

The Relationship Between Organizational Culture and Performance: A Review of Theory and Practice

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ABSTRACT – Organizational culture has become an important element to determine the success of organizations in various sectors. This research aims to analyze the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance through a comprehensive literature review. With reference to key theories such as Schein's model, Denison, and Barney's competitive framework, this study explores the influence of culture on innovation, employee engagement, and adaptation to changes in the business environment. The analysis shows that a strong organizational culture that is relevant to operational needs can improve performance through various mechanisms, such as strengthening organizational identity, encouraging innovation, and building collaborative relationships across departments. However, challenges such as resistance to change, cultural gaps, and external pressures add complexity to managing organizational culture. Across sectors, culture performs different strategic functions, from driving efficiency in manufacturing to strengthening the culture of innovation in the technology sector. This research concludes that organizational culture becomes an internal element, and a strategic tool to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations that are able to leverage their culture adaptively and innovatively have a greater chance of surviving and thriving in the global market.

Keywords: organizational culture, organizational performance, competitive advantage, innovation, strategic management.

A. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture has become one of the key concepts in modern management that continues to attract the attention of researchers and practitioners. As a set of values, norms, and beliefs that underlie the behavior of organizational

members, organizational culture plays an important role in shaping organizational identity and directing the way individuals and groups work. In an increasingly competitive business environment, organizational culture is often considered as one of the key elements that can affect the success or failure of an organization (Darmawan et al, 2020).

Many studies show that organizational culture has a close relationship with organizational performance (Lee & Yu, 2004; Tandon et al., 2018). In the scope of business, organizational performance can include various aspects, such as profitability, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and innovation (Pathirangage, 2019). A strong culture is often regarded as the “social glue” that unites organizational members to work towards a common goal (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985). For example, organizations that instill a culture of collaboration and innovation tend to be more successful in creating new products or services that are relevant to market needs.

However, the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance is not always clear. Some studies find a significant positive relationship, while others show inconsistent or even negative results. This variability can be due to differences in research perspectives, such as industry, organization size, or the approach used to measure culture and performance. For example, a culture that works in one organization may not necessarily work in another organization that has different characteristics.

Theories of organizational culture, such as Edgar Schein's three-level model and Denison's model, offer frameworks that can be used to understand the elements of organizational culture. Schein's model, for example, divides organizational culture into three layers: artifacts, shared values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts reflect observable aspects of culture,

such as office design and communication patterns, while values and underlying assumptions reflect elements that are more profound and difficult to change. Understanding these elements is important for identifying how organizational culture influences behavior and performance outcomes (Jung et al, 2009).

Although many organizations realize the importance of organizational culture, the implementation of cultural change often faces significant challenges. One of the main challenges is resistance to change (Jannah & Mardikaningsih, 2023). Employees who have worked in an organization for a long time tend to feel comfortable with the existing culture and may be reluctant to accept new values. Cultural change takes a long time because it involves changes in beliefs and behaviors that have been embedded in the organization.

Another issue that often arises is the gap between the culture desired by organizational leaders and the culture that actually exists at the operational level. In some cases, organizational leaders set certain values as organizational culture without ensuring that these values are actually implemented at all levels of the organization (Gambi et al., 2015). As a result, there is a "culture gap" that can hinder organizational performance and create internal conflict.

Changes in the business environment also add complexity to the relationship between organizational culture and performance. In the digital age, for example, many organizations face pressure to adopt new technologies and change the way they operate (London, 2003). Organizational cultures that are not adaptive to these changes can be a major obstacle to digital transformation. Conversely, organizations with cultures that encourage learning and innovation tend to be more successful in adapting to environmental changes.

Globalization has created new challenges for managing organizational culture. Multinational organizations often have to manage cultural differences in the different countries in which they operate. An organizational culture that is too rigid or too focused on local values can hinder cross-cultural collaboration. Conversely, organizations that are able to create a culture that is inclusive and values diversity tend to be more successful in achieving their goals.

