



Investigating the Impact of HR Rebranding on Employee Engagement through Organizational Culture Transformation

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ABSTRACT: Based on the resource-based and signaling theories, this study examined the mediation of Organizational Culture Transformation on the effects of HR Rebranding on Employee Engagement in the Fijian hospitality sector. Data analysis has been performed from a regression-type mediation analysis including PROCESS Macro, whereas thematic analysis was employed for qualitative insight analysis. A sample of 112 employees working across hotels and resorts were used, and data were collected using SurveyMonkey, along with interviews and questionnaire items used in focus groups. One caveat of this study is its cross-sectional design, limiting causal inferences. Indeed, results demonstrated a significant and significant positive correlation between HR Rebranding & Organizational Culture Transformation, and between Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement. In fact, Organizational Culture Transformation acted as a complete mediator for the HR Rebranding–Employee Engagement association. Qualitative evidence supported these trends with trust, inclusion, and wellbeing enhanced as primary drivers of engagement, but also challenges, including resistance to change and doubts concerning the sincerity of rebranding. This study serves as practical guidance for HR professionals and leaders in hospitality businesses on how to better focus on the HR dynamics, concentrating on employee engagement. Highlighting the mediating function of organizational culture, the study can equip managers with meaningful skills and insights to marry HR branding with cultural change to improve job satisfaction and sustained commitment of the workforce with resilience and thriving output.

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KEYWORDS:

HR Rebranding, People & Culture, Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, the field of Human Resource (HR) function has evolved from transactional tasks to strategic responsibilities focused on employee experience and organizational culture. A growing trend focuses on HR departments rebranding to a “People & Culture” heading and it is all about inclusivity, wellbeing and values-based practices. This evolution represents global efforts to change HR from an institutional-level tick-box exercise to an active driver of organizational success through people-centric measures rather than procedural measures. Given that the quality of service provided and the satisfaction of guests directly stems from people being engaged, the importance of HR transformation is very apparent in the hospitality industry particularly. There is now general recognition in organizations that HR policies do not lead only to high employee engagement but that a great deal of this is determined by the organizational culture within which those policies work. As a result, HR rebranding exercises aim to convey a new sense of commitment to staff, their success depends on whether those actions remain part of a more widespread culture change. Theoretical models, including RBT, and Signaling Theory, offer a basis for examining this phenomenon. According to RBT, intangible resources (e.g. organizational culture, employee involvement) represent the critical resources with potential for sustainable competitive advantage. Signaling Theory holds that HR rebranding is used as a signal to employees and external parties, highlighting or signaling organizational priorities and values. Yet signaling alone may prove to be inadequate without also a strong cultural infusion. Even though interest in HR rebranding is growing, findings from research on employee engagement have been few, particularly in developing nations and service sectors. This research seeks to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the mediating role of Organizational Culture Transformation on the HR Rebranding–Employee Engagement relationship in the Fijian hospitality sector.

Approaching this research using mixed methods with quantitative analysis by employing survey data and qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups, the research presents this holistic perspective from the different aspects of human resource branding

initiatives leading to employees' outcomes. The results add theory through confirmation of culture as an important bridge and offer a practical guideline for HR managers trying to boost engagement by means of strategic branding and cultural fit. Not only does this study provide context-specific recommendations, by focusing on a service-oriented industry as the hospitality sector in Fiji, but it also provides organizations with insights with direct relevance in the same sector.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

HR departments are being rebranded by companies as People & Culture to indicate a transformation approach to employee-focus. Yet, there is scarce empirical evidence to determine if just this rebranding improves employee engagement, or its success is ultimately influenced by more fundamental organizational culture adjustments. The key question is whether HR rebranding is a signal of change. But if meaningful culture and practice do not align, engagement might be only very low. In contrast, Resource-Based Theory suggests that organizational culture and commitment may well be strategic resources that foster competitive advantage: this means cultural transformations are the root cause of better employee results.

