

**Breaking Silos with Objectives and Key Results:
A Case Study of a Multicultural Technology Company**

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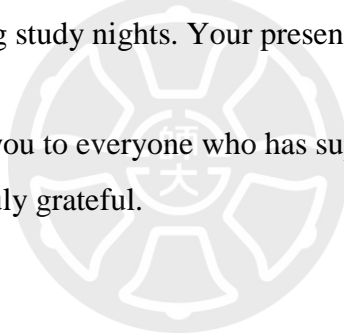
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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) in a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment, with a specific focus on their effectiveness in breaking down silos and fostering collaboration. While OKRs are widely adopted to enhance alignment, transparency, and accountability, their impact on overcoming organizational silos in diverse and distributed teams remains underexamined. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research investigates the OKR adoption process, highlighting key challenges such as misalignment in goal-setting, inconsistent training, and limited cross-departmental visibility. Based on the findings, the study suggests that while OKRs improve individual accountability and provide structured goal-setting, they do not inherently dismantle silos. A bottom-up approach to OKR implementation resulted in fragmented objectives, reinforcing existing departmental boundaries rather than bridging them. Moreover, cultural diversity and remote work conditions had a minimal impact on OKR adoption compared to structural and leadership-related factors. The study also underscores the importance of leadership commitment, structured training, and transparent goal-setting in ensuring the successful implementation of OKRs. It provides practical insights for organizations looking to integrate OKRs effectively in multicultural and remote environments, emphasizing the need for strategic alignment, continuous engagement, and accessible tracking mechanisms. By addressing these factors, companies can maximize the potential of OKRs, not just as a performance management framework but also as a tool to enhance collaboration and organizational cohesion.

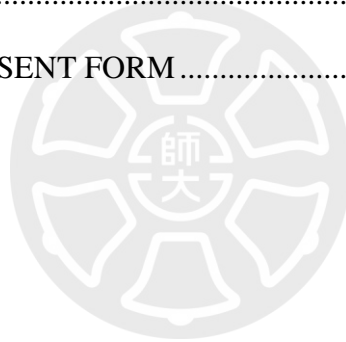
Keywords: Objectives and Key Results, multicultural teams, remote work, organizational silos, cross-departmental collaboration



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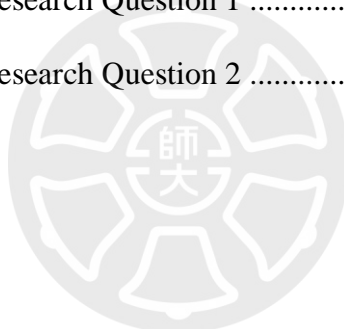
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the research topic, background information; state the purpose, problem area, and research disposition.

Research Background

In the current dynamic and fast-paced technological setting, companies must consistently engage in innovation and adapt to new advancements to stay competitive in the market. Furthermore, it is critical for organizations to have distinct long and short-term strategic objectives to guide these innovations. Nurturing collective cohesion, which promotes efficient cooperation and removes organizational barriers across departments, is crucial for an organization to grow and accomplish its objectives. While some companies successfully foster this environment, others fail to do so. Therefore, maintaining a competitive advantage requires not only ongoing innovation and clear objectives, but also the establishment of a collaborative organizational culture.

In addition, effective human resource management practices are argued to be "a source of sustainable competitive advantage" (Delery & Roumpi, 2017, p.1). Companies often design human resource management activities to align with their capabilities. Employee evaluation is one of the critical activities. An effective evaluation method not only enhances employee performance and ensures the company meets its objectives but also serves as a tool to promote collaboration and increase cohesion among team members. Objective and Key Results (OKRs) framework has been described as a successful tool in regard to this.

The concept of OKRs has been widely adopted by organizations aiming to drive focus, alignment, and engagement among employees. Niven and Lamorte (2016) explained that OKRs help organizations set clear, measurable objectives and track their progress towards achieving them. In addition, Herkenrath et al. (2023) described that the OKR framework not

only establishes the goals for an organization to obtain but also quantifies the success. For this purpose, the goal-setting process appears in a V-shape, starting with top-down direction and then transitioning to bottom-up input, which includes feedback from employees. This promotes open and clear communication at every level. Zasa and Buganza (2022) pointed out in their research saying that OKRs foster team alignment and enhance employee engagement with the company mission. This finding implied that OKR is considered a great tool to enhance collaboration among team members.

In order to stay competitive in an era of rapid change and continuous acquisition of new, innovative automatic tools, businesses invest significant time and financial resources in implementing a system such as OKRs with the hope that it could be a solution to help them set clear goals and enhance team collaboration, which are two essential factors for company success (Al-Saadi et al., 2023; Rompho, 2023). Naturally, organizations expect a return on this investment, whether in a qualitative form (e.g., greater transparency and alignment) or a quantitative form (e.g., improved productivity and performance). Accordingly, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of OKRs within organizations to determine whether this investment is indeed justified.

However, most studies on OKR frameworks have been conducted in Western or culturally homogeneous environments, which offers limited understanding of how OKRs work in diverse companies. The difference is especially clear in Vietnam, where organizational cultures combine modern corporate structures with hierarchical traditions, therefore potentially influencing the effectiveness of OKRs. While many studies focus on OKRs as a performance management tool, their influence on breaking down rooted silos, a major obstacle to cross-functional collaboration, remains mostly unexplored. Existing research touches on team alignment but fails to investigate how OKRs influence interdepartmental relationships, decision-making power, and collaboration in fragmented work environments. Furthermore,

current OKR studies often assume a uniform application across different business settings, overlooking how cultural diversity and remote work shape goal-setting behaviors and collaboration dynamics. This assumption may lead to flawed conclusions and ineffective OKR implementations in non-Western contexts. Since OKRs are still relatively new in Vietnam, organizations risk adopting them without fully understanding their limitations or the adaptations needed to make them work in multicultural and remote settings.

Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by examining the OKRs implementation process in a Vietnamese multicultural IT company located in Ho Chi Minh City with a remote workforce. Specifically, it questions the idea that OKRs automatically encourage people to work together by looking at how cultural diversity, remote work, and organizational norms affect the framework. Instead, it explores whether OKRs truly help break down silos or whether they risk reinforcing existing structural inefficiencies, an area largely overlooked in prior research.



Problem Statement

Vietnam is the country which continues to promote modern business practice; therefore, the adoption of Western management frameworks like OKR is also increasing. The cultural dynamics of Vietnamese companies, which combine traditional values with modern practices, provide a unique context for studying the effectiveness of OKR implementation. OKRs are critical many sectors, especially in tech industry where innovation and rapid adaptation are key to stay competitiveness. According to a report by McKinsey (Van Kuiken, 2022), the successful technology leaders of the future will have to research new technologies and improve capabilities to turn continues change into competitive edge. Some of Vietnamese big companies such as FPT Telecom, VNG, and MB Bank have also implemented OKRs and reported improvements in strategic alignment and team performance. However, introducing a

framework like OKRs can be a challenging task for an organization because people need to change the way they work and their behaviors to adapt the new framework (Stray et al., 2022). Implementing OKRs can be particularly difficult in a multicultural organization, where employees share different mindsets and values that may restrict the company's ability in adopting this new framework. This might result in conflicts and the emergence of siloed working, which contradicts to the initial purpose of developing this model. Therefore, while the benefits of the OKRs are well-documented, it is necessary to investigate how OKRs specifically tackle the issue of breaking down organizational silos without worsening the existing lack of cooperation within the company.

Silos can significantly hinder communication and collaboration, leading to inefficiencies and a lack of cohesion. Poor communication and cooperation between silos affect the organizational performance in a negative way as evoked issues are not expressed promptly. Additionally, when knowledge and resources are not shared, it will be a challenge to apply any programs that bring benefits to the business (De Waal et al., 2019).

It is crucial to comprehend the role of OKRs in fostering inter-departmental collaboration and breaking silos, given the diverse cultural background and remote working conditions often found in technology enterprises. This research is a case study and will focus on a Vietnamese tech solutions company with a multicultural and remote background.

Research Purposes

This research aims to examine the effectiveness of OKRs in breaking down silos and fostering accountability and collaboration inside a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work setting. It further explores how the organization's diverse workforce and remote environment shape the OKR implementation process and outcomes.

Research Questions

Though there is an increasing amount of literature on OKRs' advantages, there is still a noticeable lack of understanding of how OKRs can help break silos and improve collaboration in a tech firm with a diverse culture and flexible working conditions.

The key research questions which should be answered are:

1. What is the implementation process of OKRs in a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment?
2. How do the OKR participants perceive the effectiveness of OKRs in helping break down silos between departments and promoting accountability and collaboration?

By answering these questions, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which OKRs foster inter-departmental collaboration and reduce barriers to communication and cooperation.

Significance of the Study

There is limited research on this topic. A total of 24 studies were found, with 19 results appearing on Scopus using the keywords “OKR” or “Objectives and Key Results.” Most of the research focuses on the effectiveness of OKRs on employee performance measurement, implementation challenges, and integration with other frameworks or tools. The significance of this study lies in its expectation to offer valuable insights about OKRs' practical implications. Collaboration greatly contributes to the success of a team, or, in a broader sense, a business. It has gone “from a nice-to-have to a strategic imperative” (Gardner, 2016, p. 4). And if a company wants to emerge in today's competitive market, it must foster "more refined" and "more efficient" collaboration among its employees. As a result, seeking insights into the mechanisms of OKRs, which support cooperation enhancement and silos reduction, is considered significant. This study aims to examine the impact of OKRs on company structure

and culture, especially in a multicultural and remote setting, an area which few or no earlier research have mentioned so far. The findings of this research will potentially provide recommendations for leadership in tech companies to consider the efficient way to apply the OKR method in their firms in order to maximize the positive outcomes in terms of silos reduction and employee engagement.

Research Scope

The research is conducted in a multicultural IT solutions service company in Vietnam, which offers an excellent opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of OKRs implementation. With over 30 years in the industry and a flat hierarchical structure, this organization has faced challenges related to siloed working environments. The company's diverse workforce and remote work model add layers of complexity to its organizational dynamics. Consequently, the company's Board of Directors made the decision to implement Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) as a strategy to address this persistent problem. Specifically, the study focus focuses on examining how effectively OKRs contribute to breaking down silos, promoting accountability and enhancing collaboration among departments. It aims to investigate whether OKRs offer clearer insight into departmental performance, thereby supporting better organizational decision-making processes.

Data collection for this study was conducted between December 2023 and February 2025, as its period spans the duration of the OKR implementation project, providing a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics involved. Participants in the interviews are current employees who are directly involved in the OKR implementation project within the organization. To provide comprehensive insights into the participants' perception of the real impact of OKRs on silo breaking, a qualitative data collection method is adopted using semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis.

By adopting this qualitative case-study approach, this research aims to provide in-depth insights into the effectiveness of OKRs as a tool for breaking down organizational silos, promoting accountability, and enhancing collaboration within the selected multicultural and remote work context.

Definition of Terms

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

OKRs are a strategic performance management framework aimed at enhancing organizational focus, alignment, accountability, and collaboration among employees. OKRs comprise two essential components: 1. objectives, which are clear and qualitative goals intended to drive organizational activities, and 2. key results, which are measurable outcomes that track the achievement of these objectives (Niven & Lamorte, 2016). The OKR framework encourages alignment through a combined top-down and bottom-up approach, facilitating clear communication and employee engagement (Herkenrath et al., 2023). Successful implementation of OKRs relies heavily on continuous monitoring, adaptability, and effective leadership support (Doerr, 2018).

Organizational Silos

Organizational silos refer to isolated departmental structures within an organization that hinder the efficient sharing of information, resources, and collaboration across different units (De Waal et al., 2019). These silos can lead to compartmentalization, reduced productivity, internal conflict, and hindered overall organizational performance. Silos typically arise due to a combination of structural barriers, misaligned priorities, limited transparency, and poor interdepartmental communication. Breaking down silos involves addressing both structural barriers and psychological attitudes, creating conditions that encourage cross-departmental collaboration and the alignment of common goals (Bento et al., 2020).

Multicultural Organization

A multicultural organization is defined as one composed of employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, each bringing unique perspectives, communication patterns, and working styles (Marquardt & Horvath, 2001). Multicultural teams present both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include language barriers, varying communication norms, and potential misunderstandings due to cultural biases or stereotypes. However, multicultural organizations benefit significantly from diverse perspectives, enhanced creativity, broader problem-solving capabilities, and innovation fostered through inclusive collaboration (Szpilko et al., 2022). Effectively managing a multicultural team requires tailored communication strategies, inclusive practices, and a culturally sensitive management approach to foster collaboration and optimize team performance.

Remote Working

Remote working, also known as telework, involves performing work tasks away from traditional office settings, supported primarily by digital communication technologies (UNICE/UAPME, CEEP, & ETUC, 2002). Remote work has gained substantial traction due to advancements in technology and accelerated adoption driven by global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. While remote work offers considerable benefits like increased flexibility, improved employee autonomy, reduced commuting times, and enhanced work-life balance (Elshaiekh et al., 2018; Franken et al., 2021), it also introduces unique challenges such as decreased face-to-face interactions, potential isolation, reduced spontaneous knowledge sharing, and difficulties in sustaining consistent team collaboration (Kowalski & Ślebarska, 2022; Xu et al., 2022). Successful remote work arrangements often require structured communication protocols, robust technological tools, and clear, transparent management practices to overcome these challenges and maintain productivity and employee engagement.

CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will give an overview of literature that are related to the research problem presented in the previous chapter.

The implementation of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) has gained significant attention as a strategic tool to enhance organizational alignment, focus, and performance. This chapter reviews the existing research on the effectiveness of OKR, collaboration, and organizational silos in multicultural and remote work settings. The purpose is to establish a theoretical basis for examining the OKRs adoption in a diverse IT solutions company that operates in Vietnam.

Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)

Definition

OKRs are a strategic framework and continuous practice that aim to guarantee employees work together effectively (Niven & Lamorte, 2016). According to Niven and Lamorte (2016), OKRs help organizations set clear, measurable objectives and track their progress towards achieving them. They strive to balance top-down and bottom-up approaches through clear communication, engagement, agility, and transparency. The OKR framework's power comes from a combination of two components: objectives and key results. The objectives represent the specific outcomes that require accomplishment. The goals should be clear, qualitative, well-defined, and have a significant impact on the business. Key results, on the other hand, are metrics used to measure or track the progress of an objective towards achieving its goal. They serve as outcomes that provide evidence of achieving a goal or target. Key results should be measurable and quantitative (Silva & Souza, 2023). An objective is typically followed by two to three key results statements (Hennigan, 2024).

Silva & Souza (2023) explain that the main purpose of using OKR in firms is to enhance focus, alignment, and acceleration, with the ultimate goal of achieving business goals more rapidly. OKR is famous for its short and rapid cycles, often lasting three months, as prolonged durations can potentially threaten the company's operations. This approach promotes agility, efficiency, and creativity by reducing deadlines and allowing for faster evaluations to accelerate learning.

Establishing precise and demanding goals can effectively improve employee participation and satisfaction. The team's consensus and the organization's requirements determine whether to use OKRs for goal creation on a quarterly, biannual, or annual basis (Hennigan, 2024).

Benefits of OKRs Implementation

Needless to say, applying OKRs can bring undeniable benefits to organizations. This framework is widely used and has been accepted and practiced at companies such as Intel, Google, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Netflix, among hundreds of others, ranging from start-ups to large organizations (Srinivasan & Ni, 2023).

In a 2018 interview with Harvard Business Review, Doerr expanded on the benefits of OKRs, as detailed in his book *Measure What Matters* (McGinn, 2018). He identified five major benefits, indicated by the acronym FACTS: focus, alignment, commitment, tracking, and stretching. Doerr noted that having no more than three to four OKRs helps companies stay focused on what truly matters, making it easier to prioritize goals and stick to timelines. Alignment keeps teams unified and directs members to follow shared visions and results, avoiding the risk of working in isolation. Commitment, which should begin at the leadership level, fosters accountability and transparency, ensuring that all team members track progress and meet milestones. Tracking, through regular monitoring and weekly check-ins, helps review progress and address any challenges in time. Finally, stretching supports setting ambitious

goals. The methodology here is to accept that not all goals will be reached, but based on past key results, companies will continue to improve and achieve new milestones over time (Hennigan, 2024).

There are several advantages to OKR implementation, such as strengthening the alignment between individual and team objectives and the overall organizational strategy, improving communication, and boosting employee engagement. This approach allows companies to identify the most important objectives and create a collaborative framework that promotes their achievement. Federico & Buganza (2022) emphasized that OKRs enable the development of a common vision, which is essential for efficient teamwork and collaboration. Moreover, OKRs help identify high-performing teams and areas needing improvement, enabling better decision-making and resource allocation.

Challenges of OKR Implementation

Despite their benefits, implementing OKRs can be challenging. Herkenrath et al. (2023) noted that many organizations fail to realize the full potential of OKRs due to poor implementation practices. Common challenges include resistance to change, lack of proper training, and insufficient alignment between OKRs and the organization's strategic goals. The authors argued that successful OKR implementation requires a supportive organizational culture, clear communication, and continuous monitoring and adjustment of objectives.

