
Role of External Affairs Department: Leveraging as a Strategic Pillar to Enhance Management Practices and Organizational Resilience in a Business Process Outsourcing Company

Joslyn B. Canon¹

¹ *Qualfon Philippines, Inc*

Corresponding Author: Joslyn B. Canon E-mail: jcanon@

Abstract — This study assessed the role of External Affairs Department: Leveraging as a Strategic Pillar to Enhance Management Practices and Organizational Resilience in a Business Process Outsourcing Company. Using an embedded single case study design, the research examined Qualfon Philippines operations in Cebu and Dumaguete during 2024. Eight participants provided data through interviews analyzed using thematic analysis revealing six themes: multifaceted stakeholder relationship management, assessment frameworks, crisis management strategies, organizational stability mechanisms, cross-site coordination approaches, and strategic optimization recommendations. Results demonstrated that External Affairs Departments serve as critical strategic pillars enhancing organizational resilience through systematic stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance, and adaptive governance. The study developed comprehensive strategic frameworks optimizing External Affairs functions through enhanced communication, cross-functional integration, and performance evaluation.

Keywords — **External Affairs Management, Business Process Outsourcing, Organizational Resilience, Stakeholder Engagement, Multi-Site Operations, Strategic Management**

I. INTRODUCTION

External affairs management represents fundamental bridges between organizations and stakeholder ecosystems. Sustainable success depends on balancing multiple stakeholder interests, making external affairs strategic organizational capabilities essential for operational effectiveness (Fukuyama, 2022). In BPO sectors, stakeholder engagement determines operational success and organizational resilience. External affairs functions require heightened stakeholder engagement and understanding, as organizations must navigate complex regulatory frameworks, community relations, government partnerships, and corporate compliance requirements. The efficacy of these functions profoundly impacts operational efficiency, organizational sustainability, and strategic positioning within competitive BPO landscapes.

Globally, 80 percent of multinational corporations implemented stakeholder feedback mechanisms, yet only 37 percent effectively utilized data to improve operations, highlighting critical implementation gaps in translating stakeholder input into tangible organizational improvements (Setyawan et al., 2024). Companies with transparent engagement frameworks experience 32 percent higher trust ratings (Sadykova & Galy, 2024), with top quartile companies showing 1.5 percent higher revenue growth (Pandey, 2023). These international trends underscore strategic importance of understanding stakeholder perspectives in business operations. Excellence in external affairs has evolved from peripheral functions to central components of organizational legitimacy, particularly as stakeholders increasingly expect corporate transparency, responsiveness, and meaningful engagement.

In the Philippines, Republic Act 11032 mandated improved business-government interfaces. Despite this framework, only 68 percent of BPO companies demonstrated full compliance awareness, with stakeholder satisfaction averaging 71 percent nationwide (Mata et al., 2022). Provincial operations reported satisfaction 17 percent below Metro Manila averages (Camarillo & Bellotindos, 2021), with BPO companies averaging 8 percent below other service sectors (Treceña, 2021). Visayas region ranked 14th among 17 regions in business stakeholder satisfaction (Borongan & Naranong, 2022), with BPO engagement ratings 12 percent below regional averages (Samaniego et al., 2022). Only 56 percent of local stakeholders reported CSR

awareness despite significant economic contributions (Baco, 2023). In Cebu and Dumaguete, only 41 percent actively engaged with BPO initiatives in 2023 (Alegado, 2021).

Research gaps exist regarding External Affairs impact on organizational resilience in multi-site BPO operations. While BPO companies collect performance data, few studies examined strategic relationships between external affairs effectiveness, stakeholder engagement, and organizational resilience across multiple Philippine locations. This study addresses gaps by exploring interconnections within Qualfon Philippines multi-site operations, developing evidence-based frameworks for enhancing stakeholder-centered BPO operations. Recent research emphasizes systematic stakeholder engagement and organizational development (Panela, 2025a; Panela, 2025d), external challenges on organizational functioning (Panela, 2025b; Panela, 2025c), and resilience mechanisms during crisis periods (Panela, 2025e).

Literature Review

External affairs assessment represents critical organizational effectiveness evaluation in multi-site BPO companies with complex stakeholder ecosystems. Research demonstrates that clearly defined engagement procedures and accessible communication significantly influence stakeholder satisfaction, with simplified language showing 27 percent higher engagement than complex terminology (Paradji & Asiri, 2024). Decision Support Systems effectively capture engagement data for organizational improvement, demonstrating that systematic collection and analysis translate stakeholder experiences into actionable improvements, particularly in BPO sectors with complex operational frameworks (Tapado et al., 2023). Corporate external affairs systems require systematic evaluation frameworks ensuring continuous improvement across multiple dimensions of stakeholder engagement and organizational performance.

