fit evaluation and robustness diagnostics to assess model adequacy [13], [14]. The culture and engagement measures

are chosen for documented reliability and evidence of cross-context utility, which support meaningful comparisons across the three countries [5], [8], [15]. The qualitative phase complements these procedures by tracing how employees interpret resources and demands in their settings and by examining the local meanings that shape the uptake of cultural practices. Comparative insight is strengthened by prior evidence that societal values moderate how resources are perceived and used, underscoring the need to interpret statistical relations through a cultural lens [9].

This sequential structure fits the research questions that require both confirmatory power and interpretive depth. Quantitative analysis maps the contours of culture–engagement relationships across sites, while qualitative analysis clarifies how these relationships are experienced and understood by employees on the ground. The result is a design that joins empirical precision with contextual sensitivity, and that can account for both the stability and the variability of engagement mechanisms in multinational environments.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

Data collection followed the sequential logic of the explanatory mixed methods design. The quantitative phase used a structured self-administered online questionnaire distributed to employees of multinational corporations in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus. The instrument elicited standardized responses on perceptions of organizational culture and employee engagement to enable valid comparison across national contexts and to prepare a stable base for subsequent qualitative explanation [20]. Measurement choices aligned with the study's theoretical scaffold. Culture was profiled with the Competing Values framework and its diagnostic instrument, and engagement was captured with a short-validated measure that assesses vigor, dedication, and absorption [5], [8], [15].

Sampling used a purposive stratified strategy to secure proportional representation across industries, organizational roles, and hierarchical levels. Stratification was designed to reflect variation in age, gender, and tenure so that inferences would rest on a heterogeneous pool rather than a narrow slice of the workforce [21], [26]. The final sample comprised 450 respondents, with 150 participants from each country, supporting cross-site comparability and providing sufficient information for the modeling strategy specified in the design [13], [20]. A precision check indicated that with $N = 450$ and balanced groups of 150, the design achieves adequate power to detect standardized structural paths of 0.20 at $\alpha = 0.05$ with CFI-based fit evaluation.

The survey instrument integrated validated scales with documented reliability and cross-context utility. Internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, and all subscales exceeded the conventional threshold of 0.80, with UWES-9 ranging between 0.87 and 0.91 and OCAI subscales between 0.82 and 0.88 [15], [22], [23]. Construct validity was examined through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, and model fit was evaluated according to contemporary guidance and implemented using established latent-variable software [13], [14]. These procedures ensured that the measurement model was stable and interpretable across settings.

Given the study's multilingual context, the questionnaire underwent forward translation and independent back translation for Greek-speaking participants in Greece and Cyprus. Discrepancies were reconciled by a bilingual panel to preserve conceptual equivalence and cultural appropriateness,

consistent with best practice in cross-cultural instrument adaptation [24], [25]. A pilot test with twenty participants drawn from the three national contexts examined clarity, cultural relevance, and technical usability, and minor revisions were incorporated before full rollout [21], [25]. Administration protocols were standardized across countries. All participants received identical instructions and followed uniform procedures, protecting the integrity of the data collection process and reducing avoidable method variance [21]. The online platform supported secure handling of responses and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation [27].

The qualitative phase drew on a purposive subsample of thirty survey respondents who consented to follow-up interviews. Ten participants were interviewed in each national context to trace how employees interpreted organizational values, engagement practices, and cultural expectations in their own settings. Semi-structured interviews balanced protocol consistency with flexibility to pursue context-specific cues. The guide was developed using a transparent, staged process to support coherence and depth, and interviews were conducted in participants' native languages where relevant. All sessions were recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim to maintain analytic accuracy and auditability [12], [28]. Sampling concluded when additional interviews yielded no novel codes relevant to the research questions, indicating conceptual saturation.

Ethical safeguards were applied throughout. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was protected, and data were stored securely for the duration of the project, in line with applicable data protection law [27]. The combination of validated instruments, rigorous translation, pretesting, and standardized procedures supports reliability, validity, and reproducibility across both phases. Respondents were recruited through corporate HR mailing lists and professional networks, with eligibility criteria including current employment in a multinational subsidiary and at least 6 months of tenure. Mixed methods design that integrates quantitative mapping with qualitative interpretation provide insights that single methods often miss, and this project followed that logic to produce findings that are both empirically precise and contextually grounded [20].

3.2 Data Analysis Methods

The analytical strategy reflected the mixed methods design and combined quantitative and qualitative procedures to produce findings that are both robust and narratively rich. Quantitative processing used SPSS version twenty-eight and AMOS for estimation and diagnostics. Key structural models were then cross-checked in R using the lava an package to examine the stability of parameter estimates and fit indices [29], [30], [14]. Preliminary screening addressed missingness, distributional shape, multicollinearity, and influential observations, following guidance for preparing data for latent variable modeling and for protecting the validity of subsequent inferences [31], [13]. Descriptive statistics summarized the sample and initial response patterns so that later modeling rested on a clear view of the empirical terrain [13].