One major challenge is aligning OKRs with the existing organizational culture and ensuring they fit the company's strategic objectives (Doerr, 2018; PwC Switzerland, 2021). Schmidt & Rosenberg (2014) assert that adapting OKRs to each firm's specific context often necessitates significant cultural adjustments. The flexibility required to implement OKRs successfully can be difficult in organizations with rigid, hierarchical structures or deeply ingrained cultural practices (Doerr, 2018; Schmidt & Rosenberg, 2014). Federico and

Buganza's (2022) study underscored the significant challenge of leaders' commitment to the OKR process and their willingness to cultivate an open, transparent culture. Without this commitment, the OKR method may fail to progress, resulting in discrepancies and a lack of employee involvement. Moreover, proactive communication is essential to keep everyone engaged in the process, as simply making documents accessible is not sufficient in large organizations. Integrating OKRs with existing performance management systems can also pose difficulties. Many organizations struggle to align OKRs with other performance metrics and incentives, leading to potential conflicts and confusion about priorities. According to Al Thinyan & Ghawji (2022), OKRs should not be considered a substitute for other established management practices. It is essential to ensure that OKRs are seen as complementary to existing systems and to understand their principles and specific applications inside the organization. Complexity in setting objectives is another pitfall, as a company may end up with a lengthy and unfocused list of activities for its OKRs if it fails to clearly determine its areas of concentration. Additionally, if OKRs are not integrated into daily practices, managers may struggle to identify slow development or low confidence, ultimately failing to generate any tangible benefits (PwC Switzerland, 2021).

Concept of Collaboration and Organizational Silos

Definition and Importance of Collaboration

Collaboration, as defined by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM), is "a working practice whereby individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve business benefit" (AIIM, n.d.). The ELT Journal also emphasized that collaboration involves working together to achieve something beyond what one person can accomplish alone (Barfield, 2016). This approach includes setting goals and sharing responsibilities within a team. This approach includes setting goals and sharing responsibilities within a team. In

addition, the American Psychological Association (APA) highlighted that the effectiveness of collaboration is reflected in the interrelationship of behaviors, thoughts, and feelings among team members, which fosters an efficient working environment (Weir, n.d.). This perspective underscores the necessity of social interaction and mutual understanding in enhancing cooperation within a company.

The significance of collaboration in the workplace cannot be overlooked, especially in today's interconnected world. Research from the Kellogg School of Management demonstrated that as knowledge and skills become more specialized, it is crucial for individuals with diverse expertise to collaborate in order to achieve better outcomes (Kellogg Insight, 2022). This collaboration is essential for promoting innovation, as it combines varied perspectives and skill sets to address complex problems (Gardner, 2016). Additionally, the American Psychological Association (APA) highlighted that the inclusion of various personality traits, values, and abilities greatly influences a team's success. Effective collaboration leverages these collective strengths, enhancing performance by combining different skills and knowledge. Research has demonstrated that teams whose members are capable of learning, reasoning, and adapting are more likely to collaborate effectively and achieve their objectives (Weir, n.d.).

Definition and Implications of Organizational Silos

"The term silo refers to subgroups in webs of interaction" (Bentona et al., 2020, p. 3). De Waal et al. (2019) explained organizational silos as "psychological boundaries creating compartmentalization, segregation, and differentiation" (p. 2). In their research, they also highlighted that silos can create both advantages and disadvantages, depending on the circumstances. The concept known as "silo mentality" can be effectively utilized in the management of large companies, where there is clear accountability and responsibility allocation. However, this mentality often leads to reluctance and unwillingness to share

knowledge, skills, and information among teams or departments. De Waal et al. (2019) further pointed out a critical perspective, stating that silos are not just about the existing boundaries between departments, but more about the narrow way of thinking that these boundaries create. This mindset prevents individuals from collaborating with other teams within the organization.

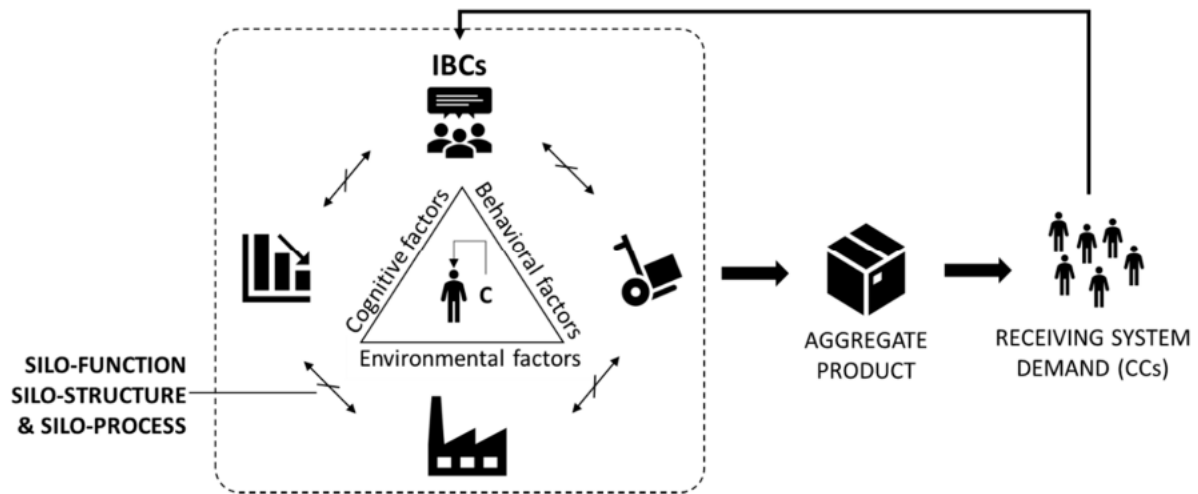
In their research, Bento et al. (2020) examined silos in *Organizational Silos: A Scoping Review Informed by a Behavioral Perspective on Systems and Networks*. They explained that silos can be classified based on their "functional property" or "structural properties." Functional silos indicate a lack of coordination but are still essential for different departments to work efficiently. This is referred to as "interdependence." On the other hand, structural silos reduce worker productivity and can only be resolved through reorganization. Overall, process silos serve as barriers to collaboration within a company, as they hinder the sharing of information, goals, and resources between teams or departments.

The reciprocal determinism model (see Figure 2.1) interprets how silos form in organizations by highlighting the interconnection of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Personal factors, including knowledge, expectations, and attitudes in organizations, influence how individuals think and act. Skills, practices, and self-efficacy are behavioral factors that can influence task performance. Environmental factors, like social norms, access within the company, and the physical and social environment, help shape the organizational structure.

In this context, personal factors contribute to silo processes, behavioral factors shape silo functions, and environmental factors cause the formation of silo structures. This model facilitates our comprehension of how these various elements interrelate and contribute to the establishment of silos within an organization (Bento et al., 2020).

Figure 2.1

Reciprocal Determinism Model



As explained by Bento et al. (2020), “the interrupted bidirectional lines represent the effects of silos, depending on the system property derived from the model of social learning (callouts in bold). The metacontingency is comprised of interlocking behavioral contingencies (IBCs), one or more aggregate product(s) (AP), and the receiving system demand. Note: Consequence at the individual level; CCs = cultural consequences” (p.4).

In another recent study by Silberman et al. (2022), the formation of silos resulted from the narrow focus on specific expertise. The study clarified that the isolation of expertise within a group can result in invisible boundaries that hinder effective collaboration with other groups. The solution to breaking down this silo and improving cross-functional collaboration is to identify and actively address these barriers.

A bad management attitude can also cause silos to develop. Leaders whose management styles support conflict and discourage mutual respect within the team have the potential to foster silos. Regardless of the cause, the emergence of silos within a company often leads to internal tension or conflict (De Waal et al., 2019).

OKRs and Organizational Collaboration

Role of OKRs in Enhancing Collaboration

Zasa & Buganza (2023) underscored the importance of participatory approaches in defining objectives, explaining that a shared vision emerges more naturally when employees are involved in setting organizational goals. Through this participatory goal-definition process, teams can better understand each other's contributions, leading to clearer alignment and minimized misunderstandings. Similarly, Rompho (2023) explained that well-defined OKRs help reconcile performance indicators with broader organizational strategies, reducing issues arising from unsuitable target setting. By doing so, organizations are able to address potential misalignments early and ensure that individual tasks or deliverables are in line with collective objectives.

In the field of software development, Berntzen et al. and Vedal et al., as cited in Silva & Souza (2023), examined how OKRs act as a coordination mechanism across dispersed teams. They found that defining clear objectives and quantifiable key results made the roles of team members more transparent, facilitating smooth coordination. Stray et al. (2021) supported this view by emphasizing that a systematic OKR process, including the regular review and updating of objectives, heightens overall transparency. Their study indicated that shared knowledge of team priorities and deadlines plays a fundamental role in harmonizing efforts.

Furthermore, research by Klanwaree & Choemprayong (2019) highlighted that when employees understand how their individual tasks connect to top-level goals, a sense of motivation naturally follows. In their feasibility study of IT consulting enterprises, they identified that transparent communication of objectives and progress improved not only awareness of personal responsibilities but also comprehension of how day-to-day tasks

collectively influence final outcomes. Through this heightened clarity, employees in various teams or departments can perceive the direct significance of their work, which strengthens inter-team collaboration and contributes to a more unified organizational culture.

Overall, the literature indicates that OKRs, when managed through inclusive definition and rigorous monitoring, establish an environment conducive to knowledge sharing. By providing teams with a framework that highlights purpose, mutual accountability, and continuous alignment, organizations can foster more seamless collaboration and mitigate siloed behavior.

Multicultural and Remote Work Environment

Cultural Differences in the Workplace

Multicultural teams are groups focused on completing tasks, composed of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Marquardt & Horvath, 2001). Multicultural teams, which consist of individuals from many nations, exhibit several differences compared to monocultural teams. The nature and magnitude of problems vary, as do the methods for efficiently resolving them (Szpilko et al., 2022).

Working in multicultural teams presents several challenges, primarily stemming from differences in language, cultural norms, and communication styles. Language barriers can lead to misunderstandings and ineffective communication, while stereotypes and prejudices can hinder collaboration and create a hostile work environment. Xenophobia and ethnocentrism further exacerbate these issues by fostering distrust and reluctance to embrace other cultures. Additionally, differences in values, norms, and past negative experiences with other cultures can lead to conflicts and difficulties in establishing group norms. These challenges are compounded in virtual teams, where time zone differences and lack of physical interaction further complicate coordination and communication efforts (Szpilko et al., 2022).

Despite these challenges, multicultural teams offer numerous benefits that can significantly enhance organizational performance. Such teams promote the improvement of language skills and intercultural communication, fostering a more inclusive and competent workforce. The diverse perspectives within these teams lead to unique experiences and broadened thinking horizons, encouraging innovative problem-solving and creativity. Additionally, working in multicultural teams helps break down cultural and communication barriers, increasing openness and reducing stereotypes. This environment not only enhances individual professional growth but also equips organizations with the ability to adapt and innovate through a diverse set of skills and viewpoints (Szpilko et al., 2022).

Remote Work Dynamics

Given that much research has explained the definition of remote working, and the concept has gained prominence in the last decade, this paper adopts the most common definition of remote work (or telework) as "a form of organizing and/or performing work, using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis" (UNICE/UAPME, CEEP, & ETUC, 2002).

After the COVID-19 outbreak, organizations were forced to replace traditional working models with remote work due to its infeasibility. Remote working is a relatively recent adaptation. Although many businesses have adopted and applied the concept for over 30 years, its widespread practical use has only recently become commonplace. This shift has been driven both by the impact of COVID-19 and by advancements in commonly used technologies and communication platforms (Franken et al., 2021).

The shift in working habits has had both positive and negative impacts on employee performance. On the positive side, remote work provides employees with greater freedom and

flexibility, which in turn enhances creativity. Additionally, it helps save commuting time, allowing workers to allocate extra time to their tasks (Elshaiekh et al., 2018). For example, a Swedish study, as reported by Eurofound, revealed that remote work motivates employees, enhancing their concentration even during non-working hours. Similar findings have been reported in French and UK studies (Eurofound and International Labour Office, 2017). One of the most prominent advantages of remote work is its contribution to work-life balance. In their findings, Franken et al. (2021) reported that working remotely led both managers and employees to express improvements in work-life balance.

On the negative side, telework can pose a threat to employee performance and the company as a whole. In 2012, a CIPD survey revealed that employees' inability to recognize colleagues by name hindered communication within the company, causing task delays. Additionally, remote working discourages knowledge sharing among team members, resulting in fewer opportunities for skill improvement (Elshaiekh et al., 2018).

In their research, Kowalski & Ślebarska (2022) cited that excessive remote work can negatively affect social relationships in the workplace, weakening employee connections. Research further reveals a negative influence on work-family conflict, leading to a decline in employees' overall well-being (Xu et al., 2022). Aside from that, technical issues during remote work can lead to a decrease in work effectiveness, particularly for mid-level and lower-level staff (Kowalski & Ślebarska, 2022).

Chapter 2 explores the theoretical foundations of OKRs, organizational silos, multicultural organizations, and remote work. OKRs are widely acknowledged as a strategic tool for enhancing alignment, transparency, and collaboration but usually face challenges such as resistance to change, lack of proper training, and integration problems. Organizational silos, which are characterized by communication barriers and departmental isolation, interfere with efficiency and collaboration, making it crucial to establish clear goals and cross-functional

transparency. Multicultural organizations present both challenges and opportunities, as cultural differences can impact communication and teamwork, but diverse perspectives also drive innovation and problem-solving. Remote work, while offering flexibility and improved work-life balance, can further reinforce silos due to reduced face-to-face interactions and limited spontaneous collaboration.

This chapter sets up the theoretical framework for understanding how OKRs can be used to break down silos in a multicultural, remote work environment. It also talks about the framework's pros and cons in different business settings.



CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a thorough analysis of the methodological decisions made in order to address the research question.

Research Approach

Qualitative research focused on people's sense-making and how they interpreted what they experienced (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) highlighted one important characteristic of qualitative research: inductive reasoning, which meant researchers "gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses" (p. 17).

For several reasons, this study employed a qualitative, inductive approach. First, inductive research allowed researchers to emerge from the data collected in a natural way rather than forcefully incorporating it into pre-existing theories or structures (Thomas, 2006). Second, its straightforward approach involved examining raw data and identifying key themes to draw conclusions, thereby simplifying the analysis of qualitative data for researchers (Thomas, 2006). Third, qualitative research explained phenomena such as behaviors, experiences, and attitudes that could not be quantified (Tenny et al, 2022). This goal aligned with the overall purpose of the research. Lastly, qualitative research relied more on words and pictures than numbers; the data gathered from interviews, observations, field notes, documents, and other sources enhanced the research results, potentially providing additional insights (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

To align with the focus of this study, a qualitative approach utilizing case study methodology was adopted. According to Yin (2014), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16).

There were two reasons for choosing the case study for this research. Firstly, a case study excelled at analyzing situations where the context and the phenomenon variables were inseparable (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In other words, the setting of the phenomenon was crucial for understanding its behavior, characteristics, and the interaction between variables. This study matched well with the research background because it closely explored how OKRs could break silos in a tech company's multicultural and remote working environment, which was a real-life context. Yin (2014) also classified case studies into three types: descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory. The purpose of a descriptive case study was "to 'describe' a phenomenon in detail in its real-world context" (Priya, 2021, p. 96). This research delved into the implementation of OKRs and attempted to elucidate their mechanism for reducing silos, thereby aligning with the stated purpose. Finally, the study focused only on one specific company, which aligned with the definition of a "unit of analysis"—one of the characteristics of a case study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

In this research particularly, OKRs began implementation in this company in December of 2023 by first going into a planning phase in which training materials were prepared by the Project Leader and a very detailed plan was developed with the CEO for the rollout. First off, the Project Leader conducted an initial training session for department heads on the OKR concept and what to expect when implementing the OKRs. Later, each department had an in-depth session, which allowed team members to have a basic understanding of OKRs and their specific departmental goals. At the same time, during the last quarter of 2023, the company was in the process of selecting a suitable tool for OKR management and decided to select Microsoft Viva Goals as the company's OKR tracking platform. In January 2024, the OKR framework was finally launched to the company. Currently, all departments have established their own sets of OKRs and meet with the CEO quarterly to monitor progress. At the time of this research, November 2024, OKRs for the next year, 2025, were being completed.