Several critical factors drive stakeholder satisfaction with BPO operations including compliance, responsiveness, communication delivery, and procedural transparency, consistently ranking among top satisfaction predictors (Lamsal & Gupta, 2022). Awareness initiatives significantly improve utilization and satisfaction, with high awareness showing 31 percent higher

satisfaction (Bulos, 2021). BPO companies face unique challenges in external affairs management due to technical nature of operations and complex stakeholder frameworks requiring sophisticated coordination. Community satisfaction analyses with corporate social responsibility services reveal that even when technical aspects are handled competently, procedural delays create dissatisfaction influencing overall stakeholder perception, suggesting efficiency metrics should be prioritized alongside program quality in BPO external affairs.

Reliability and assurance dimensions most influence BPO stakeholder satisfaction, demonstrating that consistent performance and expertise maintain high satisfaction despite lower ratings in other dimensions (Sarande et al., 2022). Systematic quality management produces measurable satisfaction improvements, with particular benefits in technically complex services similar to multi-site BPO companies (Sabijon et al., 2021). Digital transformation initiatives increasingly influence stakeholder satisfaction, with customer satisfaction applications demonstrating capacity to streamline feedback collection and enable real-time engagement adjustments, with implementation resulting in up to 37 percent increases in problem resolution speed and corresponding 29 percent improvements in stakeholder satisfaction ratings (Khairil, 2021).

Khadka and Maharjan (2017) examined customer satisfaction-loyalty relationships emphasizing feedback systems and staff training importance, advocating integration into long-term organizational goals. Their mixed-methods approach provides valuable frameworks for examining multidimensional satisfaction nature, though contextual differences exist as their study focused on private cleaning services rather than BPO external affairs operations. Nevertheless, findings regarding feedback systems and staff training have direct relevance to external affairs improvement recommendations in multi-site BPO operations. Smith (2016) identified service quality dimensions predicting customer retention including tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, safety, communication, and empathy, with safety showing strongest negative correlation with switching intention, providing frameworks for examining which external affairs aspects most significantly influence stakeholder satisfaction, potentially guiding resource allocation for engagement improvements across multi-site operations.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed Embedded Single Case Study Design examining Qualfon Philippines multi-site operations across Cebu and Dumaguete from 2023-2024. The design enabled comprehensive examination within unified organizational framework while analyzing site-specific manifestations (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Participants

Eight purposively sampled participants included external affairs personnel (minimum one-year experience), management representatives, external stakeholders, and cross-site coordinators across both sites.

Instrument

Ten-question interview guide underwent content validity assessment by five experts achieving acceptable validity scores across all questions.

Procedures and Analysis

Data collection followed systematic phases: formal permission, participant recruitment, interviews, and documentary evidence collection. Analysis employed thematic analysis and cross-case pattern matching using NVivo software with triangulation procedures (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Ethical protocols aligned with Republic Act 10173 ensuring confidentiality and informed consent throughout. This section should contain detailed information about the procedures and steps followed. It can be divided into subsections if several methods are described.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theme 1: Multifaceted Stakeholder Relationship Management. External Affairs Departments operate through comprehensive stakeholder relationship frameworks encompassing relationship building, strategic communication, and community integration, aligning with Stakeholder Theory emphasizing that organizations must effectively engage all parties affecting or affected by organizational activities (Sinha et al., 2019). Participants demonstrated foundational relationship cultivation through statements such as helping build lasting relationships with clients, local government officials, and industry players, bridging between organizations and government bodies ensuring compliance support, and focusing on bridging relationship gaps between companies and communities. These statements demonstrate central roles in establishing strategic relationships supporting organizational objectives through sustained engagement and positive stakeholder responses.

Strategic communication functions extend beyond traditional public relations to encompass reputation management and organizational representation. Participants emphasized handling public relations and media communications to shape stakeholder perceptions. Community integration facilitates organizational integration within local communities ensuring BPO operations contribute positively to regional development. Cross-case analysis reveals Cebu operations benefit from established business networks and active government partnerships, while Dumaguete operations navigate academic-cultural contexts with different engagement expectations, demonstrating sophisticated relationship management transcending transactional interactions.