Exploratory factor analysis was used to probe the latent structure of the adapted scales and to inform item retention decisions where needed, consistent with best practice for instrument evaluation [32]. EFA used principal axis factoring with oblique rotation to permit correlated factors. Factor retention was guided by parallel analysis and the minimum average partial criterion. Confirmatory

factor analysis then tested dimensional integrity and evaluated overall and localized fit using the comparative fit index, Tucker Lewis index, root mean square error of approximation, and standardized root mean square residual. Cutoff guidance and decision rules were interpreted in light of current recommendations and with attention to model complexity and sample characteristics [13], [33]. Standardized loadings, composite reliability, and average variance extracted were calculated for each construct. All loadings exceeded 0.60, composite reliability exceeded 0.70, and AVE met or approached 0.50, indicating acceptable convergent validity. Discriminant validity was examined via the Fornell–Larcker criterion and heterotrait–monotrait ratios. These steps established a defensible measurement platform for the structural analyses that followed. Models were estimated using maximum likelihood with robust standard errors. Missing data were handled using full-information maximum likelihood. Distributional non-normality was evaluated with Mardia’s coefficients and addressed through robust fit indices. Standardized path coefficients and 95% confidence intervals were reported, along with effect-size measures, for direct and indirect paths.

Structural equation modeling was applied to estimate the hypothesized relations among latent variables while accounting for measurement error and shared variance. Model building proceeded from theory to specification to evaluation, and respecification was limited to changes that were both statistically indicated and theoretically coherent [13]. Multi-group SEM assessed measurement invariance and compared structural paths across the three national samples. Tests proceeded from configural to metric to scalar levels, and decisions were based on changes in fit indexes widely used for invariance assessment in cross-cultural research [34], [35], [36]. When full scalar invariance was not supported, partial invariance models were estimated by freeing a minimal set of constraints indicated by modification indices and justified by conceptual equivalence. Appendix A reports fit at each step and lists each freed loading or intercept, along with its justification, so that the comparability decisions behind the multi-group results are fully transparent and reproducible. Specifically, the partial scalar model freed three intercepts, namely HI2 in Cyprus, MA6 in Greece, and UW8 in Cyprus, because modification indices indicated non-trivial baseline differences and each item raised plausible substantive concerns about role clarity, competitive framing of success, or the semantic nuance of absorption; no factor loadings were freed, preserving metric equivalence and supporting cautious comparison of latent relations across groups. Invariance decisions followed recommended cutoffs of $\Delta CFI \leq 0.010$, $\Delta RMSEA \leq 0.015$, and $\Delta SRMR \leq 0.010$ for metric and ≤ 0.015 for scalar models. Partial invariance was considered where modification indices and theory aligned.

Qualitative analysis complemented the statistical models by examining how employees described culture and engagement in their own terms. Interview transcripts were analyzed using a reflexive thematic approach that emphasizes analytic transparency, depth, and attention to context [12]. Coding and memoing were supported in NVivo version fourteen, which facilitated traceability from raw text to codes and themes [37]. Theme development was primarily inductive and was sensitized by the constructs of the Job Demands–Resources perspective and by widely used cultural dimensions, which helped connect local accounts to the study’s theoretical frame without forcing the data [7], [4]. Credibility was strengthened through iterative coding cycles, collaborative reading for

coherence, and reflexive memos that documented interpretive decisions over time [12], [38], [40].

Integration occurred through methodological triangulation, linking numerical patterns to lived experience so that each method could inform and challenge the other. Joint displays and narrative weaving were used to align quantitative findings with qualitative themes and to clarify where convergence, complementarity, or discrepancy appeared [20], [39]. Comprehensive documentation of data preparation, coding schemas, model specifications, and decision rules enhances transparency and replicability and supports the accumulation of evidence in this domain [13], [12], [40]. To assess potential common-method bias, we compared a latent common-method factor model to the baseline measurement model. Model fit differences were negligible, and no single factor accounted for most of the covariance. A marker-variable analysis produced convergent results.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

The study upheld rigorous ethical standards across all stages of the project. Participants received clear information about the aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, data handling, and the right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Survey respondents gave digital consent before completing the questionnaire. Interview participants confirmed consent in writing and again orally before the session began. These procedures reflect widely accepted guidance on ethical planning and transparent reporting in mixed methods and survey research [20], [21].

Confidentiality and anonymity were safeguarded throughout. Survey responses were collected without personal identifiers. Audio recordings from interviews were stored on encrypted devices and were anonymized during verbatim transcription. All processing and storage complied with the General Data Protection Regulation, including principles of lawfulness, purpose limitation, data minimization, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, and accountability [27].

Participants were informed that they could skip any question or discontinue participation at any point. The study posed minimal risk. The content of the questions remained within typical organizational experience, and participation carried no direct cost or material consequence. The use of standardized instructions and consistent administration across sites further supported fairness and reduced avoidable procedural variance in the research process [21].

Qualitative work received additional attention to ethical quality and trustworthiness. The interview guide balanced structure and flexibility and supported respectful exploration of participants' experiences across cultural contexts [28]. Analysis followed a reflexive thematic approach that values transparency and care in handling participants' words and that encourages sensitivity to context, power, and interpretation [12]. Trustworthiness was strengthened through documented coding decisions, collaborative review for coherence, and an audit trail that linked interpretations to the underlying data [38], [40].