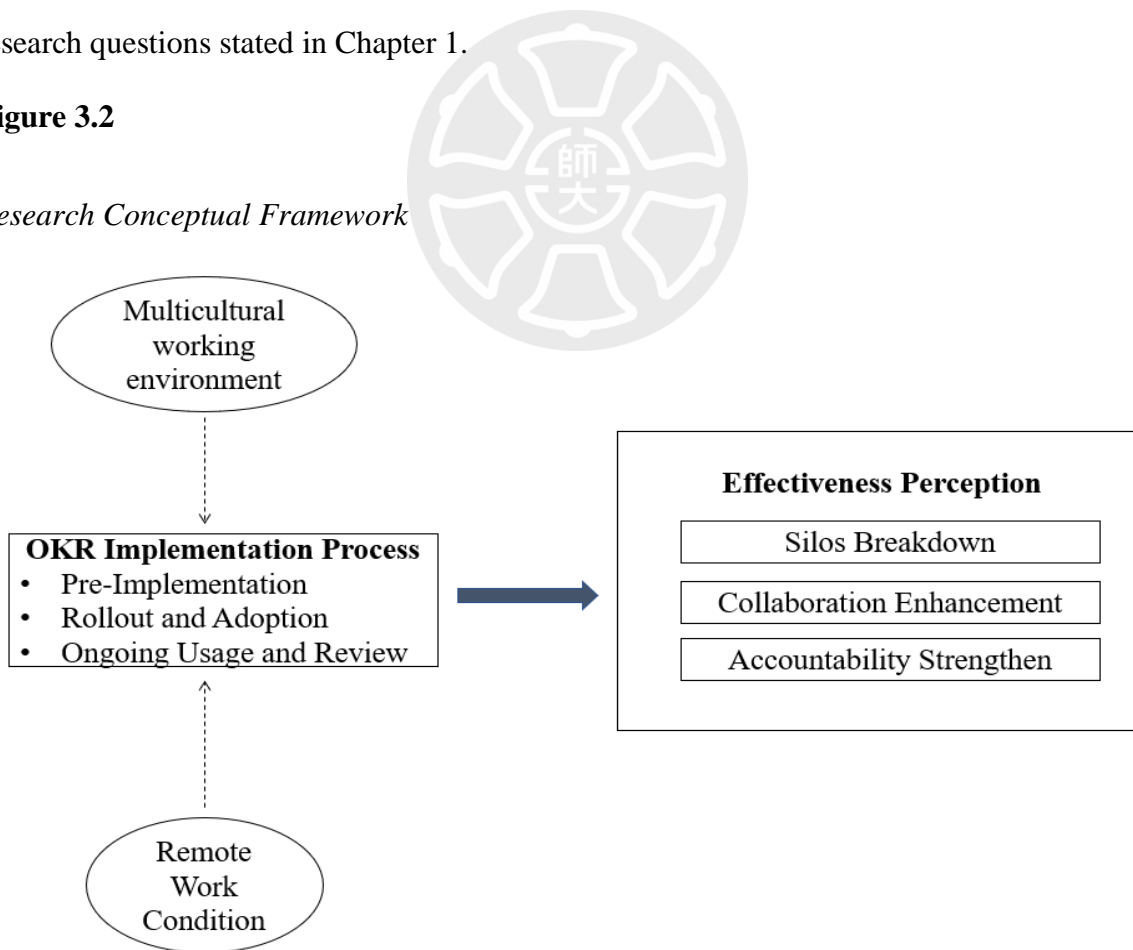
The researcher was active in the preparation phase by contributing to the design of training materials and setting up Viva Goals, mainly through the integration of data that existed within Excel into Viva Goals. After the introduction of the OKR system, the researcher was given some personal objectives and key results and had to report to the supervisor every week regarding progress to ensure that all that was being done was in line with departmental goals. The involvement in participation and contribution places the researcher in a better position whereby he can gain insight into the OKR adoption process, analyze how it affects collaboration and reduces silo in the organization.

Research Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study was constructed based on the research purposes and research questions stated in Chapter 1.

Figure 3.2

Research Conceptual Framework



The figure indicates the implementation of OKRs in a multicultural remote work environment and how participants perceive its effectiveness in breaking down silos, enhancing collaboration and strengthening accountability. The framework consists of three components: the remote work condition, the multicultural working environment, and the OKR Implementation Process which leads to the effectiveness perception.

First, the multicultural working environment and remote work conditions serve as contextual factors that shape the way OKRs are implemented.

Second, the OKR implementation process consists of three phases:

- Pre-Implementation – Identifying the company’s root problems, with leadership proposing OKRs as a potential solution to address them;
- Rollout and Adoption – Conducting training and having each department set their own objectives, combined with the adoption of an OKR tracking tool to track and update progress;
- Ongoing Usage and Review – Monitoring progress, adjusting OKRs based on feedback, and ensuring continuous engagement with the framework.

Finally, the effectiveness perception represents how employees and teams evaluate the impact of OKRs. This study examines three dimensions of effectiveness:

- Silos Breakdown – Whether OKRs facilitate cross-departmental collaboration and information sharing;
- Collaboration Enhancement – How OKRs improve teamwork, transparency, and goal alignment;
- Accountability Strengthening – The extent to which OKRs encourage employees to take ownership of their goals and performance.

By analyzing these relationships, this study provides insights into how OKRs function in a multicultural, remote IT setting and how employees experience their effectiveness. Rather

than establishing causal relationships, the framework focuses on understanding perceptions, challenges, and best practices in OKR implementation.

Research Procedure

This study's entire research process was illustrated in Figure Y, and each procedure will be described in detail below.

The eleven phases outlined below will be followed in the research procedure of this study.

Phase 1: *Identified Research Topic*

The first was a brief reflective review of the current literature on OKRs, teamwork, and multidisciplinary team performance in cross-cultural settings. The subject evolved into how OKRs can help break down organizational silos and cultivate collaboration across cultures and long-distance working in tech companies in Vietnam.

Phase 2: *Defined Research Purposes and Questions*

Research questions were formulated in collaboration with the adviser and following a comprehensive literature evaluation. The questions revolved around what OKRs mean for cross-departmental work in a remote, multicultural organization and how it helps break silos. The study aims to evaluate the efficacy of OKRs in promoting collaboration and diminishing silos in these unique organizational contexts.

Phase 3: *Determined Research Method*

When it came to investigating the complexities of OKRs implementation in a multicultural technology organization, a qualitative case study approach was chosen as the method of investigation. This method provides the opportunity for a deeper dive into employee experience and organization dynamics.

Phase 4: ***Reviewed Literatures***

The literature review focused on theoretical standpoints involving OKRs, silo working, organizational collaboration, multicultural teams, and remote work environments. These were explored to understand the connection and effects of collaboration in organizations.

Phase 5: ***Drew Conceptual Framework***

The study also introduced a framework to show how OKRs may foster collaboration and eliminate silos. This framework considers how remote work and cultural diversity impact teamwork and organizational communication.

Phase 6: ***Developed Interview Question***

To answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives, the interview questions were designed to capture concise and relevant information.

Phase 7: ***Conducted Expert/Peer Review and Pilot Interview***

Questions were developed for the interview following the research objectives and reviewed by experts on the subject. HR professionals and industry peers provided feedback on the interview protocol. Pilot interview was used to verify the clarity and appropriateness of the questions.

Phase 8: ***Modified Interview Questions***

The researcher updated interview questions based on expert, peer, and pilot test feedback before finalizing them.

Phase 9: ***Collected Data through Interviews, Observations and Document Analysis***

A case study was carried out at a Vietnamese IT services company with the method of interviewing key staff from several departments through semi-structured interviews. Participants were sampled based on their position, connection to OKRs, and cross-departmental links. In addition to interviews, observations were

conducted to gain insights into OKR training sessions, team discussions, and OKR review meetings. These were supplemented by an analysis of internal documents to determine how the framework was communicated, implemented and integrated into daily operations.

Phase 10: *Analyzed Data*

Data from interviews, observations and documents was transcribed, and an open-coding approach was used to analyze it. Common themes, corresponding to collaboration, communication, and also breaking down silos, were agreed upon. Analysis was cyclic, with data being reappraised and sorted and resorted as necessary to ensure consistency in the interpretation of results.

Phase 11: *Concluded Results and Findings*

The final analysis provided rich key learnings in the area of how OKRs can bring departments together and reduce silo mentalities within a remote multicultural setting. The information was

Case Selection and Participants Criteria

“A sampling plan is a formal plan specifying a sampling method, a sample size, and a procedure for recruiting participants” (Moser & Korstjens, 2018, p.10). There are several sampling strategies, and in the context of this study, purposive sampling is the most suitable approach as it requires participants to be selected based on the researcher's judgment about which potential participants will be the most informative.

This research focuses on a multicultural IT solutions service company in Vietnam offers an excellent opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of OKRs implementation. With over 30 years in the industry and a flat hierarchical structure, this organization has faced challenges related to siloed working environments. The company's diverse workforce and remote work model add layers of complexity to its organizational dynamics. Consequently, the company's

Board of Directors made the decision to implement Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) as a strategy to address this persistent problem.

Despite its well-established presence, the company has faced so many challenges, one of which is the lack of collaboration across departments and working in silos. Its flat hierarchical structure, the difference in cultural backgrounds of employees, and the presence of veteran employees who have been with the organization for over 15 years present both advantages and challenges. While these employees bring valuable experience and commitment, their long tenure in specific roles can lead to resistance to change and collaboration difficulties, particularly with new employees.

By implementing OKRs, the company aims to achieve several key objectives:

- Clarity on Departmental Performance: Identifying which departments are aligning with the company's overall goals
- and which are not;
- Breaking Down Silos: Promoting Accountability and Collaboration Across Departments;
- Improved Decision Making: Gaining insights into the performance and value contribution of each department to make informed decisions.

To ensure an accurate and comprehensive understanding of OKRs implementation, participants were selected based on specific criteria, including their role in the organization, experience with OKRs, cultural background, inter-departmental interaction, and company tenure. Selection was based on their organizational roles, experience with OKRs, tenure, and cultural background.

The sample was purposively selected to provide an in-depth understanding of the OKR implementation process, with a particular focus on how OKR implementation presents challenges arising from a multicultural workforce. The goal is to choose an appropriate sample

that provides sufficient information required for a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The criteria for participant selection are listed below, while Table 3.1 provides details on the participants and their numbers.

At least two years of service: The selected participants have all served within the company for at least two years, hence pre-OKR implementation. The interviewees can discuss how things worked before OKRs and how the OKR framework has influenced team performance and collaboration, changes in organizational dynamics.

OKR Project Leader: Overall management and implementation of OKRs in the organization are under the project leaders. In this regard, they have been exposed to the OKR framework most and ensure proper deployment at the departmental level. Their insights will enable an overall understanding of how OKRs are structured and integrated at the organizational level.

Heads of Departments: Departmental heads who will be directly responsible for OKR implementation at team levels. These participants work in close liaison with OKR project leaders to ensure that efforts are aligned with the company's strategic goals. Since they oversee the process in their departments, they add great value in their contributions regarding how OKRs are implemented at the team level and help break down silos within an organization.

OKR Champions: OKR Champions are designated for each department and take charge of OKRs for the whole team in those departments whose heads may not be available for an interview. Interacting champions are in close contact with the OKR project leader and work together with other teams for the consistent implementation of the OKR framework. This article provides critical insights into how OKRs have improved collaboration by way of facilitating interdepartmental collaboration.

By selecting participants who first meet the tenure criterion, and then evaluating their roles (OKR Project Leaders, HODs, or OKR Champions), this approach ensures that the study draws from persons with sufficient knowledge of both pre- and post-OKR organizational dynamics and captures key insights into the OKR process. It is from the selection of such participants that this study will seek in-depth information concerning how OKRs create scenarios for silos destruction, induction of collaboration, and alignment of teams within a multicultural and remote-work environment.

As a researcher, I worked within this organization for almost four years as an Learning and Development specialist has its strengths in professional network development across all departments. Also, close relationships with the heads of departments enabled my access to participants and facilitated gaining deep insights about the OKR framework in practice.



Table 3.1*The Description of Interview Participants*

Number	Name	Department	Years of service	Position	Interview Location
1	Participant 1	Sales	2	OKR Champion	Online
2	Participant 2	Marketing	7	OKR Champion	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
3	Participant 3	Academy	18	Academy Manager	Online
4	Participant 4	Human Resources	7	OKR Champion	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
5	Participant 5	Accounting	5	Chief Accountant	Online
6	Participant 6	Customer Support	13	Customer Support Manager	Online
7	Participant 7	Professional Services	22	Professional Services Manager	Online
8	Participant 8	Human Resources	3	OKR Project Leader/ HR Manager	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Data Collection

This section introduced and clarified the data collection methods. Data were described as "ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As previously mentioned, this was qualitative research, and interviews, observations, and secondary sources were the three main categories of data collection in this kind of study (Kumar, 2014).

Table 3.2 described the data collection process, highlighting the primary sources of data, including interview data, observation records, and relevant documents. This study primarily focused on using interviews, observations, and documents as the main data collection methods.

Interviews

Pilot Interview

According to Majid et al. (2017), The purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the suitability of the interview questions and to offer the researcher preliminary insights into the feasibility of the overall research. Before the official semi-structured interview, an initial draft of the interview questions that matched the study's goals was created by the researcher. To assess the clarity and appropriateness of these questions, informal discussions were held with a few selected participants. The purpose of these early exchanges was to get their opinions on the questions' relevance, phrasing, and structure. The researcher changed the interview questions in response to their recommendations in order to improve clarity, remove any ambiguity, and guarantee that they were in line with the study's objectives.

Semi-Structured Interview

Most forms of qualitative research collected data through interviews. It was essential when behaviors, feelings, or how people perceived the world could not be observed (Merriam

& Tisdell, 2015). This research necessitated the use of semi-structured interviews. In this type of interview, all questions were used flexibly, and no order of questions was predetermined. As shown in Table 3.3, the interview questions were designed to align with each research question, ensuring that the discussions remained focused while allowing flexibility for deeper investigation. Another characteristic of semi-structured interviews was that a list of exploratory questions guided most of the interview questions. Also, this flexibility in using the questions allowed the researcher to accept new ideas about the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This format matched the purpose of the research: gathering participants' experiences with OKRs, understanding whether OKRs could or could not break down silos and enhance collaboration, and discovering new insights from the participants.

At the outset of the interview, the researcher explained the research objective and thereafter sought consent from the participants to record the entire procedure using a digital voice recorder, to which all eight interviewees consented. To maintain the confidentiality of the interviewees' information, they were required to sign a consent form (Appendix A) before the start of the interview. Throughout the interview procedure, the researcher used a laptop to record notes on certain observational remarks.

Each interview was conducted in English or Vietnamese, depending on the interviewee's nationality and level of English fluency if they were Vietnamese. The entire duration varied from thirty to forty-five minutes, depending on the interviewee.

Iterative Interviews: Follow-ups and Informal Discussions

Apart from the initial eight key participant interviews, follow-up interviews and informal discussions were conducted to confirm initial findings, clarify emerging themes, and track changes in participant perspectives over time. Follow-up interviews were conducted with select participants depending on noteworthy insights or discrepancies discovered during the initial round. These shorter interviews, usually lasting 20-30 minutes, were crucial for:

- Confirming or challenging preliminary conclusions drawn from the first interviews;
- Tracking shifts in perception over time (e.g., whether resistance to OKRs decreased after extended use);
- Clarifying contradictions between interview data and observed behaviors in OKR meetings.

Additionally, informal discussions were integrated into the research process, enabling the researcher to capture unstructured, real-time reactions that might not have surfaced in a formal interview setting. These spontaneous conversations took place after meetings, during lunch breaks, and other casual interactions in workplace environments, typically lasting 10-20 minutes.

For example, during a coffee-break chat in January 2025, one participant candidly shared frustrations about the OKR system, stating that it was still viewed as a managerial exercise rather than a tool for empowerment. These unfiltered insights provided additional layers of understanding beyond the structured interviews, helping to contrast official perspectives with day-to-day realities.

Table 3.4 illustrated the interview process and the focus areas covered in both formal and informal interactions with participants. All follow-up interviews and informal discussions were documented immediately after completion, ensuring that spontaneous insights were preserved as part of the research data.

Observation

According to Merriam (2009), observation was “an important form of data collection in numerous types of qualitative studies examining or observing how a particular phenomenon unfolds” (p.158). In this research, observation was employed as a data collection method to gain firsthand insights into the implementation of OKRs within the company. Since the

researcher worked in the HR team at the organization undergoing OKR adoption, the researcher was a participant-as-observer, meaning they were both present and involved in activities while simultaneously collecting data (Schensul & LeCompte, 2013).

The primary purpose of observation in this study was to understand how the OKR framework was implemented and how employees applied it in daily practice. A total of seven formal observation sessions were conducted between December 2023 and January 2025, covering different aspects of the OKR implementation process. These included an HR meeting to finalize the OKR tool, a company-wide OKR training session, periodic review meetings, and a year-end performance appraisal session (Table 3.5). Each session provided valuable insights into how OKRs were discussed, monitored, and adjusted over time, revealing both successes and gaps in implementation.

For example, during the OKR Training Session in January 2024, which lasted 60 minutes, the researcher observed how employees reacted to the introduction of OKRs, their level of engagement, and the clarity of the training materials. The session provided insights into the basic concept of OKRs, the company's current issues, and the process of implementing them for each department. By comparing this with later review meetings, it was possible to track whether employees' understanding and use of OKRs improved over time or if certain challenges persisted.

The observations were systematically documented through detailed field notes, capturing employee engagement and key discussion points. Data from these observations were then cross-referenced with interview findings and document analysis to ensure reliability and validity. By integrating insights from these structured sessions, the study was able to examine the depth of OKR adoption, the challenges encountered, and the overall impact of OKRs on breaking down organizational silos. These structured observations were critical in determining

how OKRs changed over time, providing a real-world view of how employees interacted with the framework and how leadership managed the adoption process.