This research aims to examine the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance based on a comprehensive literature review. The focus of this research is to

understand how elements of organizational culture influence individual and group performance in various scopes. As such, this research is expected to provide better insights into the role of organizational culture to create sustainable competitive advantage.

B. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method based on a literature review to analyze the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. This approach was chosen because it allows exploration of various theories, models and previous research results relevant to the topic. The literature review provides a strong conceptual foundation for understanding the elements of organizational culture and how they affect organizational performance.

The data sources in this study come from scientific journals, books, research reports, and other documents that have been published in the last two decades. This research focuses on literature that discusses theories of organizational culture, such as the Schein model, the Denison model, and theories related to the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. Literature relevant to topics such as organizational innovation, leadership, and adaptation to changes in the business environment were also part of the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted thematically with the following steps. First, the collected literature was grouped based on key themes, such as elements of organizational culture, impact of culture on performance, and challenges in cultural change. Second, each theme was analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and differences that emerged in previous research results. Thirdly, findings from various literatures were synthesized to answer the research question of how organizational culture affects organizational performance.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, by comparing results from various literatures to ensure consistency of findings. The limitations of this study were acknowledged, mainly related to the reliance on secondary data that does not allow for direct empirical validation. This literature study approach provides an important starting point for understanding the dynamics of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance.

Through this method, the research is expected to provide insights into the role of organizational culture to determine organizational performance. This approach also provides a basis for further empirical research, focusing on specific fields or industry sectors.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance

Organizational culture is one of the key elements to shape individual and group behavior within the organization, which ultimately affects the overall performance of the organization. Edgar Schein (2010) explains that organizational culture consists of three levels, namely artifacts, shared values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts include observable aspects, such as organizational structure, dress code, or workspace design. Espoused values reflect the principles upheld by the organization, while basic assumptions are unconscious beliefs that underlie all behavior in the organization.

The relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance is a topic widely discussed by various studies. Denison and Mishra (1995) in their study found that cultures that support employee involvement, consistency, adaptability, and the existence of a clear mission have a positive correlation with organizational performance. For example, companies with a culture that encourages employee involvement tend to have higher productivity because employees feel responsible for achieving work results. This involvement creates a strong sense of belonging, which motivates employees to give their best contribution.

On the other hand, Kotter and Heskett (1992) state that not all organizational cultures automatically improve performance. Some organizational cultures that focus too much on internal stability and control can stifle innovation. For example, organizations that have a strict hierarchical culture often have difficulty adapting to technological changes or dynamic market demands. This can lead to a decrease in the organization's competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

Other research also highlights that a strong organizational culture has diverse effects depending on the context. Barney (1986) suggests that organizational culture will only be a source of competitive advantage if it is rare,

difficult to imitate, and has value to the organization. For example, technology companies like Google have built a culture of innovation that encourages creativity and attracts top talent from around the world. This kind of culture is difficult for competitors to replicate because it is unique and rooted in the structure and practices of the organization.

Organizational culture does not always have a positive effect, especially if it is not accompanied by increased employee competence and adjustments to the organizational climate (Arifin & Mardikaningsih, 2021). When organizational culture is too homogeneous or irrelevant to external needs, it can create stagnation and decrease employee loyalty (Hariani & Irfan, 2022; Wulandari & Darmawan, 2024). Therefore, efforts to integrate quality of work life, leadership, and employee motivation (Handayani & Khairi, 2022; Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022) are important to maintain cultural dynamics to keep the organization competitive. For example, manufacturing companies that fail to integrate a culture of sustainability in their operations face pressure from global markets that are increasingly concerned with environmental issues. Thus, the relevance of organizational culture in relation to the market and external environment is an important factor that determines its impact on organizational performance.

Organizational culture also affects performance through interpersonal relationships within the organization. Chatman and Jehn (1994) showed that the congruence between individual values and organizational values has a significant impact on productivity. When employees feel that their personal values are in line with organizational values, they tend to be more motivated and show higher levels of job satisfaction. Conversely, value incongruence can lead to conflict and lower team effectiveness.