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents a rigorous, integrative analysis of the findings from the explanatory mixed-methods design employed in this investigation. The analysis is explicitly aligned with the study's central research questions, which examine the influence of organizational culture on employee

engagement in multinational corporations in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative data, the section elucidates both generalizable patterns and contextually embedded meanings that shape engagement across culturally distinct settings.

4.1 Quantitative Findings and Interpretation

4.1.1. Organizational culture profiles by country

The organizational culture profiles were examined using the adapted Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), which measures four culture types: clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy. Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for each cultural dimension across the three countries. As shown in Table 1, market culture is most dominant in the UK, while clan culture is most pronounced in Greece. Interestingly, Cyprus reveals a relatively high hierarchy orientation compared to the other two countries. These patterns suggest national preferences for internal cohesion (Greece), performance orientation (UK), and formal structure (Cyprus), which align with Hofstede's national cultural dimensions, such as individualism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.

Table 1. Mean scores of organizational culture scores by country

Culture Type	United Kingdom (M ± SD)	Greece (M ± SD)	Cyprus (M ± SD)
Clan	3.4 ± 0.8	4.2 ± 0.6	3.7 ± 0.7
Adhocracy	3.6 ± 0.7	3.3 ± 0.9	3.1 ± 0.8
Market	4.1 ± 0.5	3.5 ± 0.8	3.8 ± 0.6
Hierarchy	3.2 ± 0.9	3.6 ± 0.7	4.0 ± 0.5

Note: OCAI scales range from 1 to 5. Higher scores indicate a stronger presence of the cultural archetype. Source: By authors.

Recent OCAI results indicate that national value systems leave distinct imprints on the dominant cultures of multinational subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus. In this sample, the United Kingdom displays the highest mean for market culture with a focus on measurable outputs and external benchmarking. This pattern is consistent with evidence that market profiles thrive where clarity of targets and competitive comparison are salient, and with national tendencies toward individual agency and relatively low hierarchical distance that support meritocratic, performance-driven systems [5], [4], [8], [9]. Respondents in the United Kingdom tended to interpret effectiveness in terms of explicit results rather than relational ties, which aligns with the view that value systems shape how organizational cues are understood and enacted [4], [9].

Greece has the highest mean for clan culture, emphasizing cohesion and mutual support. National tendencies toward stronger interdependence and higher uncertainty avoidance help explain why employees privilege collegiality, participatory leadership, and communal identity as sources of security and shared purpose. These conditions map well onto a clan profile in which belonging and

trust are prominent resources for engagement and resilience [4], [10], [5]. In contexts where uncertainty is salient, collaborative ties function as job resources that encourage persistence and shared responsibility for outcomes, which is consistent with motivational pathways identified in the engagement literature [7].

Cyprus presents a pronounced hierarchy profile with a preference for clear chains of command and codified procedure. Although its national scores sit between Greece and the United Kingdom on power distance, a stronger orientation to social hierarchy and formal structure can be adaptive when institutional uncertainty is part of the organizational backdrop. Employees describe the structure as a guarantor of fairness and resource stability, and many also express a longer-term aspiration for greater collegiality as capabilities and confidence grow. This interpretation fits a change path in which cultures evolve toward more participatory forms while retaining valued clarity about roles and processes [11], [5], [7].

4.1.2. Cross-national patterns in employee engagement

Figure 1 illustrates the mean engagement scores for each dimension across the three countries.