Documents

As per Merriam & Tisdell (2015), the majority of documents used in research predated the start of the current investigation. In this case, researcher-generated documents were the most suitable choice. The primary objective of document generation was to gain insight into the situation under investigation, a common strategy in action research (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

This research used documents for two primary purposes:

1. The data extracted from documents was stable and provided descriptive information as well as monitored change and progress, which suited the case study strategy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).
2. Documents gave researchers an overview of how an organization operated (Silverman, 1993).

Table 3.2*Data Collection Process*

Participant	Interview			Observation			Documents
	Type (number)	Duration	Date	Type (number)	Duration	Date	Type, length
Participant 1	Interview 1	60 mins	07/2024	HR Meeting to finalize OKRs tool	60 mins	12/2023	- Company OKRs Training Slides
Participant 2	Follow up Interview	10 mins	12/2024	Company OKR training	60 mins	01/2024	- Company OKRs User Guide
	Interview 2	45 mins	07/2024	HR Team Discussion for OKR setting	120 mins	02/2024	- Company-wide announcements
Participant 3	Follow up Interview	20 mins	12/2024	OKR weekly review with Participant 4	30 mins	05/2024	- OKRs Setting Files of HR Team
	Interview 3	70 mins	07/2024	OKR monthly review with Participant 4	45 mins	06/2024	
Participant 4	Follow up Interview	20 mins	12/2024	OKR quarterly review with Participant 3 and 8	120 mins	09/2024	
	Interview 4	60 mins	07/2024	OKR yearly review and performance appraisal of Participant 4	60 mins	01/2025	
Participant 5	Follow up Interview	20 mins	10/2024				
	Informal Discussion	10 mins	12/2024				
Participant 6	Interview 5	50 mins	07/2024				
	Follow up Interview	20 mins	12/2024				
Participant 7	Interview 6	100 mins	07/2024				
	Follow up Interview	20 mins	12/2024				
Participant 8	Interview 7	45 mins	07/2024				
	Follow up Interview	15 mins	12/2024				
	Informal Discussion	10 mins	01/2025				
Participant 8	Interview 8	60 mins	07/2024				
	Follow up Interview	30 mins	12/2024				
	Informal Discussion	10 mins	02/2025				

Table 3.3

English Version of Interview Question

Research Questions	Interview Questions
Research Question 1: What is the implementation process of OKRs at a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment? OKRs Implementation Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Can you describe the initial steps your department took to implement OKRs?2. What specific training or support was provided by the company or by your department to help employees understand and adopt the OKR framework?3. What challenges did you encounter during the OKR implementation process? How were these challenges addressed?4. How are OKR progress and feedback managed and communicated within your department and across other departments?5. What tools or platforms are used to support the management and tracking of OKRs across the company? <p>Multicultural and Remote Impact</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. How has the remote work environment influenced the implementation and effectiveness of OKRs?7. How have cultural differences among employees impacted the understanding and application of OKRs within the company?
Research Question 2: How effective are OKRs in breaking down silos between departments?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Can you describe the specific silos (e.g., communication, collaboration, or information barriers) that existed between departments before OKRs were implemented?2. In your experience, what were the main causes of these silos within the organization (e.g., cultural differences, organizational structure, remote work)?3. Have you noticed any changes in cross-departmental collaboration or communication since the implementation of OKRs? Can you give specific examples?4. How has the accountability within or between departments changed with the

implementation of OKRs?

5. Regarding OKRs' process and results, do you have anything else to mention?



This research utilized the company's OKR-related documents to assess whether the training content aligned with the actual adoption of the framework in the organization. Table 3.6 summarized the purpose of analyzing these materials in relation to OKR implementation within the company. The reviewed documents included:

- Company OKR Training Slides: Provided an overview of the OKR framework, key principles, and implementation guidelines within the company;
- OKR User Guide: A structured reference document offering best practices and guidelines for writing and tracking OKRs;
- Company-Wide Announcements and Leadership Communications: Emails and memos from leadership reinforcing the importance of OKRs and setting expectations for adoption;
- OKR Setting Files of HR Team: Documents outlining objectives, key results, and actions, which were later imported into Microsoft Viva for tracking. This analysis provided insights into how the HR team structured its OKRs, set measurable key results, and defined action steps to achieve departmental goals.

By analyzing these documents, the study was able to examine how OKRs were communicated, understood, and adopted within the organization. Combining document insights with interview data offered a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

Table 3.4*Overview of Interview Process and Focus Areas*

Interview Type	Timeframe	Participants	Focus Areas
Initial Interview	07/2024	All Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early impressions of OKRs. - Perceived challenges in OKR alignment. - Initial reactions to OKR training. - Department-specific OKR experiences (e.g., Marketing’s cross-team collaboration, HR’s implementation role).
Follow-up Interviews	12/2024	All Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in perspectives over time. - Addressing discrepancies from earlier interviews. - Evolution in OKR engagement and team collaboration. - Reflection on implementation progress.
Informal Discussion		Participant 4, 7, 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candid opinions about OKR successes and challenges. - Off-the-record insights not captured in formal interviews. - Spontaneous reflections on final-year OKR outcomes. - Real-time feedback on OKR integration in daily workflows.



Table 3.5*Overview of Observation Process and Focus Areas*

Observation	Timeframe	Participants	Focus Areas
HR Meeting to Finalize OKR Tool	12/2023	OKR Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How leadership guided OKR tool selection. - Level of employee input and buy-in. - Expected vs. actual usage of the OKR tool.
OKR Training Session	01/2024	Employees in the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee engagement with OKR concepts. - Common confusion points or resistance to OKRs. - Effectiveness of training delivery and follow-up discussions.
HR Team Discussion for OKR setting	02/2024	HR Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How HR facilitates OKR implementation. - Alignment of HR-related OKRs with company-wide objectives. - Departmental concerns and modifications.
Weekly OKR Review	05/2024	Participant 4 and Participant 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress updates and accountability measures. - Frequency and effectiveness of OKR discussions. - Conflicts or misalignment in OKR execution.
Monthly OKR Review	06/2024	Participant 4 and Participant 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tracking changes in OKR adoption. - Leadership engagement and feedback. - Whether OKRs influenced decision-making.
Quarterly OKR Review	09/2024	Participant 3 and Participant 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How leadership and employees interact around OKRs. - Engagement levels during training and review sessions. - Collaboration and alignment across departments. - Communication patterns in OKR discussions.
Year-End OKR Review and Performance Appraisal	01/2025	Participant 4 and Participant 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation of final-year OKR outcomes. - Adjustments made for the upcoming cycle. - Challenges faced and lessons learned.

Table 3.6

Overview of Document Analysis

Document	Purpose of Analysis
Company OKRs Training Slides	Assess how employees were introduced to OKRs and whether the training provided sufficient clarity.
OKRs User Guide	Review whether employees had structured reference materials to guide them in applying OKRs.
Company-Wide Announcements	Evaluate how OKRs were communicated and whether employees understood leadership expectations.
OKR Setting Files of HR Team	Analyze how the HR team structured its OKRs, set measurable key results, and defined action steps for departmental objectives.

Data Analysis

Flick (2014) outlined the data analysis process as "the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making in the material and what is represented in it" (p. 5). The purpose of data analysis was to make sense of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

According to Kumar (2014), one of the three ways to write about findings in qualitative research was to identify the main themes that emerged from field notes or interview transcripts and write about them, quoting extensively verbatim (p. 317). The overall data analysis process began with identifying the unit of data, which was the segment in the dataset responsive to the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

This research adhered to Merriam and Tisdell's step-by-step category construction analysis process (Figure 3.2). The process began with reading the first set of data from the interview transcript, field notes (Table 3.7), and collected documents. Open coding (Figure 3.2) was conducted to assign notations to data potentially relevant to the research questions, which were then grouped into similar categories. This process continued with additional data sets until patterns or regularities were identified throughout the entire dataset. These patterns subsequently transformed into themes, also known as categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The analysis began with open coding, which produced 246 codes related to leadership involvement, training with tools and reporting, collaboration and silos, accountability measures, and challenges and improvements before and after OKR implementation. After open coding, similar codes were grouped into categories, followed by axial coding to determine how these categories directly addressed the research questions.

During axial coding, relationships among categories were examined to explore how categories, in one direction, informed the processes underlying OKR implementation, and in the other direction, how these processes influenced the dismantling of departmental silos. Some

categories primarily highlighted procedural and strategic aspects of implementing and maintaining OKRs, addressing Research Question 1 (RQ1). Others provided valuable insights into collaborative patterns, changes in communication, and structural adjustments necessary to reduce interdepartmental barriers, addressing Research Question 2 (RQ2).

Table 3.8 shows an example of data analysis for RQ1 and RQ2. The first-order codes were produced from quotations gathered through interviews, document studies, and observations.

Figure 3.2

Data Analysis Process

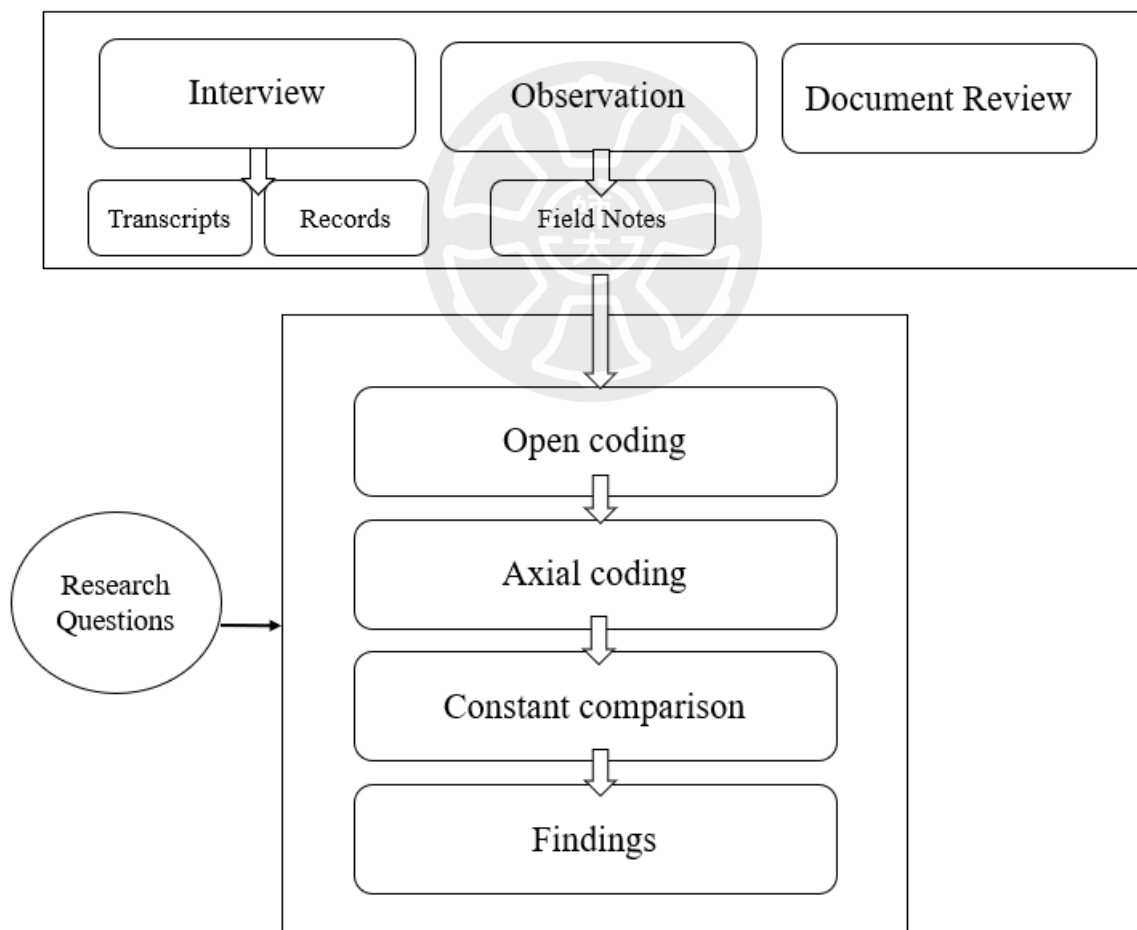


Table 3.7

Example of Field Notes from the Observation

Time	Fieldnotes
00:06	<p>The session begins with the HR Manager aka OKR Project Leader welcoming participants and emphasizing the interactive nature of the session. She encourages questions throughout and shares that he had to self-educate about OKRs before implementing them in the organization. Several participants join the meeting during this time.</p>
00:47	<p>HR Manager explains the motivation behind adopting OKRs, mentioning pilot programs in a few departments the previous year. She acknowledges the challenges faced in adoption and notes that HR has already undergone a separate session on OKRs.</p>
01:43	<p>She begins sharing his screen and introduces the session's objectives: understanding OKRs, their alignment with company strategy, and the review process. He asks for participant engagement, but initially, there is minimal response.</p>
03:28	<p>The first discussion question is posed: "What issues prevent the effectiveness of our working process?" Participants are slow to respond, so HR Manager shares common challenges such as unplanned resource allocation and lack of clarity in prioritization.</p>
06:38	<p>HR Manager asks participants to define OKRs. Employee A responds with "Objectives and Key Results." HR Manager affirms the answer and elaborates on the OKR framework, referencing John Doerr's influence on the methodology.</p>
09:42	<p>An example is provided to illustrate how objectives and key results work together. HR Manager gives a personal example about improving mental well-being, breaking it into key results and associated actions.</p>
17:20	<p>She explains alignment and cascading in OKRs, detailing how objectives move from C-level to departmental and individual levels. He uses visual aids to clarify how objectives, key results, and tasks connect.</p>

A formula for defining objectives, key results, and actions is introduced.

24:38 Participants are encouraged to think critically about setting measurable and inspiring objectives.

A humorous example involving unicorns is used to illustrate common OKR

28:50 misalignment issues. Participants engage in discussion, pointing out the lack of specificity and realism in the example.

The discussion shifts to measuring OKR success. Participants raise concerns about

35:20 tracking progress across different systems. HR Manager acknowledges the challenge and mentions a trial run with Microsoft Viva to centralize OKR tracking.

A practical example of corporate OKRs is shared, demonstrating how company-

42:49 wide objectives translate into departmental goals. The marketing, sales, and product teams each contribute their respective key results.



Figure 3.3

Example of Open Coding Process of Interview Transcriptions

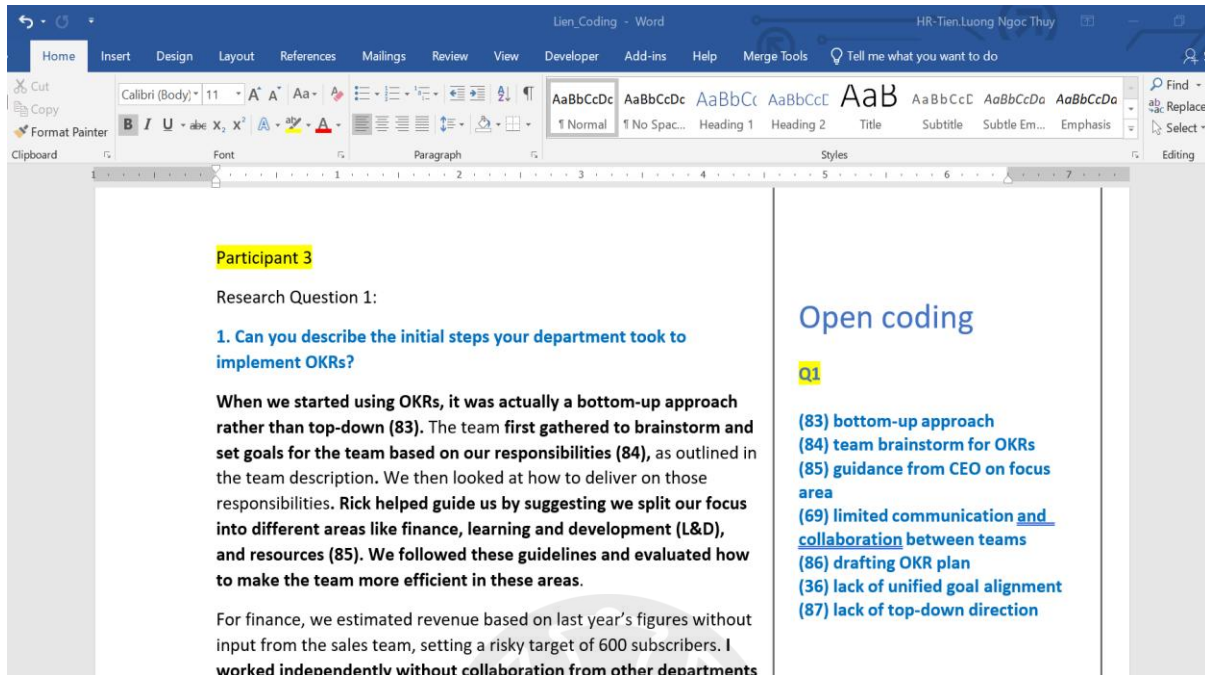


Table 3.8

Example of Data Analysis Process of RQ1

Addressing RQ1: The Implementation Process of OKRs

Data Source	Original Quotes (Raw Data)	1st-order codes	2nd-order codes	Categories	Theme
Interview	“The first step was to ensure all team members understood what OKRs are and how to set them... many confused them with KPIs.” (Participant 1 - Sales)	Employees mixing OKRs with KPIs, causing confusion	Training and Building Understanding	Initial Rollout and Early Adoption	OKR Implementation Process
Observation	"Participants raise concerns about consolidating data from multiple sources... HR Manager responds by emphasizing the importance of manual tracking in early stages." (OKR Training Observation)	Visibility gaps across departments hinder alignment	Technological Tools and Accessibility	Initial Rollout and Early Adoption	OKR Implementation Process
Observation	"HR Manager acknowledges the challenges faced in adoption... HR has already undergone a separate session on OKRs." (Observation Fieldnotes, 00:47)	Initial OKR training session covered basic concepts	Training and Building Understanding	Initial Rollout and Early Adoption	OKR Implementation Process
Document	“Objectives should directly align with the organization's strategic goals... ensures that every action contributes to the overall mission.” (OKR User Guide)	Departments mandated to create OKRs; final approval by CEO	Leadership Decision and Early Direction	Pre-Implementation	OKR Implementation Process