This study addresses this void with a mediation model (see figure 1) that tests the following:

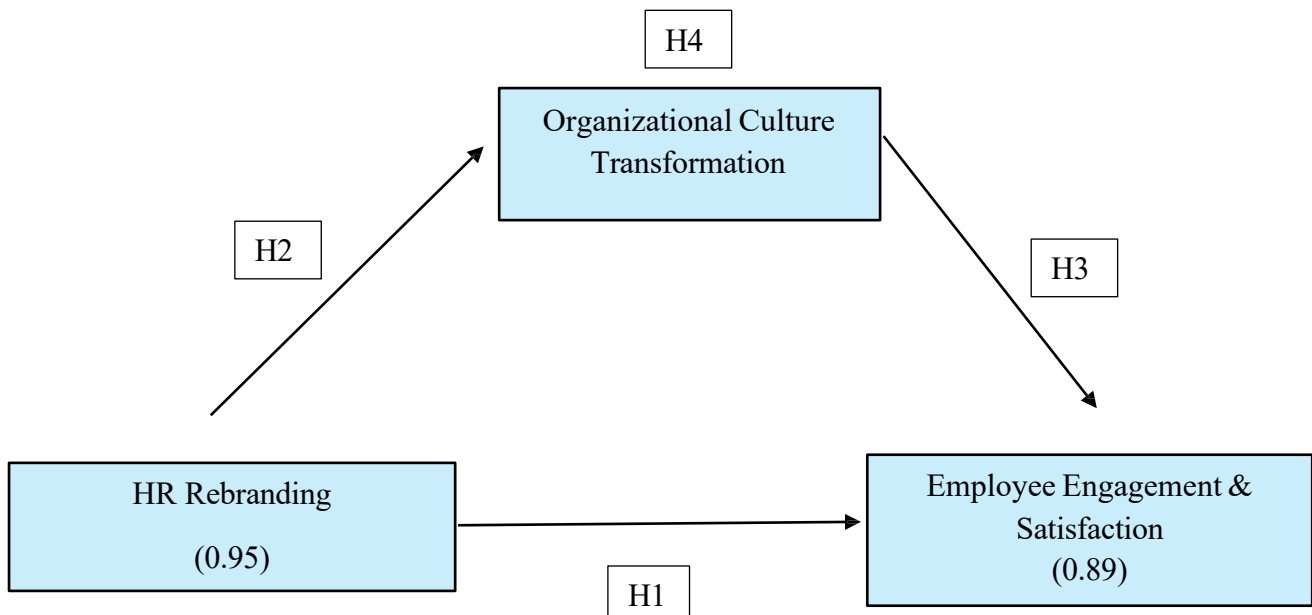


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

LITERATURE REVIEW

HR Rebranding and Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

Revising HR (including but not limited to operationalizing such actions as employer branding and digital transformation) has become a strategic lever for improving employee engagement and satisfaction. Sharma et al. (2024) discovered that employer branding significantly mediates the relationship between HR practices and employee engagement, implying that both internal and external perceptions of HR in practice can influence employee behaviour and attitudes. Their PLS- SEM analysis further supported that rebranded HR functions which focus on value creation, transparency and employee-centricity are believed to enhance the engagement and retention of employees. Similarly, Evans-Uzosike and Okatta (2025) ran a meta-analytical analysis and discovered that the most decisive factor in retaining and involving staff is HR branding and communication strategies. Their findings point out that HR rebranding is not just cosmetic, it is a real shift in character; one that brings HR into line with employee expectations, leading to increased satisfaction.

H1: HR Rebranding will be positively related to Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

HR Rebranding and Organizational Culture Transformation

Cultural changes in an organization also come from HR rebranding. Finnholm et al. (2025) advanced a conceptual framework that views HR professionals as change agents with the potential to enhance enterprise culture through strategic rebranding and capability refinement. Their work highlights that the changing nature of HR - from administrative to strategic - permits HR to shape cultural norms and values as well as behaviour. Claessens et al. (2025) further corroborates this point by illustrating the central role of HR in strategic and sustained organizational change planning.

H2: HR Rebranding will be positively related to Organizational Culture Transformation

Organizational Culture Transformation and Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

The association of companies' culture and its influence on employee engagement is increasingly backed up by literature. Mazzetti and Schaufeli (2022) provided a longitudinal example that engaging leadership promotes a team culture that greatly benefits employee engagement and performance. Their results underscore the significance of cultural cues including trust, empowerment and alignment as a driver of engagement. Chelangat (2022) gives an extensive literature review showing that an effective organizational culture (i.e., open conversation, recognition and alignment with employee values) drives increased satisfaction and job performance. As a collective, these studies affirm that culture is more than backdrop to employee experience as a driver.

