

An Exploration of Cultural Theory: A Utilization of Culture to Examine Organizational Commitment

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Abstract- This study intends to find a relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment. Organizational culture is a broad and complex concept. It determines the underlining principles and behaviors in an organization. Organizational Commitment refers to the level of attachment one feels for their job. For the purpose of this study, Meyer and Allen's (1993) instrument will be used to measure organizational commitment as a criterion, or dependent, variable. Culture will be measured using Wouters and Maesschalck's (2014) Grid- group culture scale as a predictor, or independent, variable. A questionnaire containing both measures was distributed through convenient sampling and analyzed using correlational analysis.

Index terms- organizational culture, organizational commitment, retention, workplace culture, workplace attitudes

I. INTRODUCTION

Extensive research on organizational culture lies in its relevance and complexity (Schien 1990). It is reasonable to question the effects of culture on an organization because of its ambiguous nature, particularly in areas such as productivity, employee satisfaction, and so on. However, the broadness and complexity of the topic is largely the reason it is so important to build on its literature. The more culture is studied within the organization, the easier it can be to understand, control and predict the culture and its antecedents. While there has been a large amount of research dedicated to the topic, it is still difficult to measure, define and understand. Culture has been most simply defined by Deal and Kennedy (1982) as the way things get done in an organization. For the purpose of this study, the relatedness of organizational culture and an employee's commitment to their workplace will be examined.

Literature on organizational commitment, organizational culture, and the relationship so far established, will be presented. A detailed description of group grid culture theory's application to organizations and a multi-dimensional commitment theory proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) will also be discussed. The basis of group grid culture is to study the amount of connectedness groups share, along with how power is distributed in a particular culture (Douglas 1970). Meyer and Allen (1991)

particularly set out to study commitment as the mindset and psychological state of the individual. The dynamics which arise from culture differences, cause varieties in psychological mindsets. It is important to examine these for patterns or relationships relating the two.

II. LITERATURE

Culture. The study of organizational culture roots in anthropology. Schein applies a functionalist perspective to his theory (1990). Organizational culture can be defined as notions, beliefs and ideas developed by a group throughout the history of an organization acting as determinants for behavior among employees. The basis for behavior is derived from tradition and is deeply rooted in the organization. However, in the face of internal and external challenges, action must be taken to survive. Success or failure leads to adjustments of set behaviors. New employees learn established norms as accurate responses to environment (Schein 1990).

Organizational culture is studied at three different levels. The first way culture exhibits itself is through its artifacts. This refers to anything in the organization that produces a reaction in employees. Artifacts can be tangible, such as the objects at a physical location, or intangible, such as language, narratives, and practices (Trice and Beyer 1993). Employee interpretations and reactions to artifacts are difficult to study. The second level refers to the organization's values, such as its philosophy and norms, usually set by management. The third level is concerned with assumptions determining behaviors in an organization. These assumptions are so deeply ingrained in an organization they are subconscious and go unquestioned (Schien, 1990).

Organizational culture is observed, defined, and measured in various ways and perspectives. Any detail is subject to have an effect on an organization's culture. Pareek (2010) studied openness, collaboration, trust, autonomy proaction, authenticity, and confrontation. Denison (1990) studied involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission traits.

Cameron and Quinn (2006) created competing values dimensions. They are based on internal vs. external focus and flexibility vs. stability. There are four resulting categories: Competing culture, controlling culture, collaborative culture, and creative culture. This way of studying culture is similar to the grid group culture theory due to its systematic, competing

framework. While the criteria and meaning of definitions differ, they are both closely related to how factors affect relationships among those in culture as a whole.

Organizational culture will be studied at the anthropological level for the purpose of this study. Group grid culture theory has received much attention in the study of culture, as it can relate to any type of culture. In this case, it is being related to organizational culture. One of the theories strengths lies in its inclusion of a passive culture. Being able to detect these passive cultures, gives us the opportunity to study trends and occurrences, which would otherwise be ignored.

To understand grid group theory we must first understand its two main components. The group component of the theory refers to how integrated the individual is to the particular group. The amount of time they spend together, the extent to which they perform tasks with each other, and how connected they are as a whole are all aspects being studied at this level. Grid refers to how much importance a role or position holds in the culture's context. The aspects studied at the grid level include the power one receives from belonging to a classification within a culture and how much one is able to do or not do because of whom the roles they hold. Depending on how high or low a culture identifies with these classifications, results in one of four classifications.

A hierarchy culture has a strong grid and a strong group classification. This type of culture would have strong group ties and regards authority. Egalitarian culture is weak in grid yet strong in its group affiliation. This type of culture may feel very connected to those around them but does not feel tied to roles or gives importance to titles. Individualism is when a culture is both weak grid and group. A fatalistic culture is that which is strong in grid and weak in-group ties. This is said to be a passive culture. Behavior can become distrustful due to lack of group ties but consideration and respect of titles and rules.