Table 3.9

Example of Data Analysis Process of RQ2

Addressing RQ2: Effectiveness of OKRs in Breaking Down Silos

Data Source	Original Quotes (Raw Data)	1st-order codes	2nd-order codes	Categories	Theme
Interview	“Departments weren’t sharing insights... made it hard to see the bigger picture.” (Participant 1)	Limited visibility and shared updates	Lack of Transparency and Accountability	Silos Working as Main Barrier	Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction
Interview	“Now, with clear goals and quarterly targets... collaboration has improved.” (Participant 3)	Some teams identifying shared KRAs improved collaboration	Positive Impact on Some Collaboration’s Aspects	Partial and Uneven Impact on Silo Reduction	Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction
Interview	“OKRs help create accountability by providing clear visibility into each team member’s objectives.” (Participant 2)	Regular OKRs check-ins driving personal accountability	Increased Ownership and Visibility	Strengthening Accountability Through OKRs	Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction
Observation	During the OKRs quarterly check-in, there was little interaction between HODs as they discussed their objectives separately. (Quarterly OKR Review, Sep 2024)	Departments focus on own tasks, minimal synergy	Persistent Silos and Limited Collaboration	Partial and Uneven Impact on Silo Reduction	Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction
Document	“The importance of cascading and aligning goals at all levels, from corporate to individual tasks.” (OKR User Guide)	OKRs intended to unify department efforts	Conceptual Framework for Alignment	OKRs as Framework for Shared Reference Points	Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction

Research Quality

To ensure the quality of this study, strategies were applied based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Techniques like member checking, triangulation, and peer review helped strengthen credibility, while consistent interview methods and detailed documentation supported reliability. These efforts aimed to ensure the findings were both trustworthy and relevant to similar organizational settings.

Credibility (Internal Validity)

Lincoln & Guba (1985) described credibility as something beyond reality itself. Credibility, or internal validity, concerned the extent to which research findings aligned with reality. While the notion of absolute truth or reality could never be fully captured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), several strategies were employed in this study to enhance its credibility. Even though an objective of "truth" or "reality" could never be captured (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), respondent validation, adequate engagement in data collection, and peer review were utilized to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Each of these strategies contributed to reinforcing the reliability and validity of the research.

Respondent Validation: Also known as member checking, this was a process in which the findings of the research were presented to the participants for confirmation. The researcher went back to the interviewees with the preliminary findings to verify that the interpretations correctly captured their experiences and views about the OKR implementation process. This step was necessary to ascertain that the data reflected the views of the respondents with authenticity.

Triangulation: This research used multiple sources of data, including interviews, observations, and internal documents, to confirm emerging findings. By comparing these

diverse sources, triangulation reduced potential biases and enhanced the credibility of the study. This ensured that the conclusions were not based on individual perceptions but on evidence from multiple perspectives.

Adequate Engagement in Data Collection: Adequacy in data collection was ensured through prolonged and iterative data collection. The researcher did this by ensuring that the variations of OKRs impacting silo breaking, accountability, and collaboration were well understood through semi-structured interviews with key personnel involved in OKR implementation across different departments and cultural backgrounds. Adequate engagement also entailed revisiting the interview data during analysis to ensure that no significant insights were missed or overlooked.

Peer Review: A peer review was used throughout the research process as a means of gaining more validity. The research design and interview questions were reviewed by several colleagues and subject experts. Externally, the scrutiny provided identified potential biases that could have been inherent in the research study. Suggestions from peers assisted in refining the analysis to capture results that were accurate and relevant in the context of a multicultural IT solutions company.

Taking these strategies together, internal validity was enhanced for the research, and weight was given to the conclusions drawn.

Transferability (External Validity)

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), external validity is about how well the findings from one study can apply to other situations. In this research, transferability is supported by the use of rich, detailed descriptions of the organizational context, the challenges faced, and how the OKR framework was implemented. These stories include detailed examples and actual quotes from interviews, field notes and internal documents. It helps readers to

understand not only what happened but also why and how it unfolded. This depth of context gives others the information they need to judge whether the findings might apply to their own organizations.

Reliability or Consistency

Merriam & Tisdell (2015) defined reliability in research as “the extent to which research findings could be replicated” (p. 250). According to this view, reliability was narrowly defined as the degree to which the findings of a study could be reproduced under similar conditions. To enhance reliability for this study, through detailed descriptions of the activities and procedures undertaken with relevant notes, the researcher maintained an extensive journal throughout the research. This comprehensive record-keeping allowed for tracing and revisiting each step of the research.

A uniform method was employed to gather data through semi-structured interviews. The questions asked of each participant were designed to remain consistent across interviews, ensuring that responses were comparable and that the process yielded reliable data. This consistency was crucial in providing a dependable basis for analyzing the impact of OKR implementation on breaking silos and promoting collaboration across departments.

To further ensure consistency, interview questions were sent to participants one week in advance of their scheduled interviews. This approach allowed participants ample time to reflect and prepare for the discussions. Additionally, all interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder during both face-to-face and online sessions to preserve the integrity of data collection and ensure high-quality responses. This methodical approach was designed to reinforce the reliability and consistency of the research findings.

CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter proposes to report the findings that have been derived from thorough qualitative coding. The analysis tries to answer two of the key research questions:

- **Research Question 1 (RQ1):** What is the implementation process of OKRs in a multicultural IT solutions company working in a remote work environment?
- **Research Question 2 (RQ2):** How do the OKR participants perceive the effectiveness of OKRs in helping break down silos between departments and promoting accountability and collaboration?

RQ1 and RQ2 address two different aspects of the research, although their categories and themes are not totally distinct. The chapter comprises two main sections. The first section explains the overall OKR implementation process with the illustration of related themes and categories. The second section then examines whether and how OKRs contribute to breaking down silos in the company as per the participant's perception.

The final part of the chapter summarizes these findings, providing an integrated understanding of how implementation processes and silo reduction efforts interrelate.

The Implementation Process of OKRs of the Case Company

RQ1 concentrates on the introduction and adoption of OKRs in the context of remote work and cultural differences in an IT solutions organization. The categories generated from the open codes reveal several aspects of the implementation process, including leadership and organizational alignment, training procedures, handling of structural and technological challenges, reporting and review process under the influence of remote and cultural differences factors.

Table 4.2

Data Structure of Research Question 1

1st order codes	2nd order codes	Categories	Theme
Siloed communication and lack of big-picture	Recognition of Silos and	Pre-	OKR Implementation
Disconnected functions leading to inefficiencies	Need for Alignment	Implementation	Process
Need for a shared vision to align teams			
CEO/HODs introducing OKRs as a solution	Leadership Decision and		
Departments mandated to create OKRs; final approval by CEO	Early Direction		
Early absence of unified corporate vision → confusion			
Initial OKR training session covered basic concepts	Training and Building	Initial Rollout	
No structured follow-up or advanced OKR guidance	Understanding	and Early	
Employees mixing OKRs with KPIs, causing confusion		Adoption	
Reliance on self-learning			
Bottom-up approach encouraged but no clear top-level goals	Bottom-up Approach		
Frequent revisions of departmental OKRs due to unclear direction	Application and Its Concerns		
Teams request top-down direction from CEO			

Multi-function teams set individual OKRs; single-function teams shared objectives

Multiple review cycles for department objectives

Assumptions about CEO expectations

Use of Microsoft Viva but with limited licenses

Excel sheets adopted by some departments

Visibility gaps across departments hinder alignment

Weekly, monthly, and quarterly OKR reviews vary by dept

CEO holds quarterly meetings but minimal cross-dept. interaction

Reviews focus on status checks, not collaboration

Risk of “OKR fatigue” if not reinforced

Need for continuous leadership support and follow-up

Inconsistent feedback loops for improvement

Remote work viewed as minor or neutral factor

Slight impact on follow-ups and collaboration speed

Already accustomed to Remote after COVID

Minimal influence of cultural diversity on adoption

Team Discussion for Objective Setting

Technological Tools and Accessibility

OKR Check-Ins and Reviews



Sustaining Engagement

Minimal Impact of Remote Working Condition

Cultural Differences and Their Limited Effect

Ongoing Usage and Sustaining Engagement

Cultural and Remote Factors as Moderators

Differences attributed more to exposure and goal-setting habits

Organizational factors outweigh cultural background



To answer the RQ1, the analysis first identified categories from the open codes that illustrate the processes, strategies, and supports involved in the introduction and adoption of the OKRs framework. Through axial coding, these categories were grouped into three main stages that indicate the implementation process - (1) Pre-Implementation, (2) Initial Rollout and Early Adoption, and (3) Ongoing Usage and Sustaining Engagement. Cultural and remote factors also shaped the context of implementation, serving more as moderating elements than as direct triggers in the process.

Each of the themes identified here has strong connections with RQ1, where leadership involvement, training efforts, technological tools, and procedural structures all played a part in shaping OKR adoption. The codes, identified above, are referred to again to anchor these insights in the data.

Pre-Implementation

Recognition of Silos and Needs for Alignment

According to the research's findings, the company had a siloed working environment prior to the implementation of the OKRs framework, with some HODs lacking communication between departments. This issue will be discussed further in Research Question 2. The OKR training material pointed to three primary issues: unplanned allocation of time and resources for multiple activities, a lack of thorough understanding of top priorities, and the inability to see the big picture of business activities due to disconnection between functions. Despite the absence of explicit mention of siloed working in these three statements, the company inferred that siloed structures were the root cause of these inefficiencies. The problem statement in the training file supports this assumption,

People cannot see the big picture of their business activities due to the disconnection between functions

After conducting research, the organization decided to implement the OKR framework as a potential solution to this problem. This aligns with Federico & Buganza's (2022) research on shared vision, which suggests that OKRs aid in the development of a shared vision, a crucial element for effective teamwork and collaboration.

Leadership Decision and Early Direction

The introduction of OKRs in the organization was first driven by top leadership, with the CEO and Heads of Departments (HODs) playing central roles. They act as both decision makers and facilitators throughout the whole process. All the participants indicated that the objectives were defined by the HOD and reviewed by the CEO. They also mentioned that the CEO mandated each department to develop their own OKRs, after which he would review and provide guidance until finalization. Some of the participants commented that the OKR-setting process can be discussed among the members in their team; however, the final decision-making responsibility lies with the department heads, and OKRs can only be published once they are approved by the CEO. This demonstrates that leadership plays a crucial role in initiating and maintaining the running of OKRs in the company. On the other hand, while this approach allowed departments to define their own goals, the absence of a clear, united corporate aim in the early stages resulted in varying interpretations and misalignment. This tension between leadership's directive and the departments' autonomy emerged during the early adoption stage.

Initial Roll-out and Early Adoption

Training and Building Understanding

Company Effort on Providing General OKRs Concept. In the beginning of the process, there was a training session led by the OKR Project Leader. This indicates that the company made an investment in the initial orientation. The training material covered the existing issues in the company, the concept of the OKR framework, and the necessary steps to

implement the OKRs.

According to the researcher's observation, the questions raised were mostly about how to set the right objectives and the tools used to track during the training; the concept of OKRs was explained clearly. The project leader mentioned the implementation process and how each department could adapt this framework to their current situation. The facilitator also highlighted the challenges the company is facing. Additionally, the session expressed the alignment of OKRs across different levels, from company cascading to departmental and individual goals. The session also introduced the audiences to a structured approach for setting objectives, key results, and associated actions. In the session, questions were asked about OKRs vs. KPIs, setting goals, and tracking tools. However, the engagement from employees was limited, with the session primarily being a one-way delivery rather than a hands-on workshop. The facilitator attempted to encourage interaction, but responses were minimal, suggesting that employees were either hesitant or lacked familiarity with the framework to contribute meaningfully.

Insufficient Training Leading to Confusion.

Lack of Depth and Follow-up Sessions. Despite the company's effort in conducting training session, some individuals perceived it as merely 'a generic training,' characterizing these efforts as superficial, devoid of structure, and lacking depth. Participant 2 remarked that “There weren't follow-up sessions to go deeper into best practices, guidelines, or case studies. It wasn't structured into a series that connects everything together.”

Limited Understanding of OKRs. Another factor to consider is the employees' comprehension of the concept. Participant 6 commented on the training,

The company did roll out OKR training for department heads to take back to their teams, and I think they also did an introductory session for everyone. HR organized the training

to explain the OKR concept, but I'm not sure how much everyone remembers or even knows what OKRs are. OKRs haven't really reached every employee, so a lot of people don't pay attention; some don't even know what OKRs are.

Some of them struggled to understand the OKR concept, often confusing it with KPIs, as reported by participant 1. On the other hand, they found it difficult to set meaningful, measurable objectives. Participants 3 expressed,

Initially, it was difficult for us to figure out how to set objectives and key results and how to measure them. In the beginning, we didn't know how to measure progress—for example, whether we should measure based on the number of courses produced or the percentage of completion.

Participant 8 also considered it as one of challenge,

One big challenge was that people didn't fully understand the difference between various goal-setting methods. Setting goals was tough because people didn't know how to prioritize tasks. We had to educate them on how to do that. They also struggled with coming up with statements and making the goals “SMART” (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound).

Moreover, document analysis of the training materials revealed that although fundamental OKR concepts were covered, there were no advanced follow-ups or case studies, consequently, creating uncertainty about KPIs against OKRs. As a result of a limited initial training foundation, they relied on self-education and self-searching about OKRs to bridge their knowledge gap.

Training Disparities Created Mixed OKR Adoption. The uneven quality of training across departments led to disparate levels of OKR literacy. Individuals who received clearer instruction and consistent feedback saw OKRs as a strategic tool that could enhance accountability and planning. Conversely, employees with limited training

perceived OKRs as an additional administrative burden rather than a beneficial framework. Participant 1 summarized the prevailing mindset in their teams,

We're already overloaded with tasks, and OKRs are just something extra. There's a big gap between seeing OKRs as just an add-on task and truly understanding their value.

Participant 5 echoed this sentiment, characterizing the process as merely a series of actions,

We're just doing OKR tasks for the sake of doing them.

These differing impressions, determined by the depth and quality of the first training, had a critical impact in supporting or restricting the adoption of OKRs inside the business.

Bottom-Up Approach Application and Its Concerns

Employee Frustration with CEO's Bottom-up Approach. During the discussion for the first official roll-out of OKRs, the CEO encouraged a bottom-up approach. However, seven out of eight participants expressed their frustration about the bottom-up approach requirement in the initial stage of the OKR adoption process. Participant 4 commented,

There was some conflict between top-down and bottom-up approaches. The CEO wanted a bottom-up approach, gathering input from departments to create the company's OKRs. The departments, however, were hesitant because they didn't know how to set up OKRs to align with the company's goals.

Although the bottom-up process could foster ownership and creativity, it can create fragmentation and misalignment between departments, affecting the effectiveness of the framework. Participant 3 highlighted,

At the time, we didn't have a top-down approach or clear company-wide goals, so each team worked on its own. Later, we gathered everything to set the company's objectives. However, this led to some mismatches between team goals and company goals.

This approach caused confusion among departments, as they initially lacked clear direction from the CEO, forcing them to formulate their objectives independently. Participant 7 expressed,

There are clear issues with our current OKR implementation, especially since it's a bottom-up approach. Another major challenge was the lack of alignment and transparency across departments. Departments created their OKRs in isolation, and there was no clear process to link department goals with the corporate objectives. For example, we couldn't see what other departments were working on or how our objectives intersected.

Concerns Over the CEO's Leadership in the OKR Process. Following the criticism about the bottom-up strategy, some participants also implied the CEO's negligence in directing the process. Participant 7 indicated,

But I felt the bottom-up approach was flawed from the start. The CEO, for instance, isn't entirely committed to TRG, he has his own personal interests. Instead of guiding departments directly, he lets each one set their objectives, which are then consolidated by HR. He simply reviews the objectives rather than being fully involved in shaping them.

Participant 6 also provided additional insights into the context and addressed it as a challenge,

A big challenge was coming up with OKRs without clear direction from the company. Since OKRs are set bottom-up, each team defines its objectives, and the CEO mainly reviews the wording rather than providing company-aligned objectives. This allows teams to set goals according to their own preferences—some choose challenging objectives, while others set easier ones. The bottom-up approach leaves objectives open to interpretation, and those who prefer minimal challenges end up with simpler goals.

