

## Strengthening People Engagement in Aerospace Component Manufacturing: A Qualitative Study of Culture, DE&I, and Employee Participation

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*Abstract: Implemented at a manufacturing site, culture-building initiatives such as a Culture Council, Women Forum events, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) programs were studied to determine their impact on employee engagement and organizational results. The purpose of this study is to get a better understanding of how these integrated activities affect the views, experiences, and overall work environment of employees. With the use of internal engagement indicators to bolster triangulation, a qualitative case study technique was used, which included conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals who were purposefully chosen. In order to extract meaningful patterns from the interview data, reflexive thematic analysis was used. Thirdly, a more positive organizational climate, indicated by high favorable engagement scores, was a cumulative effect of the three main findings: first, culture-building initiatives considerably increased employee voice and cross-functional participation; second, DE&I and Women Forum programs improved perceptions of inclusion and belonging; and third, these improvements individually contributed to the better climate. Employee experience, psychological safety, and organizational attitudes may all be greatly improved by cultural interventions that are participatory and inclusion-driven, according to the study's findings. These results show how valuable it is to combine inclusive practices with continuous listening methods, and they provide useful insights for firms that want to increase participation via integrated cultural initiatives. To learn more about how cultural initiatives work in different types of organizations, this study calls for further comparative and longitudinal studie.*

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## Introduction

Keeping employees engaged has grown in importance as a strategy for companies that want to keep productivity high, hold on to key employees, and create a resilient work environment (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Saks, 2019). The importance of this objective is particularly highlighted in sectors that rely on high levels of dependability, like aircraft component production. In these industries, the dedication, effort, and alignment of workers with organizational principles are crucial for ensuring safety, accuracy, compliance, and operational continuity. Aircraft spare-parts manufacturers and other global aerospace supply-chain businesses face significant levels of interconnectedness in their day-to-day operations, complicated technology requirements, and stringent regulatory norms. Disengagement in these settings is more than just a problem with human resources; it poses hazards to operations and may compromise quality, traceability, and compliance with regulations. Meeting performance and safety standards particular to a sector requires an engaged staff, which is good for business.

Pulse surveys are a common tool for multinational corporations to gauge employee engagement (Culbertson et al., 2020). These surveys are conducted on a regular basis and aim to gather up-to-date information on workplace conditions, leadership performance, and organizational atmosphere. Pulse surveys are given to all workers at the Bandung site of a worldwide aerospace manufacturing business that specializes in the manufacture of aircraft replacement parts on a regular basis. The results are compared to engagement scores from other global sites in different areas. Because of the high stakes and intense competition in the aerospace industry, this benchmarking system has a twofold purpose: first, it tracks cultural performance in comparison to other worldwide operations; second, it finds particular cultural weaknesses that need to be addressed at the local level. Organizations may assess cultural consistency, identify engagement weaknesses, and bring operational culture in line with global standards via these comparisons across sites.

Existing research shows that engagement surveys cannot produce durable gains in engagement levels without a supporting cultural infrastructure and follow-through activities, even if engagement surveys are widely used as diagnostic tools (Bailey et al., 2017). As an example, leadership-driven communication campaigns or engagement initiatives controlled by HR are examples of top-down engagement techniques that organizations often use as solutions (Albrecht et al., 2015). The local, social, and experiential aspects of engagement are sometimes overlooked by these methods. This is particularly true in industrial settings, where the cultures of the production, engineering, and administrative divisions differ greatly.

In global industrial workplaces, where hierarchical structures, technical specialization, and worldwide compliance needs typically impact workplace dynamics, there are gaps in academic knowledge about employee-driven, cross-functional cultural processes. Rather than focusing on centralized HR programs, there is a lack of research on how bottom-up cultural efforts might increase involvement. Theorizing how to include DE&I principles into engagement initiatives is also lacking, particularly in settings of emerging markets where diversity frameworks inside organizations are still developing (Shore et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013). The existence of internal networks like Women Forums is crucial for promoting fairness, psychological safety, and representation across functional groups in sectors like aerospace manufacturing, where female participation—especially in technical roles—remains historically low.