Organizational culture is even a strategic tool to differentiate an organization from its competitors. Peters and Waterman (1982), in the book *In Search of Excellence*, highlight that organizations that have a customer- and innovation-oriented culture tend to be more successful at maintaining a competitive advantage. This culture encourages organizations to continuously improve service quality and create new products that meet customer needs.

Challenges to managing Organizational Culture

Managing organizational culture is a complex process, especially since culture consists of elements that are often invisible and difficult to measure. One of the key challenges to managing organizational culture is ensuring cultural consistency across all levels of the organization. In many cases, the values espoused by top management are not fully understood or applied by employees at the operational level. This creates cultural fragmentation that can reduce the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Moreover, in multinational organizations, cultural diversity across different geographical locations is a challenge. Each branch of the organization may have different local norms, which sometimes do not align with the core values of the organization. Cameron and Quinn (2006) refer to this phenomenon as "multilayered culture," where organizations must find a balance between maintaining a strong cultural identity and respecting local diversity.

Another significant challenge is that organizational culture often changes more slowly than the dynamics of the business environment. When organizations face pressures to change, such as technological developments, shifting consumer preferences, or new regulations, organizational culture can become an obstacle if it is not designed to support adaptation. Schein (2010) highlights that the basic assumptions in organizational culture are often rigid so that changes in these values require significant time and effort.

Resistance to cultural change arises from employees, and may also come from organizational leaders (Schein, 2010). This is reinforced by findings showing that work environment, transformational leadership, and knowledge management affect employee commitment and performance (Dahar & Mardikaningsih, 2022; Eddine et al., 2023; Al Hakim & Hariani, 2021). In fact, leadership behavior and work climate (Lestari & Mardikaningsih, 2020) contribute to organizational effectiveness (Darmawan, 2024) so that support from all levels, including leaders, is needed to make cultural change a success. In some cases, long-serving top management may feel that cultural change could threaten their control over the organization. For example, in organizations with strong hierarchical structures, a shift towards a more collaborative culture may be

seen as a threat to traditional authority. These barriers slow down the cultural transformation process needed to keep the organization relevant in a changing market.

One challenge that is often overlooked is the relationship between organizational culture and reward systems. An organizational culture designed to encourage innovation or collaboration can conflict with a reward system that focuses solely on individual achievement. This mismatch creates cultural dissonance, where employees feel that the organization's values are not reflected in daily practices. As a result, employee motivation and engagement may decrease, ultimately affecting organizational performance.

Moreover, in a merger or acquisition situation, managing organizational culture becomes a very complex challenge. When two organizations with different cultures merge, cultural conflicts often arise, which can hinder strategic and operational integration. Meyer and Altenborg (2008) point out that cultural conflict is one of the main causes of merger and acquisition failure. For example, differences in work approaches, communication styles, or core values can cause significant incompatibility among employees from both organizations.

In organizations undergoing rapid growth, another challenge is maintaining positive cultural elements while accommodating larger and more complex structures. As organizations grow, there is often a shift in focus from personal relationships to formal processes. This can diminish cultural elements that support employee engagement and create a sense of belonging. These challenges require organizations to find ways to maintain their core values while adapting to greater operational needs.

Given these challenges, managing organizational culture requires a strategic and continuous approach. Organizations need to integrate culture into all aspects of operations, from the recruitment process to employee training and development, in order to establish a common value and vision at every level (Rojak & Darmawan, 2022). By implementing a consistent culture, effective leadership, and innovative behavior, employees will be more motivated and involved in achieving organizational goals (Putra & Mardikaningsih, 2022). Work discipline and motivation driven by a strong culture can sustainably improve individual and team performance (Irfan, 2022). Without a comprehensive approach, these challenges may hinder the effectiveness of organizational culture to support long-term performance.

Organizational Culture as a Competitive Differentiation Factor

Organizational culture is one element that is difficult for competitors to imitate, making it a potential source of competitive advantage. Barney (1986) asserts that unique, rare, and irreplaceable organizational culture is one of the strategic resources that can create long-term advantages for organizations. This is due to the nature of organizational culture formed through long history, social interaction, and collective experience, which cannot be easily copied by other organizations.