Calls for a Shift to a Top-Down Approach. As such, they expected the approach

could be changed to top-down, which they can receive the direction from the CEO about the overall company's goal, then set objectives and key results align with the company's goal.

Participant 8 suggested,

The bottom-up approach hasn't been as effective as we'd hoped. We're considering trying a top-down approach instead. We need to make the goals more specific and accountable, which is why we think a top-down approach might work better.

Participant 3 had the same suggestion. She commented,

OKRs should be applied in a top-down approach, where everyone sets their objectives and key results based on company-wide goals. The current bottom-up approach has issues because it can take time to revise or may be ignored if the CEO doesn't agree with the department's OKRs. So, the overall objective should be defined from the start. Currently, I only see my department's OKRs and not the company-wide objectives or those of other departments, so there's a lack of alignment across departments.

This emphasis on clarity from leadership underlines a broader theme: without explicit corporate goals, departmental objectives often remained fragmented.

Team Discussion for Objective Setting

After the bottom-up roll-out and the training, each department began working on setting their objectives and then sent to the CEO for review. When setting the objectives, departments with diverse functions assigned different objectives to their team members, while departments with single function typically set departmental objectives, with all members sharing the responsibilities for completing the required actions. This distinction influenced how teams viewed their individual accountability versus collective accountability in meeting their OKRs.

As part of the research, the HR department's OKR-setting discussion was observed. The meeting was conducted with the participation of the HR Manager and all three team members. Before the meeting, the HR manager drafted the departmental objectives and then

assigned them to each member, asking them to come up with key results and actions related to their specific working functions. The discussion lasted approximately two hours, with the HR manager going through each objective, while the team collectively refined the key results and associated actions. Following the discussion, the HR Manager held individual sessions with each member, though these meetings were not directly observed. Once finalized, the HR Manager proposed the OKRs to the CEO and received feedback. The OKRs were then revised by the CEO back and forth three times to finally call it completed. One notable aspect from this observation was the lack of shared OKRS within the HR team. It means that each member received individual objectives without overlapping or interconnected goals. This differed from other departments, where team members had collaborative OKRs that contributed to shared success measures. While this method ensured obvious individual accountability, it also meant that the OKR framework did not clearly address cross-functional collaboration within the HR members.

Challenges in Defining Objectives. Some participants reported that the planning phase took a long time since they did not receive the exact requirements from the CEO, forcing them to relies on their assumptions about what the company requires. That led to an issue: when they discussed the objectives with the CEO, the review repeated multiple times, the review was repeated several times, prolonging the process and causing frustration. Participant 5 described this iterative process,

We used a bottom-up approach where our team first defined these objectives, then submitted them to the CEO for approval. He would review and possibly challenge or modify them, especially if they overlapped with company-wide objectives, such as revenue generation. The team's internal discussions were quick, but it took a while to get final approval from him due to his thorough review process, typically about a month.

This lack of clarity led to delays as objectives had to be repeatedly revised to align with senior management expectations. Participant 1 highlighted the stress this put on the planning phase,

I think the biggest challenge was the planning phase. Planning had to be approved by the CEO. It might sound critical of the company, but even though the process was supposed to be ‘bottom-up,’ in the end, the results had to satisfy the higher-ups, like the HODs. Throughout the process, although some felt that the multiple review could improve the quality of the objectives, others believed that clearer direction in advance could have prevented the back-and-forth approvals. These perspectives reveal how a lack of defined corporate guidelines can undermine the intended benefits of a bottom-up approach.

This finding aligned with the HR department’s OKR-setting experience, where the lack of upfront clarity prolonged the planning process. The HR team repeated revisions reflect the overall company tendency, confirming a company-wide challenge in which teams had to make assumptions about objectives rather than working with specified corporate priorities.

Technological Tools and Accessibility

The company implemented Microsoft Viva as the primary tool to streamline OKR tracking. However, limited software licenses restricted access to this platform, which created inefficiencies and inconsistencies in how OKRs were tracked across departments. Only leadership and a few employees had access to Viva, forcing some teams to rely on Excel spreadsheets to monitor their progress before manually integrating their data into the Viva system.

One reason for this restricted access was that not all employees were directly assigned individual OKRs. In departments where employees shared similar job functions, objectives were often set at the team level, with only senior members responsible with monitoring progress. Participant 6 explained this approach,

We don't have enough Viva licenses for everyone to access and check in on OKRs. In my team, we only have three licenses, which are generally given to senior members. I assign them tasks and tell them to check in, but if it's not a task they're directly responsible for, I don't ask them to check in.

In contrast, departments like HR, where employees had more distinct and specialized responsibilities, provided all team members with access to Viva. This inconsistency in tool usage created gaps in how different teams engaged with and tracked their OKRs.

Another significant limitation was the lack of visibility across departments. Participants reported that they could not view the objectives or progress of other departments, which hindered alignment and collaboration. Participant 6 highlighted the resulting isolation,

There's no cross-checking or challenge between departments, and I don't have visibility into other departments' OKRs. This means we work in isolation, and each department simply reports their progress at the end of the month.

Participant 2 echoed these concerns, pointing out the difficulty in aligning departmental objectives with overarching company goals due to limited access to company-wide OKRs,

The OKRs are mainly focused on the department, and we don't have visibility into the company-wide OKRs. This makes it hard to align our department's OKRs with the company's.

Ongoing Usage and Sustaining Engagement

OKR Check-in and Reviews

Following the initial adoption period, the company entered a phase of quarterly reviews, iterative improvements, and attempts to integrate OKRs more firmly into daily operations. The OKR training material outlined four stages for the reviews: a weekly meeting between the manager and the individual, a monthly report, quarterly reviews, and an annual performance evaluation.

Observations made by the researcher further revealed how the review process played out in practice. The researcher attended weekly and monthly OKR review meetings of one member of the HR department. The manager conducted these online meetings, opening the Microsoft Viva tool to check the status of each objective and discuss relevant actions. The weekly session lasted about 30 minutes, with a focus on quick progress updates. In the monthly meeting, which lasted around an hour, besides checking the statuses, some objectives were adjusted in response to shifts in company priorities, which illustrate OKR's inherent flexibility. The researcher also observed a part of the quarterly meetings between the HODs and the CEO. These meetings spanned three full days overall. The CEO held individual meetings with each department head to review progress, followed by a collective session where they discussed cross-departmental OKRs. The observation took place in the two-hour collective session involving HR, Marketing, and Academy Departments. In this meeting, the cross-department objectives with "at risk" or "behind" statuses were discussed. The CEO challenged the department heads on these objectives and demanded more concrete actions.

Variation in Review Practices. Despite the described guidelines, actual compliance to the review requirements varied per department. Participant 6 reported,

Initially, we did regular check-ins both monthly and quarterly when OKRs first launched, but now I've reduced it to quarterly check-ins, sometimes only at the end of the quarter. I also do quarterly check-ins with the CEO.

This phenomenon occurred within departments that had a single function, indicating that the employees in that department shared the same responsibilities.

Regarding the quarterly review, all participants reported that the HODs had meetings with the CEO. While these meetings are valuable for updates and checkpoints, participant 7 noted some limitations in the collaboration and alignment between departments,

Cross-department communication is pretty limited to those quarterly meetings. During these meetings, department heads share their OKRs, but honestly, I don't really pay much attention unless it directly impacts my team. I know each department has its own OKRs, but since they don't relate to my team, I don't usually have any feedback for them.

Sustaining Engagement and Consistency Over Time

For the implementation to persist, the leadership must invest more effort than just introducing the framework. As mentioned above, the majority of participants suggested a top-down strategy for the OKRs framework, indicating a need for clear and consistent guidance from senior leadership. Participant 4 further emphasized the need for consistency in leadership direction as they reflected on the bottom-up approach they had adopted,

OKRs need to be followed up on by the person, the team, and the company. You can't just set OKRs and then ignore them or change them constantly. Although OKR theory allows for changes, there should still be a fixed direction. The approach can be adjusted, but the final objectives should remain consistent. From my perspective, there should be something fixed, like the company's corporate OKR. If you change direction too often, it'll cause confusion.

The need for sustained feedback and training also emerged as a prominent theme. Participant 2 recounted,

We only had one session for OKRs, and after submitting them, there was no feedback, so we don't know if what we did was right. If there had been feedback on how to write objectives, like pointing out missing timelines or suggesting adjustments in percentages, it would've been more helpful. I suggest providing more training and performance reviews. Each team should review their OKRs every month.

Since OKRs are a new framework introduced in the company, they need constant promotion and feedback from the leaders. Participant 1 agreed with this statement,

We need more leaders, like the OKR project leader, who is taking the first steps, but the effort needs to be stronger. Right now, her work is the initial step, but after that, each department runs it on their own, and the OKR spirit starts to fade. When that happens, people see OKRs as just another administrative task rather than something that drives the company forward.

In sum, these insights highlight the critical role of leadership in sustaining employee engagement with OKRs. They must provide consistent support, strategic direction, and regular feedback rather than just introducing the framework. Without these elements, the “OKR spirit” can maintain itself within the company.

Cultural and Remote Factors as Moderators

Remote work and cultural diversity have a minor impact on OKR implementation. Most participants found remote work manageable, with just a few delays in follow-ups. Cultural differences were not viewed as a barrier; instead, issues were associated with leadership, mindset, and OKR experience. Differences in goal-setting were related to familiarity with OKRs rather than country, emphasizing the importance of training over cultural changes.

Remote Working Impact

The findings show that only one or two participants agreed that remote working has some impact on the OKRs implementation process.

Participant 8 expressed her thoughts,

It’s easier to catch up with people and push for progress when you’re onsite, but remote work tends to slow down the process.

Participant 6 echoed that idea; however, they considered it a minor issue,

Face-to-face might make it easier for collaboration and follow-ups, but other than that, remote work hasn't really changed much. If we're working remotely, it might require more supervision if people don't check in on time, but that's just a minor issue.

Aside from that, everyone else believed that the implementation process would be minimally affected by remote working conditions. It is because they've already adopted this working style since COVID.

Minimal Impact of Cultural Difference on OKRs Adoption

Mindset and Organizational Factors Were Bigger Challenges. Participants generally agreed that cultural differences had minimal direct impact on the understanding and adoption of OKRs. Instead, challenges were often attributed to mindset, individual attitudes, and organizational dynamics.

Most participants emphasized that cultural diversity within the organization did not significantly affect the implementation of OKRs. Employees across diverse backgrounds successfully worked together, with mutual respect for differing perspectives and communication styles. As participant 1 noted,

From my perspective, cultural differences don't seem to influence how we set OKRs.

In fact, I see OKRs as a tool that promotes collaboration within the team, and cultural differences haven't been an issue for us.

Other participants echoed similar sentiments, emphasizing that the primary challenges stemmed from internal organizational factors, such as a lack of clarity in leadership or departmental misalignment, rather than cultural diversity. Participant 6 observed,

There's no real impact from cultural differences. Objectives are usually just assigned based on who's available and skilled for each task.

Several participants identified issues in OKR implementation that were initially thought to stem from cultural differences but were more accurately attributed to mindset and

organizational culture. For instance, some leaders prioritized their departmental objectives over company-wide goals, hindering collaboration. Participant 7 explained,

Some leaders prioritize their own departmental objectives over the company's common goals, which hinders collaboration. This challenge is more about attitudes and company culture than cultural diversity.**Differences in Goal-Setting Styles, Not Cultural Barriers.** Where differences did emerge, they were more aligned with working styles and attitudes toward goal-setting rather than cultural identity. Some participants attributed goal-setting tendencies to cultural patterns, with Vietnamese employees reportedly favoring realistic, lower targets, while foreign employees often preferred more ambitious stretch goals. Participant 2 highlighted this distinction,

Vietnamese employees tend to set lower targets that are easier to achieve... Foreign employees tend to set goals that are much higher, aiming for 10x or even 100x improvement.

However, participant 8 clarified that these tendencies were influenced more by knowledge and exposure to OKRs than by cultural differences,

Setting high goals didn't depend on cultural differences but rather on people who cared about the company and set hard but achievable targets. The difference is more linked to knowledge and exposure rather than culture.

Knowledge and Experience Mattered More Than Nationality. Participants frequently emphasized that differences in OKR understanding and application were driven more by knowledge and experience than cultural backgrounds. Employees with prior exposure to OKR frameworks brought valuable insights and best practices to the process, while those unfamiliar with the framework often struggled with its concepts. Participant 8 noted,

Those with experience in OKRs brought in more ideas, added value, and shared best practices. The difference is more linked to knowledge and exposure rather than culture.

This underscores the need for targeted training and support to ensure that all employees, regardless of their background, have the skills and understanding necessary to engage with the framework effectively.

Effectiveness of OKRs in Breaking Down Silos of the Case Company

The RQ2 examines how the participants perceived the effectiveness of OKR framework in the breakdown of silos in a multicultural technology company that operates remotely. Starting with this, numerous categories are identified such as interdepartmental dynamics, communication flows, and accountability. While there are some overlaps here with RQ1 into the influence of leadership and the role of training, this section details more existing barriers that exist between departments and their work, and why.

The categories linked to RQ2 cluster into main themes: **(1) Silos Working a Main Barrier, (2) OKRs as a Framework for Shared Reference Points, (3) Partial and Uneven Impact on Silo Reduction, and (4) Strengthening Accountability Through OKRs.** By delving into these topics, a better understanding was gained of the complexities of how OKRs can strengthen interdepartmental relationships, what sets the stage for or disrupts development, and which features of the surrounding reality foster collaboration and accountability within departments.

Silos Working as Main Barrier

Pre-Existing Siloed Structure

Before OKRs were implemented, many participants described **working in silos** as a main obstacle in the company. The reasons that led to that were varied from lack of transparency and visibility, transactional collaboration between departments, and misalignment of goals and priorities.

Table 4.2

Data Structure of Research Question 2

1st order codes	2nd order codes	Categories	Theme
<p>Siloed communication, lack of inter-department transparency</p> <p>Collaboration felt like “asking for favors”</p> <p>No unified corporate goal</p>	<p>Pre-Existing Siloed Structure</p>	<p>Silos Working as Main Barrier</p>	<p>Effectiveness of OKRs in Silo Reduction</p>
<p>Limited visibility and shared updates</p> <p>Information barriers hindering cross-team awareness</p> <p>Weak structures for mutual accountability</p>	<p>Lack of Transparency and Accountability</p>		
<p>Departments adopting separate priorities</p> <p>Frequent conflicts due to misaligned targets</p>	<p>Misalignment of Goals and Priorities</p>		

OKRs intended to unify department efforts

Leadership's aim to create a common reference for performance

Conceptual Framework for Alignment

OKRs as a Framework for Shared Reference Points

Bottom-up approach reversing intended goal cascade

Limited tool usage preventing visibility across departments

Unclear process for linking departmental and corporate objectives

Gaps in Implementation

Some teams identifying shared Key Results that improved collaboration

Clearer responsibilities enabling better cross-checking

More focused discussions around common targets

Positive Impact on Some Collaboration's Aspects

Partial and Uneven Impact on Silo Reduction

Collaboration still personality-driven

Departments focus on own tasks, minimal synergy

Persistent Silos and Limited Collaboration



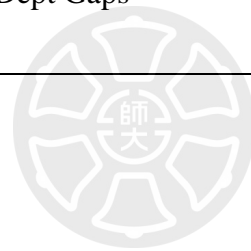
Regular OKRs check-ins driving personal accountability
Clearer individual tasks and deadlines
“Fear of missing OKRs” fostering focus and urgency

Increased Ownership and
Visibility

Strengthening
Accountability Through
OKRs

Within-team alignment significantly improved
Cross-department accountability remains weak

Team-Level Success vs. Cross-
Dept Gaps



These issues were explicitly acknowledged in the training material, which identified disconnection between functions and the inability to see the "big picture" as key contributors to inefficiencies. Each of these factors reinforced the fragmented way of working.

Lack of Transparency and Accountability

The departments operated with minimal transparency and information barriers. This recurring theme existed due to lack of communication between departments.

Participant 1 described,

Communication was mostly internal, so departments weren't sharing insights or updates with one another, which made it hard to see the bigger picture. There wasn't an easy way to share data or updates across teams, so everyone was a bit in the dark about what other departments were working on. This made it harder to support each other or to jump in when one team was struggling.

This lack of transparency created "information barrier", which left the teams unaware of each other's goals or progress. Also, they did not have clear description of what they need to do. Participant 3 highlighted,

The first thing I notice is that we don't have clear descriptions for each department regarding their authority and responsibilities.

Participant 4 described how Marketing and Sales teams worked in near isolation, Before OKRs, communication and collaboration between departments were pretty limited, which naturally led to silos. There was this recurring issue between Marketing and Sales. Marketing would pass leads to sales, but they'd have no idea what happened to those leads. If marketing followed up, Sales would just say the leads weren't qualified, but there was no clear agreement or criteria on what "qualified" actually meant. It created a lot of misunderstandings and made it really hard for the two teams to work together effectively.

This gap in communication not only reinforced the silo mentality between departments but also prevented teams from aligning their work with the company overall goals.