The Bandung site formed a Culture Council to tackle these gaps; the council's members were from several departments including manufacturing, technical disciplines, engineering,

quality, supply chain, and support. This Culture Council rejects the top-down, HR-driven model of engagement interventions in favor of a bottom-up, cross-departmental approach to ideation, refinement, and implementation of cultural initiatives. To guarantee that cultural interventions are welcoming to and reflective of all employees, the council has made the Women's Forum and the DE&I framework its key tenets. This integration is in line with recent research that shows how open-minded cultural environments may improve psychological safety, belongingness, and engagement. These aspects are especially significant in sectors that need high levels of accuracy and risk (Randel et al., 2018; Kaur & Mittal, 2023).

It is worth mentioning that the most recent pulse survey findings show a significant increase in overall engagement levels at the Bandung location. This suggests that cultural initiatives that are inclusive and driven by employees may work better than traditional techniques controlled by leadership. Evidence is mounting that cultural initiatives have a stronger impact on engagement results when workers see them as genuine, participative, and representative of their own experiences rather than as corporate requirements (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

Studies examining cross-functional, employee-driven Culture Councils that incorporate DE&I components are scarce, mostly because most previous research has concentrated on top-down engagement efforts. This is especially true for global sites in developing regions where cultural dynamics are very different from Western contexts. So, this study's goal is to look at how the Culture Council helps boost participation at the Bandung site, with the help of the Women's Forum and some DE&I principles thrown in. Within the framework of a worldwide aerospace manufacturing organization, this research aims to provide theoretically grounded and practically applicable insights into how inclusive and participatory culture-building strategies may lead to quantifiable gains in engagement.

The study is being led by the following questions in order to meet this aim:

(1) How do cross-functional Culture Council initiatives influence employee engagement at the Bandung site? (2) In what ways do the Women Forum and DE&I programs contribute to the effectiveness of these initiatives? (3) How do employees perceive the cultural shifts resulting from these interventions?

## **Research Method**

This research used a qualitative exploratory case study approach to investigate the impact of culture-driven initiatives on employee engagement at a multinational organization's Bandung site. Specifically, it looks at the Pulse Survey process, the Culture Council, the Women Forum, and DE&I programs. Research using a qualitative case study methodology captures the intricacy, contextual relationships, and social significance inherent in cultural efforts by allowing the investigator to delve into organizational processes and actual employee experiences in their native environment. Because it allows for in-depth investigation of dynamic, real-world phenomena that cannot be experimentally separated or changed, this methodology is especially suitable for studying the "how" and "why" of organizational practices influencing employee experience (Yin, 2018). Research in the field of qualitative studies has shown that exploratory case studies are useful for studying cultural interventions, employee engagement mechanisms, and organizational complexity (Hamilton & Finley, 2019).

This study's interpretative paradigm forms the basis of its qualitative design. According to this view, workers actively create meaning when they engage with organizational activities, and reality is a product of social construction. So, instead of trying to find an objective way to

evaluate engagement, the research is more interested in how workers understand and react to initiatives to foster a positive company culture. Emotional reactions, perceptions of justice, experiences connected to identity, and changing relationship dynamics are examples of the kinds of complex, subjective insights that interpretative qualitative techniques aim to capture (Aspers & Corte, 2019). The research delves into deeper levels of meaning that provide light on why some cultural activities succeed or fail in influencing engagement outcomes by stressing sense-making and lived experience via the interpretative lens.

The research used a triangulation of three qualitative techniques—document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and contextual evaluation using organizational resources such as pulse survey results—to attain methodological rigor. In addition to increasing trustworthiness and reliability, triangulation allows researchers to compare individual experiences with indicators at the organizational level, which deepens interpretation and decreases biases that can be caused by depending on a single data source (Nowell et al., 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Collectively, these methods contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics at work in today's interconnected industrial world.

Bandung site personnel who were either actively participating in or significantly exposed to culture-building activities make up the population of this research. Utilizing purposive sampling, a well-established method in qualitative research for obtaining data-rich cases that can provide profound understanding of the phenomenon being studied, the study made sure that participants had the necessary knowledge and first-hand experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to methodological recommendations for qualitative saturation, a sample size of 10-15 participants is optimal because it is within this range that both code saturation (the absence of new codes) and meaning saturation (the absence of new conceptual insights) are more likely to occur (Hennink et al., 2017; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Following iterative analysis, the ultimate sample size was settled upon when further interviews did not reveal any fresh patterns or interpretative insights.