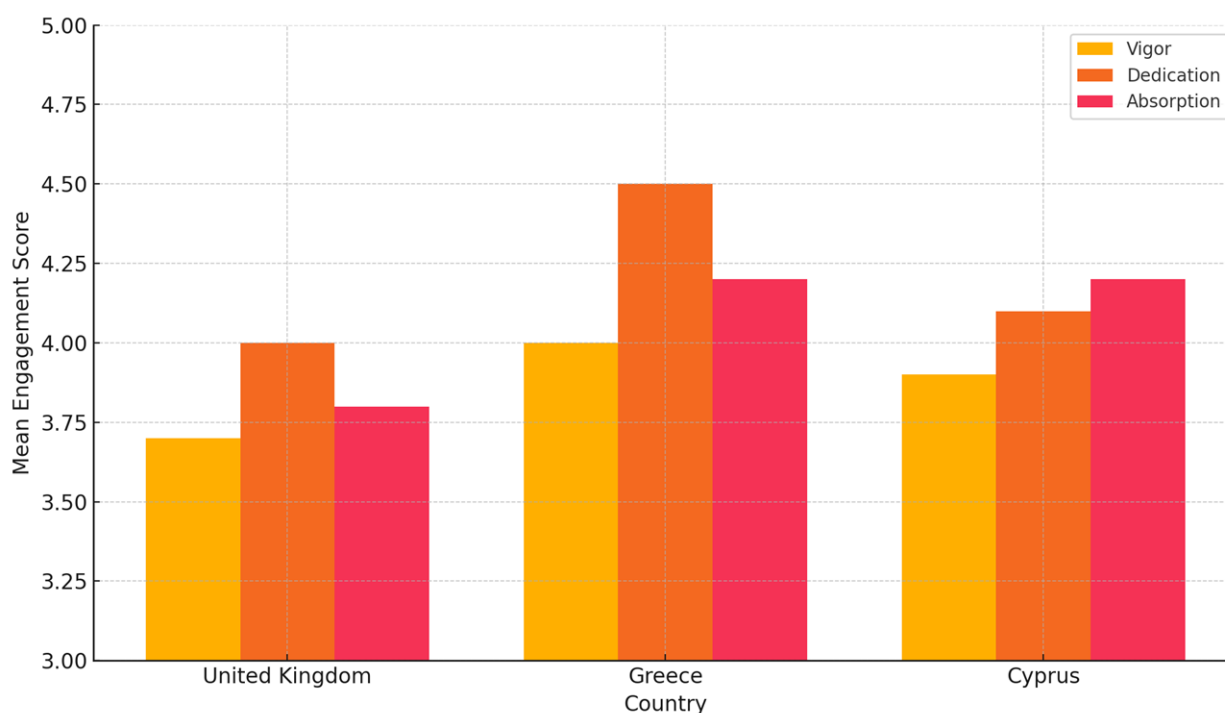


Figure 1. Cross-national comparison of employee engagement dimensions

Source: By authors.

Across the three national samples, distinctive engagement profiles mirror deeper cultural orientations. Greek respondents report the highest dedication, which aligns with evidence that collectivist and high-uncertainty-avoidance settings cultivate affective bonds with organizational purpose and with coworkers through shared values and relational trust [10], [18]. In Cyprus, absorption rather than dedication dominates. Employees describe deep immersion in tasks within a climate that still values formal hierarchy, and research on social hierarchy suggests that procedural

clarity and role security can encourage flow-like engagement even when energetic arousal remains moderate [11]. The UK profile is different. Vigor registers the lowest mean of the three countries, consistent with established engagement measurement work and recent United Kingdom evidence emphasizing work–life balance and controlled effort expenditure over sustained affective activation, although dedication remains moderately high in performance-driven environments where cognitive focus is maintained [15], [43].

These contrasts align with comparative findings that individualistic and lower power distance contexts tend to prioritize achievement and task clarity, whereas collectivist orientations draw motivational strength from socio-emotional resources and shared identity [9]. The present pattern adds nuance by showing how a hierarchy-oriented climate can support absorption when formal structures are seen as protective rather than punitive. The practical implication is to differentiate engagement levers by cultural context. Goal clarity initiatives and disciplined feedback can fit the United Kingdom. Relational programs that strengthen trust and shared purpose can reinforce dedication in Greece. Structure-plus-feedback mechanisms can sustain absorption in Cyprus while leaving room for gradual movement toward greater collegiality.

4.1.3. Structural equation modeling: linking culture and engagement

The three-group structural equation model showed excellent global fit with a comparative fit index of 0.942, Tucker-Lewis index of 0.928, root mean square error of approximation of 0.048, and standardized root mean square residual of 0.051. These indices support the adequacy of the hypothesized structure across national samples and provide a stable basis for interpreting country-specific paths. In Greece, clan culture showed the largest path weight with a coefficient of 0.41. Narratives emphasized belonging, trust, and mutual backing. Employees described engagement as feeling supported and part of a cohesive whole rather than merely meeting formal targets. These resources channel relational security into sustained dedication through the job resources pathway and fit a national profile in which interdependence and higher uncertainty avoidance elevate the motivational value of communal support [10], [7], [9], [5]. In the United Kingdom, market culture showed a robust positive association with engagement, with a standardized coefficient of 0.38 and a p-value below 0.01. Clan culture made a moderate additional contribution, with a coefficient of 0.32 and a p-value below 0.01, while hierarchy showed a negative but non-significant association, with a coefficient of -0.14. This pattern is consistent with evidence that performance-oriented climates channel resources such as clear goals, feedback, and merit-based recognition into motivational gains, a mechanism described by the Job Demands-Resources perspective and often observed in settings that emphasize autonomy and explicit performance signals [7], [5], [1], [9].

Table 2. Standardized path coefficients from cultural dimensions to engagement

Predictor (Culture Dimension)	UK (β)	Greece (β)	Cyprus (β)
Clan	0.32**	0.41**	0.28*
Adhocracy	0.11	0.16	0.08

Predictor (Culture Dimension)	UK (β)	Greece (β)	Cyprus (β)
Market	0.38**	0.19	0.21
Hierarchy	-0.14	0.09	0.33**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$. Source: By authors.

The Greek results reveal a different configuration. Clan culture produced the strongest coefficient, with a value of 0.41 and a p-value below 0.01, while market and adhocracy yielded more modest associations with coefficients of 0.19 and 0.16, respectively. This profile accords with national tendencies toward stronger interdependence and higher uncertainty avoidance, which elevate the value of relational resources such as trust, mutual support, and shared efficacy. Within the Job Demands-Resources logic, these resources buffer strain and convert communal cohesion into sustained dedication and persistence [4], [7], [10].