Transactional Collaboration

Another dominant subtheme was the tendency toward transactional collaboration rather than genuine teamwork. Before OKRs were implemented, the collaboration between teams were limited, which participant 6 expressed it as they were “asking for a favor” when it comes to working together in a corporate goal. Participant 3 also echoed this circumstance,

Before OKRs, each team just focused on their own work. For example, when my team needed to collaborate with the Marketing team to produce course videos, I often had to constantly follow up and push them to speed up the process.

Misalignment of Goals and Priorities

The lack of common objectives was a crucial element in maintaining silos. The OKR training material addressed this issue by highlighting the importance of cascading and aligning goals at all levels, from corporate to individual tasks. However, participants reported that this alignment was often missing in practice. Many times, departments create their own priorities without much connection to the main corporate goals. Participant 1 expressed,

Teams didn't really have a reason to work together closely, so there wasn't much incentive to coordinate. For example, Sales would be focused on closing deals, while Delivery would concentrate on fulfilling those deals, and often their priorities didn't line up. This lack of coordination sometimes led to duplicated efforts or, worse, conflicts in timing or resources.

Participant 7 raised a larger issue of lack of respect and united vision across departments,

The main problem was that we didn't really have shared goals or a clear, unified vision. Everyone was kind of doing their own thing, and personal interests often got in the way

of focusing on what the company needed as a whole. On top of that, there wasn't much respect for what other departments were bringing to the table, which made it really hard to collaborate

Meanwhile, Participant 6 said,

Each department is very focused on its own objectives, without having clear visibility into what other teams are working on. ... Collaboration heavily depends on individual personalities. Some team members are more willing to reach out or work with others, while others prefer to stay focused on their own tasks. This variation in personal approach makes it feel like collaboration isn't consistent across teams.

There was a lack of clarity on accountability and ownership, and that led to continuous conflicts. People always thought their own perspective was correct, so they didn't collaborate. Another factor was the absence of anyone to resolve the conflicts. Nobody stepped in to clarify things or mediate between departments, which only made the barriers worse.

All things considered, effective cross-departmental collaboration was mostly hindered by silos. Lack of defined, cohesive goals and minimal transparency enable departments function apart. Collaboration rarely extended beyond transactional needs, and employees were sometimes unaware of how their efforts linked to the overall business aim. These circumstances created a disconnected environment, allowing the business to study the OKR paradigm as a possible solution.

OKRs as a Framework for Shared Reference Points

Conceptual Framework for Alignment

Recognizing the fragmented environment, the leadership introduced OKRs with the hope of providing a common set of reference points across the organization. In theory, OKRs were intended to provide clarity on what was most important (objectives) and how to quantify performance (key results), thereby aligning efforts and counteracting siloed mindsets. The

training material stated the cascading structure of OKRs, emphasizing how annual corporate goals may be broken down into quarterly team targets and individual daily activities. Participant 7 emphasized the objective of OKRs as “to help everyone understand the company's common goals,” demonstrating their clear grasp of the framework’s intent.

Gaps in Implementation

Despite employees understanding the overall intention of this framework, they ended up reversing the application process. Participant 8 reflected on this experience,

We came up with a step-by-step process: Step 1 was goal setting, to understand the company's ideal goals. We took a bottom-up approach to set the goals, meaning it started with the team, then moved to the department, and finally aligned with the company. After that, the company’s goals were released.

This Bottom-up Approach, which was discussed in the RQ1’s findings, posed a challenge in aligning the objectives of the departments with the company’s overall goals.

Another factor that contributed to the implementation gap was the utilization of tools. Although the company used Microsoft Viva to track the OKRs, participants reported having "limited access to the OKRs tool," as they were unable to view the objectives of other departments. This issue led to many departments relying on manual Excel sheets. This resulted in inconsistent tracking of OKRs and decreased team visibility.

OKR Effectiveness on Silo Reduction

Positive Impact: Improve Clarity and Structured Collaboration

Despite the participants' criticism of the OKR framework from a bottom-up perspective, they agreed that clear goals and shared objectives could enhance collaboration in certain areas. However, the result is controversial. Participant 3 highlighted some improvements between the Academy Team and the Marketing Team,

In the Academy team, when we set an OKR related to course production—let's say producing 30 courses as part of a goal of 500 courses for the year—100 of those courses were a shared key result between my team and the Marketing team. At that point, we agreed with the head of marketing that this would be a shared OKR, and we would collaborate accordingly... Now, with clear goals and quarterly and monthly targets, if there's a delay, I can remind them, and they act on it right away. So, collaboration has improved, although it still hasn't reached my expectations.

Since the OKRs framework was implemented as a requirement for the whole company, it also gave clarity on the responsibility of each department dedicated to the shared goals. Some interaction did happen, participant 8 reported,

Once we understood the company's requirements, OKRs gave clarity on how different departments are linked and how they're interrelated. It forces teams to work together to achieve the company's goals, which helps break down silos by encouraging communication and collaboration across departments. We've started discussing things more openly, but the blame game still exists in some areas. However, overall communication has become more open.

Participant 2 agreed,

Thanks to OKRs, we now have clear objectives to follow up on consistently. Our conversations are focused on specific goals, so we don't get sidetracked. We can stay focused on the problems that need to be solved because the objectives have already been agreed upon. When we need information, we refer to the OKRs, and since everyone has agreed to be involved and is responsible, they share the necessary information instead of ignoring it.

The objective-setting process encouraged departments to identify points of intersection and, at times, engage in cross-checking practices to align their targets. These processes

occasionally led to improvements in collaboration, as employees gained better clarity on responsibilities and recognized that certain outcomes depended on inputs from other departments. However, not every department had shared objectives, or lack of visibility of shared goals limited the broader impact of OKRs.

Negative Impact: Persistent Silos and Lack of Real Collaboration

While there were positive signs, participants emphasized that OKRs had limited success in reducing silos, with many reporting little to no visible improvements in collaboration. Participant 6 directly expressed frustration over persistent siloed behaviors,

I haven't seen any improvement. In theory, OKRs should help, but collaboration remains dependent on individuals. For example, if I need assistance from another team, it often feels like I'm just asking for favors, as in our departments, there isn't a shared corporate goal linking our objectives. People prioritize their own department's work ... As it stands, I avoid relying on others and instead assign tasks to my own team or interns.

For some departments, shared goals were not available, leading teams to focus solely on their priorities. Participant 7 observed,

Honestly, not really. The OKR framework is supposed to create alignment and collaboration, but in practice, it hasn't significantly improved interaction. People still tend to work in silos, and collaboration happens only when absolutely necessary. For example, we still face barriers where certain departments hesitate to share information or collaborate due to personal priorities or conflicting interests.

Other responses were not directed but also showed the perception of the limited impact of OKRs on reducing silos. Participant 2 also highlighted the lack of visibility between departments, which hindered effective collaboration,

One issue is that only the HODs (Heads of Departments) know the finalized OKRs. MKT Manager knows the OKRs for sales and marketing, but team members only know parts of it, not the overall picture. The collaboration between the two teams still happens, but without visibility, we don't always know which campaign should be prioritized. For example, sales might have an important workshop on hospitality, but marketing may see it as just another event, not as important as the ongoing campaigns. Before OKRs, marketing collaborated normally with other teams, and our collaboration isn't really influenced by the OKR goal-setting process.

Other participants, like Participant 1, noted that while OKRs improved alignment, they did not fully address collaboration challenges,

I think OKRs enhance alignment more than collaboration. In our company, collaboration is difficult to define. Within teams, like in sales, the team spirit is high, but across departments, it's more complicated due to differing priorities. For example, it's often challenging to collaborate between sales and delivery because their priorities don't always align, even after multiple conversations.

OKRs create opportunities for teams to connect, but they do not fully resolve collaboration issues. The quarterly reviews mostly focus on whether the company was hitting the targets, which does not reflect true collaboration. One noticeable insight from the observation that supports this point is that during the OKRs quarterly check-in, there was little interaction between HODs as they discussed their objectives separately, and when one was speaking with the CEO, the others tended not to pay much attention and checked for their OKRs instead. Only when it came to cross-department OKRs did they discuss but also show a lack of willingness to collaborate to solve the problem, especially for issues that required collaboration; they did not give a clear next action but rather blamed each other.

Participant 5 similarly observed that their team continued to work independently, with "not much change in collaboration."

The introduction of OKRs provided an infrastructure for potential collaboration and transparency, but its effectiveness was inconsistent. Positive outcomes depended on clear goals, leadership reinforcement, and shared accountability. However, deeper issues, such as limited visibility of shared goals, insufficient training, and a legacy of siloed operations, impeded its impact. Without addressing these structural and cultural barriers, OKRs alone could not significantly reduce silos or foster consistent interdepartmental collaboration.

Strengthening Accountability Through OKRs

One promising effect of implementing OKRs was the creation of clearer accountability structures. The weekly check-ins within the team encouraged employees to be more proactive in completing their assigned objectives or actions. Several participant responses reflected this sense of accountability. Participant 2 highlighted how OKRs created transparency and supported independent roles,

OKRs help create accountability by providing clear visibility into each team member's objectives and progress. For example, with our Webmaster, who works independently from a different location, OKRs allow us to see the criteria he's evaluated on and how it aligns with the rest of the team's goals. This transparency ensures that we can support him effectively while also staying accountable for our own OKRs. Without OKRs, it might be easy to overlook certain tasks, but the framework ensures that everyone's responsibilities are clear, fostering a stronger sense of individual and team accountability.

Participant 5 noted that OKRs not only fostered accountability but also instilled a sense of urgency,

We fear failing to meet our OKRs and facing reprimands from the CEO, which makes us more accountable for our work. Our reports are more accurate and timelier; we can't afford to be late with tax submissions, for instance. We need to be more focused than we were before OKRs.

Participant 4 emphasized the role of structured guidelines in fostering alignment, There are clear written guidelines about what each team needs to do, and responsibilities are divided clearly. The OKRs help provide a shared structure, and since we have mutual agreements in place, we all work based on those, ensuring alignment across the team.

Additionally, Participant 3 observed how shared OKRs fostered mutual awareness and proactive support within teams,

One advantage of OKRs is that when we have shared OKRs, team members clearly know the actions they need to take. They focus on the team's objective and are also aware of each other's actions, which has increased mutual support compared to before. Previously, support only came when requested, but with OKRs, people are more proactive because they have a shared goal. This has also helped reduce conflicts within the team.

Participant 8 shared a similar perspective, noting a gradual but meaningful shift in accountability:

Since implementing OKRs, there's been a shift toward greater accountability. Now people know it's on them to achieve their tasks and objectives. While we haven't reached full accountability yet, I would say we've moved closer—maybe from a 1 to a 5 on a scale of 10. OKRs have helped individuals take ownership of their responsibilities, but fully changing the mindset and processes takes time.

It is also evident in the weekly and monthly OKRs check-ins, when Participant 4 proactive defined progress and pending tasks, as well as offered next steps to fulfill the objectives on time. Their preparation revealed that regular reviews encouraged ownership and increased transparency about individual duties.

It can be seen that the accountability is more likely to happen within a team than across departments; however, this can be considered a positive impact as employees recognized that collective performance depended on timely and accurate inputs from multiple teams. Improvements in timeliness, focus, and accuracy suggested that when employees understood the broader consequences of their actions, they were more inclined to collaborate—or at least ensure others had the resources needed to meet shared goals.

Discussions

This section concludes the findings in this chapter, including how OKRs were implemented and how the employees perceived its effectiveness in breaking silos. The two inquiries are deeply connected. In addition, this study evokes the discussion on the efficient method to adapt a new framework multinational IT firm.

Summary of RQ1 Findings

Overall, the implementation process of OKRs at this multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment unfolded in three main stages: Pre-Implementation, Initial Rollout and Early Adoption, and Ongoing Usage and Sustaining Engagement. The key findings for RQ1 can be reduced into the following general insights:

Leadership and Organizational Alignment

Leadership played a crucial role in establishing OKRs, with senior leaders, particularly the CEO and HODs, driving the process. The CEO required departments to create their own objectives, which he later reviewed and refined. While this empowered teams, the lack of clear

initial direction often led to inefficiencies, misalignment, and prolonged planning phases. The bottom-up approach fostered ownership but also caused confusion, as departments struggled to align their goals with company-wide objectives. Many participants recommended shifting to a top-down approach to enhance clarity, consistency, and alignment.

Training and Building Understanding

Initial training sessions, which were provided by the OKR Project Leader, were described as “generic,” and lacking depth, structure, and follow-up. Employees struggled to distinguish OKRs from KPIs and often found it difficult to set measurable objectives. Uneven training quality across departments resulted in varying levels of OKR literacy, with some employees perceiving the framework as an administrative burden rather than a strategic tool. Departments that received clearer guidance and feedback reported better adoption and engagement.

Tensions Between Bottom-Up and Top-Down Approaches

In order to foster autonomy, the CEO initially advocated for a bottom-up approach to the implementation of OKRs. However, a majority of the participants reported that the method was ineffective due to the company's long-standing siloed working practices. The bottom-up approach not only failed to solve the problem of siloed working, but also caused confusion as the teams were unsure of what the CEO expected. This situation resulted in numerous and time-consuming revisions to the objectives. Therefore, many participants recommended shifting to a top-down model or a hybrid approach (providing clear company-level goals first, then allowing teams to tailor objectives accordingly).

Planning and Technological Challenges

The planning phase was marked by inefficiencies due to unclear requirements and iterative review processes. Teams had to rely on assumptions when defining objectives, leading

to delays and frustration. Technological barriers further complicated implementation. Limited access to Microsoft Viva forced many departments to use manual Excel-based tracking, which increased administrative workload and created inconsistencies. Additionally, the lack of visibility into other departments' OKRs reinforced siloed working practices and hindered alignment.

Ongoing Reviews and the Need for Sustained Engagement

Most participants reported conducting weekly reviews within their teams and quarterly reviews with the CEO. While these reviews established checkpoints for updating progress, the lack of shared OKRs and the inability to view others' OKRs hindered cross-departmental collaboration, leading the HODs to primarily focus on their own team's OKRs. Participants emphasized that continuous leadership involvement, regular feedback, and training refreshers were essential to “keep the OKR spirit alive.” Without these, OKRs risked becoming an administrative task.

Cultural and Remote Work Factors as Moderators

Cultural differences had a minimal direct impact on OKR adoption. Variations in goal-setting approaches were observed, with Vietnamese employees favoring realistic targets and foreign employees setting more ambitious goals. However, these differences were attributed more to personality, mindset, and knowledge exposure than cultural identity. Remote work was also a minor factor, with participants noting that it occasionally slowed collaboration but did not fundamentally affect the implementation process.

Summary of RQ2 Findings

This section examines how the OKRs framework impacted the reduction of silos within a multicultural, remote-working technology company. While the adoption of OKRs fostered

conditions for increased transparency, accountability, and structured collaboration, the results were mixed and uneven. Below is a summary of the key findings:

Silos as a Persistent Challenge

Before the introduction of OKRs, organizational silos were deeply embedded and presented significant barriers to collaboration.

Transparency Issues: Departments operated with little visibility into each other's work, creating "information barriers" that hindered mutual awareness. This lack of transparency reduced opportunities for teamwork.

Transactional Collaboration: Interactions between departments were task-specific, often framed as "doing favors" rather than fostering genuine collaboration or teamwork.

Goal Misalignment: Departments prioritized their own objectives over corporate-wide goals. This absence of shared vision exacerbated silos, causing inefficiencies and occasional conflicts.

OKRs as a Framework for Shared Alignment

The implementation of OKRs introduced a structured framework designed to align teams and foster accountability.

Clarity and Responsiveness: OKRs helped some teams define clearer goals, leading to improved responsiveness and more informed decision-making.

Improved Collaboration: Teams that effectively adopted OKRs experienced enhanced information sharing and a stronger sense of mutual support driven by shared goals.

Challenges in Adoption: Despite these benefits, the success of OKRs was hindered by a bottom-up implementation approach, inconsistent usage across teams, and limited visibility into other departments' objectives. These factors undermined OKRs' ability to act as a truly unifying framework.

Partial and Uneven Impact on Silos

The impact of OKRs on breaking down silos varied considerably across the organization.

Positive Developments: Certain teams successfully used OKRs to improve coordination, align on shared objectives, and strengthen interdepartmental engagement.

Persistent Barriers: However, historical communication gaps, departmental prioritization over collaboration, and a lack of alignment at the corporate level limited the framework's overall effectiveness. Collaboration remained inconsistent and often depended on individual personalities or priorities rather than systemic organizational changes.

Strengthening Accountability Through OKRs

One of the key successes of OKRs was the improvement of accountability within teams.

Increased Ownership: OKRs provided greater visibility into individual and team responsibilities, fostering stronger ownership and urgency in task completion.

Team-Level Success: While accountability mechanisms worked well within teams, cross-departmental accountability remained weak, limiting broader collaborative impacts.

Overall Insights

The introduction of OKRs created a foundation for increased transparency, alignment on shared goals, and mutual support. However, the framework's ability to reduce silos was limited by entrenched communication barriers, a lack of alignment at the corporate level, and inconsistent adoption. Accountability improved significantly within teams but did not translate effectively across departments.