Researchers used a semi-structured interview guide to glean in-depth narratives from workers about their experiences. For the purpose of investigating intricate cultural and social processes, semi-structured interviews are ideal since they allow for both participant constancy and the freedom to explore developing topics (Kallio et al., 2016). Establishment of conceptual domains, review of pertinent literature on engagement, inclusivity, and culture-building practices, alignment with research questions, and iteratively refining question wording for clarity and relevance were all steps in developing the interview guide according to established qualitative design principles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The last survey included free-form questions on workers' impressions of the Culture Council, their involvement with DE&I and Women Forum programs, leadership and communication style improvements, and the company's engagement and atmosphere.

Depending on the desire and availability of the participants, primary data was obtained via online interviews as well as face-to-face interviews. In organizational research, where adaptability promotes accessibility and participant comfort, this hybrid technique exemplifies modern qualitative practice (Hamilton & Finley, 2019). In order to guarantee accurate transcription and analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded with informed permission. By having participants use their own words to describe their experiences, the researcher was able to pick out underlying themes, conflicts, and patterns in the tales.

Additionally, to supplement the interview results, secondary data such as pulse survey results, cultural initiative papers, and DE&I program materials were evaluated. By providing background information, these resources made it possible to triangulate employee

impressions with facts from the company. According to qualitative best practices for establishing trustworthiness, integrating diverse data types increases methodological rigor, interpretive credibility, and facilitates fuller contextualization of results (Nowell et al., 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Altogether, these methodological decisions allow for an in-depth analysis of how workers perceive culture-building initiatives and how these perceptions impact engagement results. This research aims to capture the in-depth personal experiences as well as the larger patterns of cultural and engagement dynamics at the Bandung site via the use of an interpretative lens, triangulated methodologies, purposive sampling, and semi-structured interviews.

The interconnections between the major factors investigated in the qualitative case study are laid out in the research's conceptual framework. It describes the ways in which the Bandung site's culture-building efforts, including the Pulse Survey, the Culture Council, the Women Forum, and the DE&I programs, influence the views and experiences of workers. In qualitative research, conceptual frameworks are useful for making sense of the interrelationships between different study constructs (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Employee engagement, psychological safety, perceived inclusivity, and happiness are some of the experience mediators that these activities are said to impact. The mediating mechanisms linking organizational practices with behavioral and attitude results are often elements pertaining to employee experience, according to prior research (Kumar, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2019). Better pulse survey findings, a stronger work environment, less inclination to leave, and better employer branding are some of the larger organizational outcomes that are influenced by these mediating elements. The framework is in line with the guidelines in qualitative case study methodology and provides a visual representation of the conceptual linkages examined in this research. It guides data gathering and analysis (Yin, 2018).



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Reflexive theme analysis, an iterative and flexible qualitative analytic method well-suited to discovering meaning patterns across interview data, was used to examine the data in this research. Studies examining organizational culture and employee experiences are well-suited to reflexive thematic analysis because it places an emphasis on the researcher's active and interpretative involvement in developing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019). First, we read the transcripts several times to get to know the data. Then, we generated initial codes. Then,

we organized the codes into potential themes. After that, we reviewed and refined the themes. Then, we clearly defined and named them. Lastly, we built a narrative that linked the themes to the research questions.

By using this technique, the researcher is able to get more than just verbal descriptions from the participants and understand the underlying, hidden meanings in their stories. The adaptability, theoretical autonomy, and applicability of reflexive theme analysis to exploratory case studies have made it a popular tool in modern qualitative research (Byrne, 2022). The researcher kept analytical notes and actively considered possible biases throughout analysis to guarantee rigor in coding and theme creation. In keeping with well-established norms of qualitative rigor, data triangulation using interviews, pulse survey results, and organizational documentation further strengthened the credibility and reliability of the findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

### **Result and Discussion**

The findings of this qualitative research provide a detailed and thorough analysis of how the culture-building programs at the Bandung location affected the perspectives, feelings, and involvement of the staff there. Study findings reveal site-wide cultural change processes via three interconnected themes derived from semi-structured interviews, document reviews, and internal engagement indicators triangulated using reflective thematic analysis. Improved organizational climate leading to good work results is one of these themes, along with more employee voice and engagement, more inclusivity as a result of DE&I and Women Forum programs, and a more welcoming work environment overall. These recurring ideas show how interconnected cultural processes strengthen employee engagement via structural and relational means.