Cyprus presents the most distinctive pattern. Hierarchy culture was positively associated with engagement, with a coefficient of 0.33 and a p-value below 0.01, while clan and market showed weaker associations, with coefficients of 0.28 and 0.21, respectively. Research on social hierarchy suggests that clear roles and procedural regularity can be experienced as protective when institutional volatility is salient, so structure can supply predictability and fairness cues that coincide with absorption and steady contribution [11], [7], [8]. Given the cross-sectional, self-report design, this finding should be interpreted as an association, and alternative explanations, such as differences in tenure, job level, and sector composition, remain plausible.

Across countries, the pattern of paths supports the study's dual theoretical frame. Hofstede's dimensions help explain why employees in more individualistic and lower power distance contexts gravitate toward output-oriented cultural cues, while those in higher-uncertainty settings invest emotionally in communities of support. The Job Demands-Resources model then clarifies how these preferences become engagement by identifying the resources that each cultural profile tends to supply. Market cultures emphasize achievement resources, clan cultures emphasize social resources, and hierarchy cultures emphasize stability resources. The positive hierarchy-engagement link in Cyprus adds a regional insight and suggests that engagement strategies should be tuned to national value profiles and to socio-economic legacies that shape collective preferences for autonomy or structure.

4.2 Qualitative Insights and Thematic Integration

4.2.1. Emergent themes from interview data

Interview narratives revealed four engagement drivers that varied systematically with national cultural logic and were derived through a reflexive thematic process consistent with Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework [12]. Each theme connected directly to the national culture profiles and to the engagement dynamics observed in the quantitative phase (see Table 3), and together they offered an interpretive bridge between measured relations and lived experience.

Relational belonging and trust dominated Greek accounts. Employees described family-like bonds and felt collectively safe as they faced uncertainty together. These accounts align with

Mediterranean patterns of interdependence and with the idea that socio-emotional resources operate as buffers when uncertainty avoidance is stronger, within the Job Demands–Resources perspective, such climates convert communal support and mutual obligation into sustained dedication and persistence [10], [7]. British and Cypriot participants also valued interpersonal support, yet they framed it as helpful rather than central, which underscores how national value systems shape the meaning and motivational weight of the same resource [4].

Table 3. Representative themes and illustrative quotes by country

Theme	United Kingdom	Greece	Cyprus
Relational Belonging Trust	<i>"I feel connected when the team is supportive and informal."</i>	<i>"Colleagues are like a family here; that's what keeps me motivated."</i>	<i>"You know people care when they ask how you are, not just about tasks."</i>
Autonomy Goal Alignment	<i>"Having the space to make decisions motivates me."</i>	<i>"Clear direction matters, but I need freedom too."</i>	<i>"When my manager trusts me, I give my best."</i>
Hierarchical Assurance	<i>"I prefer some structure, but not micromanagement."</i>	<i>"Too much formality kills creativity."</i>	<i>"Hierarchy helps me feel safe. I know what is expected of me."</i>
Cultural Identity and Meaning	<i>"Purpose Work especially aligns with mine."</i>	<i>"We take pride in doing things our way, the Greek helps me feel valued at work."</i>	<i>"Respecting tradition and values align things our way, the Greek helps me feel valued at work."</i>

Source: By authors.

Autonomy and goal alignment were most salient in the United Kingdom. Respondents equated engagement with discretionary latitude to shape tasks and with transparent links between effort and performance. Comparative evidence indicates that in more individualistic and lower power distance settings, employees often prioritize achievement and task clarity, which can sustain focus even when day-to-day energy is tempered [9]. Greek participants also sought clear direction, though they coupled it with relational interdependence. Cypriot participants valued autonomy when it was granted within well-defined hierarchical boundaries. The variation illustrates that identical job resources acquire different meanings across cultures and that resources foster engagement where they cohere with local expectations [4], [7].

Hierarchical assurance emerged most strongly in Cyprus and complemented the positive hierarchy-to-engagement path detected in the structural models. Participants emphasized the comfort of knowing exactly where they stood and portrayed formal authority as a guarantor of procedural justice rather than as a constraint. Research on social hierarchy suggests that clear roles and predictable processes can be experienced as protective when institutional volatility is salient, enabling absorption and steady contribution [11]. United Kingdom respondents associated excessive structure with diminished initiative, and Greek respondents feared that rigid formality would erode creativity.

These contrasts reinforce the view that the motivational valence of hierarchy depends on the surrounding meaning system [4], [7], [11].

Cultural identity and work meaning appeared across all three samples but took divergent forms. Greek employees anchored purpose in collective pride and shared resilience. British participants framed meaning through alignment with personal values and career vision. Cypriot participants emphasized respect for tradition and community reputation. These patterns are consistent with the idea that national value orientations shape the cues employees use to judge whether work is meaningful and whether organizational culture delivers on its promises [4], [5], [8].

4.2.2. *Interpreting cross-cultural engagement dynamics*

Qualitative testimony shows that engagement is filtered through culturally specific meaning systems rather than expressing a single universal state. Greek participants equated high involvement with a felt sense of family and mutual backing. *“I feel engaged when I belong, not just when I perform.”* This clan-like belonging mirrors the strong positive clan-to-engagement path in the models and aligns with Mediterranean patterns of interdependence in which socio-emotional resources buffer uncertainty and sustain dedication [5], [10], [7]. The emphasis on shared values and trust fits a national value profile that privileges cohesion and voice, and it illustrates how cultural cues convert social support into day-to-day motivation [4], [7].