H3: Organizational Culture Transformation will be positively related to Employee Engagement & Satisfaction.

Mediating Role of Organizational Culture Transformation

The mediating effects of organizational culture in HR rebranding - engagement relationship are being acknowledged in the literature. A more detailed explanation is found in Alafeefi and Ebrahim (2025) conducted an empirical study using the PLS-SEM methodology which showed that organizational culture mediates the impact of HRM practices on employee performance. Their research shows that HR rebranding, without a supportive culture, may not lead to full alignment with engagement or satisfaction. Boulet and Dextras-Gauthier (2025) provide more evidence from mixed-method research that satisfaction of HRM practices has the potential to influence the quality of working life although only mediated by the existence of a strong organizational culture. Such conclusions highlight the necessity of integrating HR rebranding activities with cultural transformation to maintain a sustainable level of employee engagement results.

H4: Organizational Culture Transformation will mediate the relationship between HR Rebranding and Employee Engagement & Satisfaction

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The study targeted employees from Fiji’s hospitality industry, including hotels, resorts, and service organizations. A total of 112 participants completed an online survey via SurveyMonkey, using purposive sampling to ensure representation across job positions, experience levels, and organization sizes. Most respondents were female (55.36%), aged 25–34 years (43.75%), and had 1–3 years of work experience (46.43%), reflecting a primarily early-career workforce.

Data Collection:

Quantitative data were gathered using a structured questionnaire consisting of 21 items across three constructs:

- Employee Engagement and Satisfaction ($\alpha = .90$)
- Organizational Culture Transformation ($\alpha = .90$)
- HR Rebrand ($\alpha = .95$)

Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The survey was distributed online via email and social media to ensure wide and anonymous participation.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability testing (Cronbach’s alpha), correlation analysis, and mediation analysis through regression and bootstrapping (PROCESS Macro) to examine relationships among the constructs.

Figure 2: Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Gender	Male	Female	Non-Binary	fer not to say	
	43.75%	55.36%	0	0.89%	
Age	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and above
	12.5%	43.75%	31.25	9.82%	2.68%
Current Job experience	< 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	More than 10 years
	8.93%	46.43%	26.79%	13.39%	4.46%

The table above provides an overview of the participants involved in the study, highlighting their gender, age groups, and levels of job experience. It shows that most respondents were female, aged between 25 and 34 years, and had 1 to 3 years of work experience

in the Fijian hospitality sector. This information helps to contextualize the findings by illustrating the background of the workforce surveyed.

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Correlation of Variables for the Study

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	2.47	0.93	1					
2. Gender	1.56	0.50	-0.06	1				
3. OCP Exp	2.58	0.99	0.47***	0.04	1			
4. EE	3.46	0.71	0.10	-0.11	-0.07	1		
5. OC	3.43	0.74	0.08	0.11	0.06	0.71***	1	
6. HRR	3.79	0.85	-0.00	0.08	-0.05	0.51***	0.73***	1

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Variables: 1 = Age, 2 = Gender, 3 = Current Occupational Experience (OCP), 4 = Employee Engagement (EE), 5 = Organizational Culture (OC), 6 = HR Rebranding (HRR)

The table presents descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients for six key variables: Age, Gender, Occupational Experience (OCP Exp), Employee Engagement (EE), Organizational Culture Transformation (OC), and HR Rebranding (HRR).

Descriptive Statistics:

The average scores for EE, OC, and HRR were moderate to high, indicating generally positive perceptions among respondents. Age and occupational experience showed moderate variability, while gender distribution was slightly skewed. EE was correlated highly and significantly with OC ($r = 0.71, p < .001$), implying that organizational culture improvements lead to increased employee engagement. HRR also had a robust positive association with OC ($r = 0.73, p < .001$), indicating HR rebranding activities are considered building upon organizational culture.

The strong direct relationship of HRR with EE was moderate ($r = 0.51, p < .001$), in line with the hypothesis that HR rebranding positively impacts Employee engagement. Age and occupational experience were positively correlated ($r = 0.47, p < .001$), as was expected. These findings uphold the proposed mediation model: Organizational Culture Transformation mediates the relationship between HR Rebranding and Employee Engagement.