The results are interpretative, which means that workers saw the programs as more than just organizational programs; they saw them as signs of the company's care, equity, and responsiveness to their needs. Organizational activities impact workers' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015), according to engagement theory, which centers on this meaning-making process. Based on the workers' constant reports of increased inclusion, hearing, and value, it's clear that the efforts had an impact on more than just their outward impressions of the company.

Importantly, the internal engagement indicator had a 92% positive, 7% neutral, and 2% negative rating, which provided context for the qualitative themes. Although these ratings are not employed as a quantitative end measure, they do support the workers' narratives by showing that the site's cultural orientation is widely appreciated. Triangulation like this strengthens the validity of qualitative research interpretations by showing that personal narratives and organizational context are consistent with one another (Hamilton & Finley, 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). The results of this research corroborate the interpretative findings and provide credence to theoretically informed conclusions about the cultural initiatives' efficacy, since they seemed to have a convergent influence on participation, trust, and climate.

In the end, the results provide a comprehensive picture of how cultural initiatives can change organizational dynamics, improve relational climates, and increase engagement on both the individual and group levels when applied in an integrated and participatory way. In line with the current research on workplace culture, which highlights the significance of interventions that address employee voice, inclusivity, and psychosocial climate all at once to promote organizational wellness and long-term engagement, our data support this view.

Table 1 provides a concise summary of the main results, while subsequent narratives elaborate on each component in more depth.

No	Employee Experience Dimension	Evidence From Interviews	Internal Indicator (%)	Interpretation
1	Employee Voice & Participation	Greater involvement in Culture Council activities; employees observed tangible follow-ups on their feedback; enhanced transparency in communication	Favorable: 92% Neutral: 7% Unfavorable: 2%	Indicates strong empowerment, perceived responsiveness, and increased trust
2	Inclusiveness & Belonging	DE&I and Women Forum initiatives enhanced gender awareness, representation, and psychological safety; employees reported feeling “respected” and “visible”	-	Improved belonging, reduced power distance, and stronger interpersonal climate
3	Organizational Climate & Morale	Employees reported better teamwork, supportive leadership behavior, increased clarity of expectations, and improved daily interactions	-	Signals a positive shift in workplace climate and motivational energy

Source: Interview Data and Internal Engagement Indicators (2024)

Three major themes emerged from the data:

**Employee Voice & Participation**

Significant improvement of employee voice across the board is a major and prevailing trend arising from the results. Structured cultural processes, such the Culture Council, and enhancements to the pulse survey follow-up procedure led employees to believe that their input was gathered, analyzed, and used in a significantly different manner. Participant accounts of feedback procedures before to these projects' launch tended to be more symbolic, less transparent, and less frequently followed by actual actions. Better decision visibility, more transparent follow-up action timeframes, and more accessible communication channels were all made possible by the updated systems.

Employees are being encouraged to actively develop strategic cultural goals rather than just receiving signals from on high, a trend that is reflected in this change. According to research (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Men et al., 2020), systems like this support the idea that employee voice is an important factor in establishing trust, engagement, and loyalty to the business. A key component of engagement frameworks, employees reported a rise in psychological safety, which allowed them to speak out about subjects that had previously been taboo.

The formation of interdisciplinary teams under the auspices of the Culture Council is a noteworthy trend. Collaborating on cultural initiatives and organizational changes, employees from various departments who had previously had little contact started working

together. Because research shows that interdisciplinary projects improve organizational identity, decrease siloed thinking, and increase shared cognition, this change is noteworthy (Albrecht et al., 2015). In this way, the council's organizational framework served as both a means of feedback transmission and an inclusive stage for group understanding.