United Kingdom interviewees framed engagement in terms of autonomy, measurable goals, and visible impact. *“If I can steer my targets and see the numbers move, that’s when I’m most engaged.”* This reading resonates with evidence that, in more individualistic and lower power distance settings, autonomy support and performance visibility operate as core job resources that translate into vigor and dedication through the Job Demands–Resources pathway [9], [7]. The correspondence with a stronger market profile in the British sample follows from the same logic. Employees derive energy from clear targets, credible feedback, and personal accountability, which together signal competence and progress [5], [1].

Cypriot narratives completed the mosaic by highlighting hierarchical assurance as a source of trust. *“Hierarchy helps me focus; I know exactly who decides and what is expected.”* Participants described formal authority as a guarantor of procedural justice and role clarity rather than as a constraint. Research on social hierarchy suggests that clear roles and predictable processes can be experienced as protective when institutional volatility is salient, which is consistent with the positive association between hierarchy and absorption observed in the quantitative analysis [11], [7]. These accounts do not establish causality, and factors such as tenure, occupational sorting, and sectoral norms may also contribute to the experience of structure as supportive in this setting. The contrast with the United Kingdom and Greece underscores that the motivational valence of structure depends on local meaning systems [4], [9].

4.2.3. *Conceptual synthesis of mixed-method results*

Figure 2 synthesizes the mixed-method evidence into three culturally patterned engagement configurations. The figure is interpretive rather than causal. It displays the strongest standardized

association observed in each national sample and pairs that coefficient with the dominant qualitative theme that helped explain how employees interpreted the relevant cultural resource. In Greece, clan culture showed the strongest positive association with engagement ($\beta = 0.41$), and interviewees most often described belonging and trust as salient resources. In the United Kingdom, market culture showed the strongest positive association ($\beta = 0.38$), paired with themes of autonomy, target ownership, and performance visibility. In Cyprus, hierarchy culture showed the strongest positive association ($\beta = 0.33$), paired with themes of structure, procedural clarity, and role certainty. These patterns suggest culturally contingent engagement mechanisms, but they should not be read as evidence that the cultural profile itself causes engagement, because the design is cross-sectional and alternative explanations, including tenure composition, sectoral norms, and local managerial practices, remain plausible.

In the United Kingdom, market culture showed the largest path weight with a coefficient of 0.38. Narratives emphasized autonomy, target ownership, and performance visibility. Employees reported that they are most engaged “when I can steer my targets and see the numbers move.” These resources channel an achievement orientation into sustained focus through the job resources pathway and fit a national profile that prizes individual agency and clear performance signals [7], [9], [5], [8].

Cyprus completes the triad. Hierarchy culture positively predicted engagement with a coefficient of 0.33, and participants portrayed apparent authority as “helping me focus.” Thematic labels of structure and clarity capture how procedural certainty underpins secure engagement in higher power distance contexts, where predictable roles are read as protective rather than punitive [11], [9], [4].

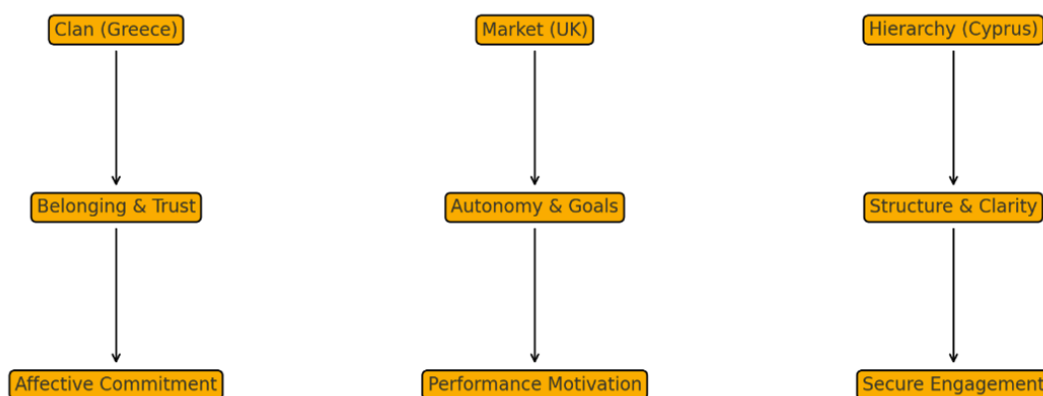


Figure 2. Culturally modulated engagement drivers across national contexts

Note. Figure 2 is a joint display rather than a causal path model. The β values denote the strongest standardized association between culture and engagement reported for each country in Table 2. The thematic anchors summarize the dominant qualitative resource interpretation for that country, namely autonomy, target ownership, and performance visibility in the United Kingdom, belonging and trust in Greece, and structure, procedural clarity, and role certainty in Cyprus.

Source: By authors.

Figure 2 shows that identical engagement labels can mask different resource configurations.

Greek subsidiaries benefit from community building and peer mentoring. United Kingdom units call for autonomy-supportive leadership and transparent metrics. Cypriot sites respond to unambiguous role definitions and visibly fair supervisory practices. Locally tuned strategies enhance resource fit and support durable engagement across the corporate portfolio.