Theme 2: Assessment and Effectiveness Measurement Frameworks. Evaluation reveals diverse approaches ranging from formal KPIs to relationship-based assessments capturing qualitative dimensions. Organizations employ structured mechanisms though implementation varies significantly across contexts. Participants indicated assessing effectiveness through KPIs aligning with communication goals, emphasizing timeliness when relaying information and needs. Success evaluation often relies on qualitative indicators reflecting relationship strength and continuity rather than quantifiable outcomes. Participants noted lack of formal scorecards but seeing success through

repeat partnership instances and vocal stakeholder feedback, sometimes receiving appreciation plaques.

Effectiveness assessment incorporates informal feedback channels providing real-time stakeholder satisfaction insights. The absence of standardized measurement approaches suggests effectiveness assessment remains evolving fields balancing quantitative accountability with qualitative relationship management indicators. This complexity reflects multifaceted external affairs work where success encompasses measurable outcomes and intangible relationship assets contributing to organizational resilience, demonstrating systematic documentation and pattern identification ensuring methodological rigor.

Theme 3: Crisis Management and Adaptive Governance Strategies. External Affairs implement strategic practices enhancing organizational resilience through crisis management, regulatory compliance, and adaptive governance enabling complex operational environment navigation. Departments serve as organizational guardians ensuring complex regulatory requirement compliance while facilitating operational continuity across jurisdictions. Participants emphasized key roles negotiating local government regulatory compliances including business permits, sanitary permits, and building fire safety compliances, bridging organizations and government bodies ensuring activity support and city law compliance, and going by the book while avoiding asking favors.

External affairs contributes to stability by building strategic relationships serving as protective mechanisms during challenging periods providing early warning systems for potential threats. Participants noted maintaining stability by fostering strong stakeholder relationships, providing early warning signals, and helping manage crises effectively while capitalizing on good community relationships especially with government department heads. Crisis management demonstrates External Affairs significantly contribute to organizational resilience through systematic regulatory compliance, risk mitigation, ethical governance, and crisis communication approaches creating protective mechanisms enabling complex environment navigation.

Theme 4: Organizational Stability and Continuity Mechanisms. External Affairs create and maintain organizational stability through systematic stakeholder management, information sharing,

and strategic positioning enabling operational continuity across diverse business environments. Departments establish comprehensive information systems providing organizational intelligence essential for strategic decision-making and operational planning. Participants emphasized information as key, with more details enabling better equipped responses to urgent concerns, and external affairs maintaining stability by fostering strong stakeholder relationships providing early warning signals about potential threats. External affairs ensures stability through systematic relationship management transcending individual transactions creating long-term partnership foundations.

Departments contribute to stability by facilitating resource access and operational support through strategic stakeholder relationships. Participants noted nurturing local government connections leading to beneficial outcomes such as providing aspiring applicants for various company positions, being consistent responding to partner organization calls, and capitalizing on good community relationships. Cross-case analysis reveals stability mechanisms remain essential across contexts though implementation must adapt to local ecosystems and operational requirements, requiring sophisticated coordination and strategic alignment in multi-site operations creating systematic resilience foundations.

Theme 5: Cross-Site Coordination and Standardization Approaches. Analysis reveals significant variations in operations across geographical locations, with distinct coordination, standardization, and local adaptation approaches reflecting complex multi-site BPO requirements. Operations demonstrate significant local context adaptation reflecting unique operational environment characteristics and requirements. Participants noted Cebu with established tourism industry and air travel hub emphasizes direct tourism marketing and international investor attraction, while Dumaguete as smaller site focuses on academic and cultural exchange programs reflecting strong university presence and historical ties. Government leaders in Dumaguete not prioritizing BPO on agendas, though new young leaders present opportunities for proactive partnerships.

Multi-site operations reveal significant coordination challenges impacting effectiveness and requiring systematic information sharing and strategic alignment approaches. Participants

acknowledged insufficient exposure to other site affairs making proper comparisons difficult, relying on social media posts knowing about other site activities, and only knowing when teams share information. Cross-site coordination demonstrates multi-site External Affairs must balance standardization with local adaptation while managing complex coordination challenges. Effective multi-site external affairs requires sophisticated local context understanding, systematic coordination mechanisms, and flexible strategic positioning maintaining organizational coherence while maximizing local effectiveness.