The 92% positive internal engagement indication is a crucial anchor in the environment. This statistic confirms that the improved impressions are widespread across the whole employee group, even though qualitative research does not depend on numerical generalizations. Consistent results from both qualitative interviews and engagement surveys provide credence to the idea that increased employee engagement is the result of a systematic culture transformation rather than an individual incident.

### **Strengthening of Inclusiveness Through DE&I and Women Forum Initiatives**

The Women's Forum and DE&I initiatives have led to substantial gains in inclusivity, which is the subject of the second overarching topic. Fairness, gender representation, and respect for one another were all seen as much better by employees after these programs. According to these results, cultural interventions affected more fundamental aspects of culture, such as values, conventions, and relationship dynamics, than just formal structures.

In order to promote a more courteous and equal workplace, address gender disparities, and challenge long-standing cultural blind spots, participants deemed the DE&I programs crucial. The Women's Forum was well-received by staff members as a welcoming space where they could share experiences with gender inequality, find resources to help them overcome obstacles, and have their views heard. Employees reported feeling more comfortable discussing delicate topics, asking for advice, and taking part in discussions that had previously been off-limits, suggesting that these measures had improved psychological safety.

This overarching theme is in line with the research showing that welcoming spaces make people feel more included, less threatened, and more motivated to participate (Shore et al., 2018; Nishii, 2013). Research indicates that employees' views of fairness and representation increase their attitudinal and behavioral engagement, and inclusiveness is seen as a critical mediator connecting organizational practices to good employee outcomes (Randel et al., 2018). This study's results provide solid evidence in favor of these theoretical claims.

Notably, female workers, who are newer to the company, reported feeling the effects of DE&I activities right away. During their first months on the job, they felt accepted, included, and encouraged. This not only shows that inclusivity is becoming better over time, but it's also becoming a part of the onboarding process, which might increase retention and loyalty to the company in the long run.

Furthermore, it seemed like the workshops helped break down barriers between different levels of management and encourage more collaborative dialogue. Leadership behavior changed as a result of DE&I training and exposure to the Women's Forum, as employees saw their leaders as more accessible and attentive to their needs. The results of leadership-inclusiveness research, which emphasizes the importance of leaders as agents in establishing environments where workers are appreciated and esteemed, are consistent with these changes in interpersonal dynamics (Randel et al., 2018).

Overarchingly, the DE&I and Women Forum programs played a crucial role as cultural mediators, fostering a feeling of belonging, equity, and psychological safety among workers. These factors are essential for fostering sustained engagement and a strong corporate culture.

### **Organizational Climate and Positive Work Outcomes**

A more pleasant corporate atmosphere was the result of participative and inclusive cultural practices, as seen in the third topic. Overall morale, team dynamics, leadership interactions, communication, and cooperation were all characterized by employees as having improved.

Collegial and helpful contacts at work improved, according to participants. Team members were more cooperative, had clearer goals and objectives, and communicated them more consistently. Additionally, workers felt that their leaders cared more about their growth as individuals, offering better guidance, more regular feedback, and more empathy when addressing issues. The widespread recognition of a people-centered leadership style as a factor in employee well-being and engagement has led to these gains (Bailey et al., 2017; Saks, 2019).

An other robust trend that emerged from the data was an improvement in morale. As a result of the strides taken to improve company culture, workers reported increased motivation, energy, and pride. Many respondents said the site was now a "better place to work," and some went so far as to say they would suggest it to others. These considerations point to the possibility of indirect effects on employer branding, a result borne out by studies linking involvement to favorable opinions of the company from the outside (Saks, 2019).

Not only that, but the engagement indicators only showed 2% negative sentiment, so it's safe to say that bad views weren't pervasive. This quantitative data supports the anecdotal evidence of a better atmosphere and shows that continuing cultural activities have widespread support.

Additionally, this research discovered early signs of improved desire to retain. Participants reported feeling more appreciated, encouraged, and inspired to participate in the long run, while qualitative data does not measure turnover risk. Such feelings are in line with the findings of previous studies that found engagement to be a strong predictor of organizational commitment and a strong predictor of turnover intention (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Albrecht et al., 2015). In conclusion, the results show that the emotional, relational, and psychological aspects of organizational life are becoming stronger, which is great news since they're the building blocks of a healthy and long-lasting work environment.