For OKRs to reach their full potential in reducing silos, organizations must address structural and cultural barriers through leadership reinforcement, training, and a clear commitment to corporate-wide alignment. While OKRs offer a valuable tool for collaboration, transforming deeply ingrained siloed behaviors requires sustained effort, cultural shifts, and a

proactive approach to managing resistance to change.

Integrating RQ1 and RQ2 Findings

Leadership Gaps and the Limits of Bottom-Up OKRs in a Siloed Environment

The critical role of leadership is a key overlap between RQ1 and RQ2 in providing a clear, unified corporate vision. In the initial implementation stage, leadership mainly delegated the objective-setting responsibility to each department. This decision resulted in misalignment and repeated revision since the departments did not understand clearly the company's goals. From the silo perspective, this lack of unified direction sustained weak cross-department coordination and isolation. Participants strongly indicated that departments would benefit from more top-down clarity on how their objectives fit into a broader strategy, thereby reducing the tendency for teams to work in silos. In a working environment where silos are a chronic issue, a bottom-up approach may not be the most optimal option. This aligns with Doerr (2018), who expresses that leadership commitment and clear communicated goals are crucial to implement OKRs effectively. Similarly, Federico & Buganza (2022) highlight that a lack of clear leadership direction can hinder collaboration and reinforce departmental silos.

Insufficient Training Led to Confusion and Weak Adoption

Both the research questions expressed the importance of adequate training to ensure employees understand the OKR concept and how to set meaningful, measurable objectives. It can be seen that a lack of follow-up training sessions or reinforcement of the importance of OKRs can result in employee confusion, as they cannot differentiate OKRs from other frameworks and do not see their value. Therefore, insufficient training led many to view OKRs as an "extra administrative task" rather than a tool for improving cross-functional work. On the silo side, deeper training on how to align and integrate objectives across departments may have reduced the degree of "favor-based" or transactional collaboration. This finding is supported by Herkenrath et al. (2023), who suggest that poor training practices and poor training

procedures frequently lead to low employee engagement and ineffective OKR implementation. Furthermore, Al Thinyan & Ghawji (2022) emphasize that training should explicitly distinguish OKRs from other performance measuring tools to enable clarity and proper adoption.

Limited Technology Access Reduced OKR Visibility

Even though the company supported OKRs by providing Microsoft Viva as a tracking tool, there is a drawback in limited access to the tool; therefore, it leads to a lack of visibility in others' team progress. Given the company's existing silos, this lack of visibility in OKRs exacerbated the situation. If data tracking is cumbersome, communication is reactive, and objectives change frequently without clear documentation, departments remain siloed, as they have no stable, shared reference points. This finding echoes the literature on information transparency as a critical factor for collaborative goal achievement (Niven & Lamorte, 2016). Furthermore, Stray et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of real-time, transparent tracking systems for effectively implementing OKRs and improving cross-team collaboration.

OKRs Fail to Break Silos but Boost Accountability

The results of this study indicate that silos are a primary issue within the company. The reasons behind this, as reported by some participants, are a lack of a unified vision and a priority of personal interest over common goals. Before the introduction of the OKRs framework, the silo mindset persisted for several years. However, the ineffectiveness of the bottom-up approach, coupled with the lack of a follow-up training plan within the company, has resulted in weak collaboration across departments. Consequently, the expected improvement in collaboration has not materialized, leading to the persistence of silos.

On the bright side, since the implementation of OKRs, departments have adhered to regular check-ins to guarantee the achievement of the objectives. This resulted in an increase in employees' accountability within departmental boundaries. They developed a greater

awareness of their own responsibilities and demonstrated a willingness to assist others in completing their tasks, knowing that this would positively influence the overall results of the OKRs. On the cross-departmental accountability, for some departments that have shared objectives, the framework helped in assigning the right responsibility to the right person; therefore, together they follow the goals and take ownership for their tasks. However, this connection still remained weak. This limited success shows that while OKRs can help people take charge and track progress, they won't fix deep-rooted cultural or structural issues without consistent follow-up across the organization.

Minor Influence of Remote Work and Cultural Diversity on OKRs Adoption

The initial intention of the research was to explore how remote work and difference in culture would affect the implementation process of OKRs. Interestingly, these two factors were not major obstacles in both results of the two research questions. Participants often attributed challenges more to organizational factors (lack of clarity, leadership support) than to geography or culture. When cultural differences did manifest, such as in setting “stretch” vs. “realistic” goals, participants indicated that the real gap was in OKR knowledge and exposure, not nationality. Similarly, remote collaboration was already normalized since COVID, and only a few participants perceived a slight slowdown in follow-up or communication.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that while OKRs provide a promising structural framework to align teams, drive accountability, and potentially reduce silos, successful implementation demands strong leadership, consistent training, cross-departmental transparency, and ongoing engagement. A purely bottom-up approach tends to reinforce existing siloed behavior unless corporate-wide objectives are clearly defined from the start. Similarly, even well-intentioned OKRs can become an administrative exercise if not continually reinforced by top management support and integrated with daily workflows. A key takeaway is that OKRs alone do not automatically eliminate silos. Instead, they act as a tool

that, when combined with effective communication, cross-functional initiatives, and a shared sense of purpose, can help bridge gaps between departments. However, without strong leadership buy-in and continuous reinforcement, OKRs can end up being just another corporate exercise that fails to deliver real impact.

From a practical perspective, these insights suggest that organizations adopting OKRs, particularly in multicultural and remote contexts, should emphasize an iterative, hybrid approach to setting objectives, invest in comprehensive training to strengthen OKR literacy, and ensure technological platforms are accessible enough to facilitate genuine collaboration. Such measures enable the original promise of OKRs: break down silos, enhance accountability, and move beyond aspiration and into sustained organizational practice.



CHAPTER V CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter comprises five segments: conclusions, implications, limitations, suggestions and final thoughts. The conclusions provide a summary of the findings from this study, highlighting contributions to organizations and theoretical implications. Future studies are also identified in the later part of this chapter.

Conclusions

The study set out to explore how OKRs are implemented in a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment and whether they help break down silos between departments.

OKR Implementation Process

In the pre-implementation phase, the company identified siloed working as a major challenge and recognized the need for performance improvement. During this stage, leadership, particularly the CEO and Heads of Departments, played a crucial role in initiating and sustaining the OKR implementation. However, the lack of a clear strategy and conflicts of interest led to confusion and misalignment. Additionally, the bottom-up approach, which was initially intended to foster autonomy, ended up exacerbating departmental silos. As a result, many participants advocated for a top-down adoption to ensure clearer direction and alignment.

Once OKRs were officially chosen as the performance management framework, the company entered the second phase, initial rollout and early acceptance. During this stage, the OKR Project Leaders conducted training sessions for the entire company. However, these sessions were described as generic and insufficient, leading to confusion among employees who struggled to differentiate OKRs from other frameworks such as KPIs. Consequently, some departments had to self-teach the concept, resulting in varying levels of OKR literacy and

inconsistent management practices. In addition, the company adopted Microsoft Viva as its OKR tracking tool, but access was granted only to select individuals, including those with assigned objectives, OKR champions, and HODs. This limited access hindered cross-departmental visibility, increased administrative burdens, and further weakened alignment and collaboration.

In the final phase, continuous usage with sustained engagement, OKRs were fully integrated into the organization's workflow, with weekly, monthly, and quarterly check-ins. However, compliance with the check-in policy varied across departments, with some following the guidelines consistently while others did not. This highlights the critical role of leadership in fostering OKRs, emphasizing their importance to employees, conducting more in-depth training to strengthen awareness and knowledge, and ensuring long-term engagement. Without strong leadership support, OKRs risk becoming just another administrative task rather than a meaningful performance management tool.

Finally, while cultural diversity and remote working conditions had minimal impact on OKR implementation, the findings suggest that continuous leadership reinforcement, systematic follow-ups, and accessible tracking tools are essential for sustaining long-term OKR adoption.

OKRs Effectiveness in Breaking Down Silos

This research question examines participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of OKRs in breaking down silos and enhancing collaboration within the organization. The findings indicate that silos had been deeply embedded in the company's structure for a long time, and while the OKR framework was introduced as a performance management tool, it was also intended to foster cross-departmental collaboration. However, due to several challenges identified in RQ1's findings, this approach largely failed to eliminate silos.

One of the main issues was that each department was required to develop its own

objectives without clear direction from the CEO. As a result, the objectives lacked alignment, not only across departments but also with the company's overall strategic goals. While some collaboration did occur, particularly among teams working on shared cross-departmental objectives, participants described this collaboration as “transactional” rather than genuinely cooperative, meaning that interactions were primarily task-based rather than fostering long-term interdepartmental cohesion.

On a positive note, OKRs were effective in improving accountability. Regular check-ins created a sense of urgency among employees, increasing their awareness of their responsibilities and the importance of completing objectives on time. Since individual tasks contributed to departmental objectives, employees became more proactive in assisting their colleagues, recognizing that their collective efforts impacted overall team success.

That being said, while OKRs can help track progress and reinforce individual accountability, they cannot resolve deeply ingrained cultural or structural issues on their own. Without consistent leadership follow-up, strategic alignment, and an organizational commitment to collaboration, silos are likely to persist despite the adoption of the framework.

Implications

Practical Implications

Organizational-Level Recommendations

For organizations adopting a new performance management framework like OKRs, it is essential to assess company culture beforehand. If the existing culture lacks collaboration and employees tend to work in silos, a top-down approach may be more effective in ensuring alignment and maximizing the impact of OKRs.

Additionally, investing in an accessible and efficient OKR tracking tool is crucial. Providing all relevant employees with access to the platform helps prevent isolation, improves visibility across teams, and facilitates real-time updates on progress. Moreover, while OKRs

foster transparency, they do not inherently strengthen interdepartmental relationships. Organizations should complement OKRs with initiatives that promote cross-functional collaboration, such as:

- Cross-team projects that require multiple departments to work toward shared objectives.
- Job rotation programs that expose employees to different functions and working styles.
- Informal networking opportunities that encourage employees to build connections beyond their immediate teams.

Leadership-Level Recommendations

Leadership plays a decisive role in determining whether the OKR framework succeeds and sustains in the long term. Effective leadership engagement is not just about approval—leaders must actively participate throughout the process by:

- Providing clear guidance and strategic direction to ensure departmental OKRs align with overarching company objectives.
- Demonstrating commitment to OKRs through active involvement in training, discussions, and progress reviews.
- Encouraging collaboration and open communication, fostering a culture where employees feel empowered to work beyond silos.

Without consistent reinforcement and top-down engagement, OKRs risk becoming just another administrative task rather than a meaningful performance management tool.

OKR Project Leader and HR Department Recommendations

In many organizations, the HR department takes on the role of the OKR Project Leader. In such cases, HR professionals must not only facilitate implementation but also actively support employees in adapting to the framework. A key responsibility is designing and

delivering comprehensive training sessions that clearly explain the core principles of OKRs, how they differ from other performance measurement frameworks such as KPIs, and best practices for setting meaningful and measurable objectives. Beyond initial training, follow-up sessions and regular check-ins should be conducted to reinforce understanding and ensure employees are applying OKRs effectively. Additionally, HR and OKR Project Leaders should closely monitor the progress of OKRs by attending departmental meetings, taking notes, and observing behavioral changes related to goal-setting and collaboration. To enhance the framework's effectiveness, continuous feedback collection and refinement are necessary, ensuring that employees receive the necessary support to integrate OKRs into their daily work. By taking on these proactive roles, HR professionals and OKR Project Leaders can drive the successful adoption of OKRs and foster a culture of accountability and alignment within the organization.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study adds a lot to what's already been written by showing that a framework for setting goals, specifically OKRs, can't always lead to better collaboration or fewer silos. Rather, the results show that the performance of OKRs depends on organizational structures, culture, and leadership engagement, thereby highlighting the need for contextual awareness. This fits with earlier research by Herkenrath et al. (2023), who say that OKR deployment is often unsuccessful because it does not adapt well to different organizational settings and doesn't pay enough attention to differences in structure.

Additionally, the research underlines the importance of leadership in deciding how sustainable and successful the OKR framework is. Although OKRs ideally encourage employee empowerment and transparency, strong leadership commitment and continuous support are absolutely essential to make sure these systems really get embedded in daily organizational operations. This result is in line with claims made by Federico & Buganza (2022), who

underlined that effective goal-setting systems mostly depend on the capacity of leaders to create an honest, transparent culture and regularly participate in the process. Likewise, Doerr (2018) emphasizes the need for clear leadership direction, stressing that OKRs run the risk of becoming only a procedural formality without active participation from top leadership instead of a tool for promoting significant organizational transformation without this direction.

Limitations

Like any research, this study has its limitations. While the data collection process was feasible, potential biases may have influenced the findings. One significant bias is the leniency bias. Since the interviews were conducted by an insider within the organization, participants may have been inclined to provide overly positive feedback to avoid potential conflicts. Additionally, given that the research findings were intended not only for academic purposes but also for the reference of the Board of Directors (BOD), participants might have overstated the effectiveness of OKR implementation to align with organizational expectations.

Bias could also have arisen during the data analysis process, particularly through inductive coding bias. Given that this research is qualitative, the coding and interpretation of data were subject to researcher perception, which could have introduced subjective preconceptions. To mitigate this, two rounds of open coding were conducted, and consultation with an academic advisor on the coding list was planned to ensure that potential biases were minimized. However, the reliance on subjective interpretation remains a limitation.

Second, the research focuses on a single company, meaning the findings may not be directly applicable to organizations with different cultural backgrounds, industries, or structures. While some insights may be generalizable, factors such as leadership style, company size, and level of OKR experience can all significantly impact how well the framework functions in different contexts.

Finally, the study examines OKR implementation at a specific point in time, making it difficult to assess its long-term impact. Future research could track organizations over extended periods to examine how OKRs evolve, how employees' perceptions change over time, and whether the framework continues to promote alignment and collaboration in the long run.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the practical realities of OKR implementation in a multicultural, remote work environment. Acknowledging these constraints allows for a more nuanced interpretation of the findings and sets the stage for future research to build upon and refine the understanding of OKRs in different organizational contexts.

Suggestions for Future Study

Given the limitations of this study, there are several promising directions for future research.

Long-Term OKR Impact

Future studies could explore how OKRs influence organizational dynamics over time. Do they continue to drive alignment and accountability after the initial excitement wears off, or do they become another corporate ritual that teams struggle to engage with? A longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into how companies sustain OKR adoption and whether their effectiveness changes over time.

OKRs in Hybrid Work Models

As more companies adopt hybrid work models, it would be valuable to explore how OKRs function in environments where some employees work remotely while others are in the office. Do hybrid teams face different challenges in implementing OKRs? Does the level of in-person interaction affect how well OKRs help break down silos? These are important questions for future research.

The Role of Technology in OKR Implementation

With the rise of AI-powered performance management tools, it would be interesting to study how technology affects OKR adoption. Do AI-driven dashboards and analytics improve engagement with OKRs, or do they create additional complexity? Future research could examine whether digital tools make OKR tracking more effective or if they introduce new challenges related to data overload and employee resistance.

Final Thoughts

This study sheds light on the complexities of OKR implementation in a multicultural, remote work environment. While OKRs offer a powerful way to align teams and promote accountability, they are not a magic bullet. Success depends on strong leadership, thoughtful customization, and a culture that encourages collaboration beyond just setting goals.

By considering the findings, implications, and limitations outlined in this research, companies can make more informed decisions about how to implement OKRs effectively. At the same time, there is still much to explore, and future studies can build on these insights to deepen our understanding of how OKRs shape modern organizations.

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APPENDIX: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study

The Implementation of OKRs in a Multicultural IT Solutions Company: A Study on Breaking Down Silos in a Remote Work Environment

Principal Investigator

Name: Luong Ngoc Thuy Tien

Department: International Human Resource Development, NTNU

Email:

Purpose of the Study

This research aims to explore how the implementation of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) affects cross-departmental collaboration and helps break down silos in a multicultural IT solutions company operating in a remote work environment. Using a qualitative research approach, this study will examine participants' perceptions of OKRs in terms of promoting alignment, transparency, accountability, and interdepartmental communication.

Expected Benefits

The findings of this study may contribute to a better understanding of the role OKRs play in reducing departmental silos, particularly in multicultural and remote work contexts. Insights gained may be useful for managers, team leaders, and HR practitioners in designing more effective performance management strategies and collaboration frameworks.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

To protect your privacy, the following measures will be taken:

1. Your name and any identifying information will not be recorded in the interview transcript. Each participant will be assigned a pseudonym or code number.

2. Audio recordings, notes, and transcripts will be stored in a secure, password-protected location accessible only to the principal investigator.
3. All data will be used solely for academic purposes. No identifiable information will be included in the final report or shared with any third party.
4. Unless legally required to disclose information (e.g., in cases of self-harm, harm to others, or illegal activities), your data will remain confidential.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without any consequences. If you choose to withdraw before the data collection is completed, your data will be deleted and not included in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this study or experience any discomfort due to your participation, please contact the principal investigator at luongngocthuytien229@gmail.com.

If you have concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may also contact the department office of International Human Resource Development at NTNU.

Consent Statement

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to participate in this study and allow my responses to be used for research purposes under the conditions described.

Participant's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____