One of the unique aspects of organizational culture as a competitive differentiation is its ability to create a strong brand identity. An organizational culture that is aligned with the company's vision and mission can strengthen employees' sense of engagement and commitment (Hariani, 2023; Mardikaningsih & Sinambela, 2021). Furthermore, through effective leadership practices and instilling values such as work safety and work ethic (Djaelani et al., 2021; Infante & Darmawan, 2022), organizational culture contributes to improved performance and a positive reputation in the eyes of customers and other stakeholders. For example, companies like Patagonia are known to have a culture that emphasizes sustainability and social responsibility. These values shape the internal behavior of the organization and create a strong brand image in the eyes of consumers. The consistency between internal culture and brand identity provides a competitive advantage that is difficult to compete with by other companies that do not have similar cultural roots.

Organizational culture also plays an important role in attracting and retaining top talent. Research by Cable and Judge (1996) shows that the fit between individual values and organizational culture contributes to higher employee retention. When employees feel their personal values are aligned with those of the organization, they tend to be more engaged, satisfied, and motivated to make maximum contributions. In a competitive labor market, organizations with a strong culture have an advantage to attract quality employees who contribute to operational and strategic excellence.

The ability of an organization's culture to foster innovation is also a significant differentiating factor. Companies with a culture that supports risk-taking and experimentation tend to be more successful in creating new products or

services. According to research by Amabile et al. (1996), a culture that encourages individual creativity and team collaboration plays an important role in producing innovations that are relevant to market needs. For example, technology companies like Apple have a culture of innovation that is internalized at all levels of the organization, from product design to marketing strategy.

The flexibility of organizational culture to respond to environmental changes is also a competitive advantage. Denison and Mishra (1995) identified that an adaptive culture enables organizations to respond to external challenges more quickly and effectively. Organizations that are able to integrate feedback from the market into their cultural structure tend to have the upper hand to maintain relevance in dynamic industries. For example, retail companies like Amazon have built a culture that supports data-driven decision-making, which allows them to continuously innovate and meet customer needs.

However, organizational culture as a competitive differentiation also comes with risks if not managed well. When culture becomes too exclusive or rigid, organizations can lose the flexibility needed to adapt to change. For example, companies that are heavily oriented towards a competitive work culture can create an unhealthy environment, which ultimately undermines team motivation and collaboration. Therefore, it is important for organizations to ensure that the culture they build remains relevant to their strategic goals and evolving market needs.

Organizational culture can also be used as a tool to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration and create internal efficiency (Irfan & Al Hakim, 2022). When this culture is based on high adaptability, employees are better able to adjust to change and work synergistically (Pulakos et al., 2000; Eddine & Darmawan, 2023). Support from management that prioritizes the value of cooperation and organizational effectiveness (Hariani, 2021) contributes to the creation of sustainable performance and the implementation of Green Human Resources Management (Mardikaningsih, 2024). Organizations that have a culture of openness and trust tend to be more successful in encouraging synergy between teams. This increases operational efficiency and creates competitive advantage through the organization's ability to make the most of

internal resources. Culture becomes a strategic element that supports integration and collaboration on a large scale.

With its potential, organizational culture is both an element that shapes internal identity and a strategic tool that can be used to create competitive advantage. Organizations that are able to leverage their culture strategically will have a stronger position to face competition in the global market.

Implications for the Business Sector

Organizational culture influences the success of organizations in different business sectors in different ways, depending on the characteristics of the sector. In the technology sector, for example, a culture of innovation plays an important role in creating new products and services that can compete in the global marketplace. In the manufacturing sector, however, the cultural focus is often more on efficiency and quality control to achieve optimal productivity. This difference suggests that organizational culture should be tailored to the needs and dynamics of each business sector.