Interpretive caution is warranted. The quantitative phase is cross-sectional and relies on self-report measures, which limit temporal inference and leave room for common method variance and socially desirable responding, even though diagnostic checks suggest that no single method factor dominates the covariance structure. Multi-group modeling strengthens comparison, yet any use of partial invariance introduces a scope condition that should be explicitly documented, since some parameters are allowed to differ across groups. The multilingual design required translation, back-translation, and bilingual reconciliation, which support conceptual alignment but cannot eliminate semantic shifts, idiomatic differences, or culture-linked response styles such as acquiescence and extreme responding that can influence means and covariances. These issues are well documented in cross-cultural survey practice and highlight the value of replication using alternative measurement approaches and additional data sources [24], [25], [53]–[55]. The three countries are all European, and the findings should be generalized primarily to comparable settings rather than treated as global regularities. Finally, although the qualitative phase deepens interpretation, interview narratives remain situated accounts and may also reflect tenure distributions, occupational composition, and sectoral norms alongside national meaning systems.

5. Conclusions

This study examined how organizational culture shapes employee engagement in multinational contexts by focusing on subsidiaries in the United Kingdom, Greece, and Cyprus. The design combined structural modeling with reflexive thematic analysis to test relationships and interpret how employees experience them in practice, providing statistical rigor alongside contextual depth [12], [13], [14], [20]. The dual theoretical scaffold combined widely used cultural dimensions with the Job Demands–Resources perspective so that national value profiles helped explain why particular resources resonate, and the resource pathway clarified how those resources translate into engagement [4], [7].

The evidence converged on three culturally modulated pathways. In the United Kingdom, market-oriented practices such as clear goals, credible feedback, and visible performance signals showed the strongest association with engagement, consistent with an individualistic, lower power distance profile that privileges achievement and task clarity [5], [7], [9]. In Greece, clan-oriented norms of trust, mutual support, and shared purpose predicted engagement most strongly, which aligns with a more collectivist, higher-uncertainty context in which socio-emotional resources buffer strain and sustain dedication [5], [10], [7]. In Cyprus, hierarchy showed a positive link to engagement, suggesting that procedural clarity and fair authority cues can act as stability resources when institutional volatility makes predictability salient [11], [9]. These cross-national patterns indicate that identical engagement labels can disguise different resource configurations, which argues against a

one-size-fits-all approach to motivation in multinational organizations.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

This study advances cross-cultural engagement theory by integrating Hofstede's cultural dimensions with the Job Demands–Resources perspective and demonstrating that national values shape both which resources matter and how they translate into engagement. In the United Kingdom, market-oriented resources such as autonomy, credible feedback, and performance visibility emerge as primary drivers. This pattern fits an individualistic, low power distance context in which achievement signals and task clarity translate into vigor and dedication through the resource pathway described by JD-R, and in which societal values moderate the salience of these cues [7], [9], [2]. In Greece, social resources rooted in clan culture, belonging, and trust fuel affective commitment and sustain dedication under conditions of higher uncertainty. This finding aligns with Mediterranean patterns of interdependence and shows how relational climates function as buffers that convert socio-emotional support into durable engagement [10], [7]. Cyprus offers the most challenging refinement. Hierarchy may function as a stability resource by providing procedural clarity and perceived fairness, which can support absorption when institutional volatility makes predictability especially salient. This result complements cultural psychological work on social hierarchy and clarifies why structure can be experienced as protective in some settings rather than as purely constraining [11], [9]. These culturally contingent pathways support a provisional cross-national resource-legibility model of engagement, according to which organizational culture influences engagement insofar as locally valued resources are rendered credible, fair, and meaningful to employees.

On this basis, the study advances three testable propositions for future theory building:

Proposition 1. The positive association between market culture and employee engagement will be stronger in subsidiaries characterized by higher individualism and lower power distance, because autonomy, performance visibility, and merit-based feedback are more likely to be interpreted as energizing job resources.

Proposition 2. The positive association between clan culture and employee engagement will be stronger in subsidiaries characterized by higher uncertainty avoidance and stronger interdependence norms, because belonging, trust, and communal support are more likely to function as protective and motivating resources.

Proposition 3. The positive association between hierarchy culture and employee engagement will be stronger where institutional volatility, stronger norm enforcement, or tighter cultural environments increase the value of procedural clarity and predictable authority, making formal structure more likely to be interpreted as supportive rather than punitive.

Consequently, these propositions shift the literature from the generic claim that culture matters to the more precise claim that culture matters through contextually legible resource configurations.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The evidence argues against uniform engagement programs and for locally tuned designs that align global intent with local meaning systems. In practice, this means selecting and amplifying job

resources that employees recognize as credible within their cultural frame so that the resource pathway described by the Job Demands–Resources perspective can operate effectively [7]. Hofstede's dimensions and comparative findings on cultural moderation help anticipate which resources will resonate in a given setting and why identical practices may produce different motivational outcomes across sites [4], [9].

In Greece, engagement grows where employees experience belonging, mutual support, and shared purpose. Managers can formalize peer mentoring, schedule regular team reflection rituals, and design interdependent project work that makes collaboration visible. These routines translate socio-emotional support into dedication by buffering uncertainty and reinforcing a clan profile that many employees already trust [5], [10], [7].