Table 3. Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Item	Mean	SD
EE 1	3.45	0.705
EE 2	3.43	0.734
EE 3	3.79	0.841
EE 4	3.45	0.850
EE 5	3.71	0.821
EE 6	3.23	0.910
EE 7	3.17	0.919
OC 1	3.70	1.021
OC 2	3.53	0.971
OC 3	3.41	0.909
OC 4	3.40	0.954
OC 5	3.41	0.948
OC 6	3.28	0.851
OC 7	3.48	0.949
HRR 1	3.45	0.902
HRR 2	3.50	0.873
HRR 3	3.49	0.923
HRR 4	3.77	0.910
HRR 5	3.79	0.832
HRR 6	3.89	0.985
HRR 7	3.74	0.945

Variables: Employee Engagement (EE), 5 = Organizational Culture (OC), 6 = HR Rebranding (HRR)

Table 4. Mediation of OC between HRR and EE

Parameter	Dependent	R ²	F	P	Coefficient	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant HRR	OC	0.526	122.25	0.000	1.033	0.222	4.650	0.592	1.474
					0.632***	0.057	11.055	0.513	0.746
Constant HRR OC	EE	0.506	55.941	0.000	1.130	0.239	4.723	0.655	1.605
					0.018***	0.081	0.225	0.186	0.143
					0.698***	0.093	7.443	0.516	0.884
Direct effect of X to Y					0.018***	0.884	0.225	0.149	0.180
The indirect effect of X to Y					0.427***	0.074		0.212	0.596
The total effect of X to Y					0.441***	0.069	6.150	0.272	0.562

First, it was hypothesized that HR Rebranding would have a positive correlation with employee engagement and satisfaction. The results of the analysis (see Table 4) indicate that HR Rebranding is positively associated with team dynamics (TD) ($\beta = 0.018$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1. Second, the findings ($\beta = 0.632$, $p < 0.001$) also provide full support for H2, confirming a positive correlation between HR Rebranding and organizational culture (Table 4). Third, as anticipated, organizational culture positively correlates with employee engagement and satisfaction, with the results ($\beta = 0.698$, $p < 0.001$) fully supporting H3 (Table 4). Furthermore, the analysis reveals a direct effect ($\beta = 0.018$, $p < 0.001$), an indirect effect ($\beta = 0.427$, $p < 0.001$), and a total effect ($\beta = 0.441$, $p < 0.001$), indicating partial mediation and providing support for H4 (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

The evidence suggests that Organizational Culture Transformation provides a complete mediating effect between HR Rebranding and Employee Engagement, which is consistent with the theoretical assertion that HR initiatives do not necessarily improve engagement without accompanying cultural change. This is in concert with organizational behavior and strategic HR literature, highlighting culture as a channel to translate HR branding efforts into relevant employee outcomes. In proving full mediation in the HR literature, this study adds to the theoretical body of knowledge by demonstrating the role of significant cultural shift in HR-driven engagement schemes.

Practical Implications

For practitioners and leaders within the hotel and hospitality industry, the study highlights that HR rebranding strategies should be complemented with cultural transformation efforts. Merely “alter HR policies or brand design” without also dealing with organizational culture might not be effective in driving better engagement. Leaders or management should focus on fostering inclusively transparent and value-oriented culture for optimal effect from HR Branding Campaigns. That means it aligns HR reforms with leadership communication, collaboration and trusting relationships to help build sustained engagement.

Constraints and Prospects:

- **Limitations:** The study is small sample confined to staff of hospitality industry in Fiji and could not be generalized to other settings or regions.
- **Cross-sectional design:** Citing cross-sectional data weakens a causal inference. Studies in future should use longitudinal designs to establish temporal relationships.
- **Demographic:** Age, sex, and professional background were not moderated. And future studies should investigate these demographic variables for finer distinctions.
- **Other Variables:** Future studies could test other mediators (i.e., leadership style, communication environment) and moderators (i.e., institutional size, technology adoption) to extend the model.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to empirical evidence indicating that Organizational Culture Transformation is the most significant relationship between HR Rebranding and Employee Engagement. Although HR rebranding initiatives symbolize a move towards employee-centric behaviour, their efficacy depends on incorporating said transitions into organizational cultures that are adaptive and supportive. This requires hospitality organizations in Fiji and similar contexts to go beyond tokenistic human resources practices, to the broader, cultural restructuring that needs to occur. Doing so would lead to increased engagement, satisfaction, and hence, greater performance.

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