### **Discussion**

The results of this research provide credence to the theory that proposes that actions aimed at fostering a healthy company culture have an effect on mediators of employee experience, who in turn have a beneficial effect on organizational outcomes. According to the findings, systematic cultural interventions like pulse surveys, Culture Council events, Women Forum programs, and DE&I projects have a significant role in molding the way workers see the world and their everyday experiences.

These initiatives led to an increase in the conceptual model's mediating variables—workplace happiness, psychological safety, and engagement—as reported by workers. The organizational outcomes of the model, which include a more positive work environment, more productivity, stronger company branding, and the desire to stay put, were all significantly correlated with these mediators.

Consistent with other research, this trend shows that employees' views of equity, autonomy, inclusiveness, and fair treatment impact their level of involvement (Kumar, 2022; Albrecht et al., 2015). Cultural interventions at the Bandung site are likely making a difference

by following well-established engagement routes, according to the theme findings and well-established theoretical viewpoints.

Braun and Clarke (2019) state that the findings are derived from the participants' narratives and that they were able to identify minor patterns based on their experiences via the use of reflective theme analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) noted that to provide depth and flexibility in obtaining employee viewpoints, semi-structured interviews were used. Additionally, document triangulation was used to increase analytic credibility and contextual grounding. The interpretations are supported by the congruence between engagement metrics and interview topics.

Collectively, the results show that programs focused on inclusivity, participatory culture, and ongoing feedback may significantly improve corporate environment and employee engagement. Practical insights for practitioners wanting to enhance the employee experience via participative and inclusive methods are offered by this research, which offers data confirming the benefits of integrated cultural interventions within global operational environments.

## Conclusion

Organizational results and employee engagement at the Bandung site were analyzed via the lens of culture-building efforts, such as the Culture Council, the Women Forum, the pulse survey mechanism, and DE&I programs. These measures greatly enhanced employee voice, inclusivity, and workplace atmosphere, according to data from reflective thematic analysis and internal engagement metrics. In line with previous research that highlights the significance of inclusivity, psychological safety, and voice in engagement outcomes, the results of this study confirm the research objective by demonstrating that structured cultural interventions significantly impact employee experience (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Shore et al., 2018). In addition to the qualitative evidence, the 92% positive engagement score shows that workers generally approve of the measures that have been put into place.

Theoretically, the study backs up current models that state organizational practices lead to employee experience mediators like belongingness, psychological safety, and engagement, which in turn lead to better organizational attitudes and behaviors (Albrecht et al., 2015; Kumar, 2022). Empirical data back up the theoretical framework established in this study, which shows how cultural factors influence mediators of employee experience and organizational results. This helps fill a gap in the research by showing how culturally integrated interventions function in a multinational company setting and how various efforts build each other to affect employee experience.

The research provides practical evidence that culture councils and other participatory culture-building institutions, when coupled with diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) and gender-focused initiatives, may significantly improve involvement and the overall environment of a company. These results point to the need for firms to embrace integrated strategies that merge inclusion-oriented treatments, employee engagement mechanisms, and continuous listening technologies in order to boost employee experience. Moreover, the findings highlight the significance of open and visible communication channels, as well as visible follow-ups on employee feedback, in maintaining trust and engagement.

This research has limitations, despite the fact that it contributes. Because the study only took place at one location inside a single multinational corporation, its results may not apply to other contexts with similar cultural or structural features. Data from interviews and internal papers were also heavily used in the research, which might have been skewed by

participant self-presentation or organizational narratives. Research in the future might broaden its focus by comparing different locations in different areas, using longitudinal designs to monitor participation over time, or combining different methods to make the results more solid. How certain DE&I components affect various demographic groups or the interplay between leadership practices and culture-building processes in determining employee experience are also potential areas for further study.

All things considered, the study provides valuable information for businesses that want to improve employee satisfaction in diverse and ever-changing workplaces by shedding light on how culture-building programs affect engagement and organizational results.

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