In the United Kingdom, employees describe engagement through autonomy, target ownership, and performance visibility. Managers can introduce self-managed goal setting with line of sight to outcomes, provide timely developmental feedback, and recognize progress in ways that signal competence without crowding out discretion. Such practices fit an individualistic, low-power distance context in which clear goals and credible feedback channel effort into sustained focus [7], [9], [5].

In Cyprus, secure engagement is reinforced when roles, procedures, and decision rights are unambiguous. Managers can publish clear role charters, run predictable feedback cycles, and convene transparent forums where decisions and rationales are explained. Structure is then read as protective rather than punitive and provides stability resources that enable absorption while preserving fairness cues in a higher power distance setting [11], [9], [7].

Execution matters as much as design. HR systems should align selection, development, feedback, and recognition with the cultural signals in each location, ensuring the day-to-day experience aligns with the espoused model. When practices, leadership behavior, and communication are consistent, engagement functions as the conduit that links people and systems to performance and retention across culturally diverse operations [18], [7].

5.3 Limitations

Several limitations qualify the interpretation of the findings. First, the design is cross-sectional and relies primarily on self-report measures, so the reported paths should be interpreted as contemporaneous associations rather than causal effects. Second, the case design strengthens internal comparison by focusing on three European subsidiaries within a comparable multinational setting, but this also narrows external generalizability to similar institutional environments. Third, although translation followed forward translation, back translation, and bilingual reconciliation procedures, semantic equivalence cannot be assumed perfectly across languages. Certain constructs, especially hierarchy, absorption, fairness, and belonging, may carry slightly different connotations in Greek and English, and response styles such as acquiescence or extremity may also vary across groups. For this reason, the partial invariance adjustments reported in Appendix A should be understood not merely as technical corrections but as evidence that some items travel across contexts less cleanly than others. These limitations do not invalidate the findings, but they do require cautious interpretation and motivate replication with longitudinal designs, multisource data, cognitive pretesting, and richer

linguistic validation procedures.

5.4 Future Research Directions

This study's European scope, cross-sectional design, and reliance on self-report measures constrain the strength and reach of its claims, underscoring the need for research designs that can establish how culture and engagement co-evolve under changing economic and organizational conditions. Future work should therefore prioritize longitudinal and experimental approaches that combine repeated measurement with theoretically grounded interventions, allowing researchers to assess whether particular resource configurations retain their effects as structures and strategies shift, and to clarify temporal precedence in the culture-engagement relationship.

Stronger generalizability now requires direct tests of the propositions advanced above in a wider range of institutional and cultural environments. Comparative research incorporating Asia, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, and non-European post-socialist contexts would allow scholars to examine whether the proposed market, clan, and hierarchy configurations replicate, weaken, or are displaced by alternative resource patterns. Such work should explicitly model national culture, cultural tightness-looseness, and institutional duality as contextual moderators rather than treating countries as residual grouping variables.

Methodological development should proceed in parallel. Mixed methods designs would benefit from deeper qualitative components and more diverse data sources, with ethnographic observation and digital trace data complementing surveys and interviews to capture routine practices and interaction patterns that participants may not fully articulate. Triangulation across modalities can reduce the risk that findings reflect method artifacts and can strengthen inferences about underlying mechanisms. Measurement precision also remains a priority, calling for continued instrument development and adaptation with explicit attention to construct clarity, reliability, and cross-cultural validity. Scale construction and refinement should follow established psychometric guidance and incorporate tests of measurement invariance to ensure that cross-national differences are not confounded with measurement artifacts. Analytical transparency would further improve when researchers share coding schemas, model specifications, and decision rules, and when structural models are cross-validated across multiple software environments to evaluate the robustness of fit indices and path estimates.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors confirm that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix A. Measurement Invariance Decisions

Table A1. Measurement invariance tests and freed parameters

Panel A. Measurement invariance tests

Model step	Constraints added	Chi-square	df	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	Delta CFI	Decision
Configural	Same factor structure across the UK, Greece, and Cyprus	2430.52	1185	0.940	0.050	0.055		Supported
Metric	Equal factor loadings across groups	2500.87	1237	0.937	0.050	0.060	-0.003	Supported
Scalar	Equal factor loadings and item intercepts across groups	2708.11	1289	0.924	0.055	0.067	-0.013	Not supported
Partial scalar	Equal factor loadings and most intercepts with three intercepts freed	2558.69	1286	0.936	0.051	0.061	-0.001	Supported

Panel B. Freed parameters in the partial scalar model

Freed parameter	Parameter type	Construct	Item code	Content area or domain	Freed in group	Rationale
HI2 intercept	Intercept	Hierarchy	HI2	OCAI leadership item	Cyprus	Baseline differs due to a stronger preference for role clarity.
MA6 intercept	Intercept	Market	MA6	OCAI criteria of success item	Greece	Baseline differs because success is framed less competitively.
UW8 intercept	Intercept	Engagement	UW8	UWES-9 absorption item	Cyprus	The baseline differs due to translation nuances around immersion.

Note: N = 450 with 150 respondents per country. Source: By authors