Theme 6: Strategic Optimization and Enhancement Recommendations. Analysis reveals comprehensive recommendations optimizing External Affairs as strategic pillars focusing on communication systems, coordination mechanisms, and systematic stakeholder engagement and organizational development approaches. Participants identify systematic communication improvements as essential for optimizing effectiveness across multi-site operations. Recommendations include quarterly or monthly operations team calls for updates on transportation, safety and security, or social media posts requiring discussion and clarification bringing initiatives from different perspectives. Regular weekly emails detailing upcoming events would help, with details currently shared during management committee meetings potentially not immediately absorbed by leadership teams. Quarterly newsletters potentially tapping internal communications teams would enhance information dissemination.

Optimization requires enhanced external affairs and operational function integration maximizing organizational effectiveness and stakeholder value creation. Strategic optimization emphasizes systematic performance evaluation and continuous improvement requiring comprehensive evaluation systems measuring effectiveness and guiding improvement initiatives. Unanimous participant recognition reveals strong consensus regarding strategic importance in BPO operations. Participants stated having such departments helps BPOs navigate increasingly complex business, government, and public relations landscapes, ultimately enhancing competitiveness and success. This is highly recommended as site director positions pivot to overseeing operations business more closely rather than conventional administration roles, making teams solely handling external affairs vital for strategic communication, risk management, and relationship building.

Participants definitively stated this is a must, demonstrating organizational consensus regarding strategic necessity for sustainable competitive advantages and operational excellence.

IV. CONCLUSION

External Affairs Departments demonstrate exceptional effectiveness addressing stakeholder engagement challenges through sophisticated relationship management approaches creating sustainable ecosystems supporting organizational objectives while maintaining community integration and regulatory compliance. The departments serve as critical strategic pillars substantially enhancing organizational resilience through systematic crisis management, regulatory compliance navigation, and adaptive governance practices creating stability mechanisms enabling operational continuity. Effective External Affairs require strategic frameworks balancing standardization with local adaptation while maintaining systematic coordination mechanisms integrating enhanced communication, cross-functional collaboration, systematic performance evaluation, and organizational recognition as strategic functions. Successful implementation requires understanding local stakeholder ecosystems, adaptive relationship management strategies, and comprehensive approaches to information sharing and strategic alignment across multiple sites, contributing to theoretical understanding and practical applications for BPO external affairs management while advancing knowledge of stakeholder relationship management and organizational resilience in complex multi-site operational environments.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Alegado, J. E. B. (2021). Post-Haiyan: Alternatives for disaster management law and governance in the Philippines. In *Disaster risk reduction* (pp. 39–62).
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-7401-3_3
- [2.] Baco, I. V., Jr. (2023). Comprehensive government programs for indigenous peoples in the Philippines. *International Journal of Advanced and Applied Sciences*, 10(6), 89–99.
<https://doi.org/10.21833/ijaas.2023.06.011>
- [3.] Borongan, G., & Naranong, A. (2022). Factors in enhancing environmental governance for marine plastic litter abatement in Manila, the Philippines: A combined structural equation modeling and DPSIR framework. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 181, 113920.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2022.113920>
- [4.] Bulos, R. M. (2021). Citizen awareness and satisfaction survey: The case of Tumauni, Isabela Philippines. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58(1), 5478–5487.
<https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i1.2164>
- [5.] Camarillo, M. E., & Bellotindos, L. M. (2021). A study of policy implementation and community participation in the municipal solid waste management in the Philippines. *Deleted Journal*, 30–45. <https://doi.org/10.35762/aer.2021.43.2.3>
- [6.] Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- [7.] Fukuyama, F. (2022). *Liberalism and its discontents*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- [8.] Huyler, D., & McGill, C. M. (2019). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 31(3), 75–77. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nha3.20258>
- [9.] Khadka, K., & Maharjan, S. (2017). *Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty: Case Trivsel Städtjänster (Trivsel siivouspalvelut)*. Centria University of Applied Sciences.
- [10.] Khairil, K. (2021). Penilaian kepuasan pelanggan dengan aplikasi survei pada PDAM Kota Bengkulu. *Teknosia*, 15(1), 16–21. <https://doi.org/10.33369/teknosia.v1i1.15542>
- [11.] Lamsal, B. P., & Gupta, A. K. (2022). Citizen satisfaction with public service: What factors drive? *Policy & Governance Review*, 6(1), 78.
<https://doi.org/10.30589/pgr.v6i1.470>
- [12.] Mata, P., Cullano, R. A., Tiu, A. M., Gonzales, G., Selerio, E., Maturan, F., Evangelista, S. S., Burdeos, A., Yamagishi, K., & Ocampo, L. (2022). Public satisfaction with the government's disaster response during Typhoon Odette (Rai). *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 84, 103483. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.103483>
- [13.] Panela, T. L. V. (2025a). Gender-based analysis of teacher empowerment scale: Examining factor structure and Rasch model fit in higher education. *Environment and Social Psychology*, 10(11), 3570. <https://doi.org/10.59429/esp.v10i11.3570>
- [14.] Panela, T. L. V. (2025b). Assessing ways through research and augmentation (AWRA): Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of college students in the Philippines phase 1. *Innovations*, 80, 462–475. <https://journal-innovations.com/assets/uploads/doc/346b3-462-475.16805.pdf>