In the service sector, a customer-oriented culture is key to success. This culture encourages employees to provide superior service and create a positive customer experience. According to research by Zeithaml et al. (1990), organizations with a strong service culture tend to have higher customer retention rates and get recommendations from customers. For example, hospitality companies such as Ritz-Carlton embed service culture across all levels of the organization thus creating consistent service standards across their branches.

Organizational culture also has important implications in high-risk sectors, such as energy and healthcare. In the energy sector, safety culture is a top priority to reduce the risk of accidents and maintain operational sustainability. Research by Zohar (2000) shows that organizations with a strong safety culture reduce accident rates and improve operational efficiency. Similarly, in the healthcare sector, a culture that emphasizes team collaboration and adherence to ethical standards contributes to better quality medical care.

Organizational culture can be a key factor in sectors that face high regulatory pressure. In the financial industry, for example, a culture of compliance is critical to ensuring that organizations comply with complex and

constantly changing regulations. Organizations that fail to embed a culture of compliance often face significant legal and reputational risks. For example, financial institutions with a culture of transparency and integrity tend to be better able to build trust with regulators and their customers.

Organizational culture also influences responses to changes in the external environment in different sectors. In the retail sector, for example, organizations that have an adaptive culture tend to be more successful in responding to changing consumer preferences and market trends. Research by Burt and Sparks (2003) shows that retail companies that innovate their culture, such as adopting digital technology or supporting sustainability, have higher competitiveness in the modern market.

In the education and non-profit sectors, a mission-oriented culture is a key element. This culture motivates organizational members to work with high dedication even though financial incentives may be lower compared to other business sectors. For example, non-profit organizations that have a culture of cross-team collaboration and commitment to their social mission tend to be more successful in achieving significant impact in the communities where they operate.

In addition to differences between sectors, organizational culture also influences how companies design cross-sectoral strategies. Organizations that have a culture of collaboration are often more successful at forging strategic partnerships with companies in other sectors. For example, a partnership between a technology company and a healthcare company to create digital solutions for medical care demonstrates how a culture of collaboration can be a tool to expand the scope of business and create new value.

The implications of organizational culture in the business sector also include the ability to support digital transformation. In many sectors, the adoption of digital technologies requires significant cultural change, particularly in terms of ways of working, decision-making and communication. Organizations with cultures that encourage continuous learning and flexibility tend to be more successful at integrating new technologies into their operations. Conversely, organizations with rigid cultures often face major obstacles in this transformation process.

With these various implications, organizational culture is not only an internal element but also a strategic tool that can be used to achieve competitive advantage in various sectors. It is important for every organization to design and maintain a culture that fits the characteristics of their sector, while remaining open to change to meet the challenges of a dynamic business environment.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Organizational culture plays an important role in determining the success of organizations in various sectors. Analysis shows that a strong culture that fits the needs of the organization can improve performance through employee engagement, innovation, and adaptation to environmental changes. However, challenges such as resistance to change, cultural gaps, and complexities in cross-cultural management remain significant obstacles that need to be overcome. Research also confirms that organizational culture is not only an internal element, but also a strategic tool that can create sustainable competitive advantage.

In different business sectors, organizational culture shows different influences. The service sector emphasizes a service culture, the technology sector requires a culture of innovation, while the manufacturing sector is more oriented towards efficiency and quality control. High-risk sectors, such as healthcare and energy, prioritize a safety culture to ensure operational sustainability. These implications suggest that organizational culture should be tailored to the unique needs of each sector to achieve optimal results.

To maximize the benefits of organizational culture, management needs to adopt a strategic approach that focuses on developing core values relevant to the organization's long-term goals. Organizations also need to ensure that the culture is adopted by top management, and internalized at all levels of the organization. Training that focuses on aligning individual and organizational values, as well as strengthening reward systems that are consistent with the desired culture, are important steps in this process.

In addition, to deal with changes in the business environment, organizational culture must remain flexible and adaptive. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between organizational culture and performance on a more specific scope, such as in the digital age or to face global challenges such as environmental

sustainability. With an organized and sustainable approach, organizational culture can continue to be the foundation that supports organizational success in the future.

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