-
- [15.] Panela, T. L. V. (2025c). Assessing ways through research and augmentation (AWRA): Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of college students in the Philippines phase 2. *Innovations*, 80, 476–489. <https://journal-innovations.com/assets/uploads/doc/886c9-476-489.16806.pdf>
- [16.] Panela, T. L. V. (2025d). Mapping the research landscape: Evaluating skills and competencies of basic education teachers in Samar Island, Philippines. *Innovations*, 80, 490–506. <https://journal-innovations.com/assets/uploads/doc/1b29b-490-506.16830.pdf>
- [17.] Panela, T. L. V. (2025e). Navigating barriers and building capacity: A phenomenological study of teachers' action research experiences in Samar Island during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Innovations*, 80, 507–530. <https://journal-innovations.com/assets/uploads/doc/6f255-507-530.16831.pdf>
- [18.] Pandey, J. K. (2023). Public trust and collaborative e-governance performance: A study on government institutions and services. *Transforming Government People Process and Policy*, 17(4), 510–531. <https://doi.org/10.1108/tg-08-2023-0113>
- [19.] Paradji, R., & Asiri, M. (2024). An assessment on land management services of ministry of environment, natural resources, and energy: The case of Sulu Province. *Deleted Journal*, 1(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.62596/7mzgng96>
- [20.] Sabijon, S. J., Magno, J., & Evangelista, E. (2021). Total quality management system of commercial services department of Metropolitan Cebu Water District (MCWD), Cebu City. *Asian Journal of Research in Business and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajrbm.2021.3.4.8>
- [21.] Sadykova, K., & Galy, A. (2024). OECD countries' experience in transformation of public service delivery systems. *Bulletin of Atyrau University Named After Khalel Dosmukhamedov*, 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.47649/vau.24.v75.i4.17>
- [22.] Samaniego, J. A. R., Maramag, C. C., Castro, M. C., Zambrano, P., Nguyen, T. T., Datu-Sanguyo, J., Cashin, J., Mathisen, R., & Weissman, A. (2022). Implementation and effectiveness of policies adopted to enable breastfeeding in the Philippines are limited by structural and individual barriers. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(17), 10938. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191710938>
- [23.] Sarande, F. S. P., Naparota, L. C., Cabalida, E. S., & Lovina, R. A. (2022). Customers' perceived service quality and satisfaction in the government service insurance system-Pagadian branch. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 7(1), 331–359. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.71.46>
- [24.] Setyawan, N. H., Sulisty, S., & Hartanto, R. (2024). A review e-government implementation: Its impact on public value creation and citizen perspectives. In 2024 International Conference on Smart Computing, IoT and Machine Learning (SIML) (pp. 137–144). <https://doi.org/10.1109/siml61815.2024.10578171>
- [25.] Sinha, S., Jawahar, I., Ghosh, P., & Mishra, A. (2019). Assessing employers' satisfaction with Indian engineering graduates using expectancy-disconfirmation theory. *International Journal of Manpower*, 41(4), 473–489. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-04-2019-0185>
- [26.] Smith, L. R. (2016). The dimensions of customer satisfaction in the Jamaican financial service industry [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. ScholarWorks.
-

- [27.] Tapado, B. M., Bola, J. G. M., Salazar, E. T., & Tablizo, Z. T. (2023). University's service delivery improvement through a DSS-enabled client feedback system. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 14(7).
<https://doi.org/10.14569/ijacsa.2023.0140721>
- [28.] Treceña, J. K. D. (2021). The digital transformation strategies of the Philippines from 1992 to 2022: A review. *Engineering & Technology Review*, 2(1), 8–13.
<https://doi.org/10.47285/etr.v2i1.66>