Although it is difficult to create a scale, which can be used to accurately measure culture, this theory can give us a good insight for measuring most types of cultures, including a passive one. It gives us an understanding of the importance of group ties and the amount of power various positions should hold. Wouters and Maesschalck (2014) created an instrument to quantitatively measure group grid theory specifically for organizations. The survey provided a high reliability rating, providing confidence in the instrument.

Commitment. The psychological state attaching an individual to the organization they work for is known as organizational commitment (Meyer and Allen 1991). Employee commitment has been studied in different ways through time. A main approach used was the exchange theory. The notion of "sidebets" was introduced to commitment levels (Becker 1960). This deals with an individual's unwillingness to lose investments already made in a company by leaving.

Attitudes and behaviors have also been proposed to explain commitment. While the two are similar, they differ particularly in the way they are studied. The sequence in which its main concepts are studied and the manner in which the conditions present are looked at reveal the main differences between the two approaches. Using a behavioral approach, one may want to begin by studying a behavior, then examine if the behavior is

repeated due to conditions present. The attitudinal approach will start by studying the conditions causing the behavior. Behavior is looked at as a process while attitudes are a mindset. Mayer & Lynne (2001) proposed the idea of attitudes of loyalty and commitment in employees producing favorable behaviors.

According to Steers (1997), commitment can be affected by personal attributes, job characteristics and work experiences. A Meta-analysis by Meyer and Stanley (2002) found personal attributes to be less closely related to commitment than work experience.

Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed a multidimensional model to explain employee commitment. The model is useful because it proposed a different form of studying commitment in the organization. They set out to study the level of commitment by focusing on the existing relationship between the individual and the organization. This was different than the behavioral and attitudinal approaches used at the time. The concept gathers the main theories and viewpoints of commitment then sets them as dimensions. This is done to better evaluate individual feelings and attitudes towards organization, and their reason, if any, to stay at an organization. The theory is widely accepted by those in the field.

The first component is affective commitment. This type of commitment deals with the emotional aspect of commitment. At this level of commitment, the individual is attached to an organization on a more personal level. The individual truly believes in the organization's goals and identifies with its philosophy. It is a more genuine commitment. This type of commitment is most closely related to this kind of commitment is Mowday's (1982) commitment scale.

Continuance commitment derives from the individual's belief they are best off working for the company. This part of commitment is closely related to exchange theory (Buchanan 1974). In this theory a person's attachment is mutual. The person's attachment is a result of what the organization can provide for them.

Normative commitment refers to the obligation one feels to the organization. While it is less common among commitment literature, it is still relevant. This type of commitment is appealing to an individual's sense of duty (Meyer and Allen 1990).

All three measures have been shown to negatively correlate with turnover. Affective commitment has shown to have the highest correlation to job satisfaction, job involvement and occupational commitment. However, affective commitment was shown to negatively correlate with personal stress and work/life balance while continuance commitment showed a positive correlation. (Meyer and Stanley, 2002) It is a useful construct to understand how an individual identifies with an organization's goals and values. Its importance in this particular study is due to the expression of culture through goals and values.

Culture and Commitment Simosi and Xenikou. (2010) Found a moderate but significant association between contents of organizational culture and employee commitment amount Greek employees working in large organizations.

Nongoe and Ikyanyon (2012) found relationships between several dimensions of culture (involvement, consistency and adaptability) and commitment. However, they found no

relationship between mission traits and commitment among Nigerian subject matter experts.

Competitive, entrepreneurial, and consensual cultures were all found to have a significant positive relationship in at least one or more of Meyer and Allen's commitment types among Nigerian employees working in the public sector. Bureaucratic culture was shown to negatively relate to affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Ezirim, Nwibere and Emecheta, 2012).

In a study, Dwivedi, Kaushik, and Luxmi, (2014) found that proaction, confrontation, experimentation, authenticity, collaboration, and trust as significant predictors of commitment. They found openness and autonomy to have no significance to commitment.

In a study conducted in India among IT employees using OCTAPACE (openness, confrontation, trust, autonomy, proaction, authenticity, collaboration, experimentation) cultural dimensions, affective commitment was the only commitment type to show correlation with each culture dimension. (Neelam and Bhattacharya, 2015)

Based on the literature, it is likely for organizational culture to effect behaviors in the workplace. Of those behaviors, commitment is likely to show a relationship.

H: Reported organizational commitment is related to organizational culture.

III. METHODOLOGY

Participants

A convenient sample was used for this study. Participants were recruited through the use of emails and social media. The requirement for inclusion was that participants be at least 18 years of age.

Materials

An informed consent was provided upon beginning the survey (see appendix A). The survey contained a set of demographic questions. These questions collected information, such as age, gender and ethnicity of participants.

Meyer and Allen's (1993) Organizational Commitment Scale was used to measure commitment as a criterion, or dependent, variable (See appendix C). The instrument consisted of 19 items. A 7-point Likert scale was provided for participants to rate their level agreement with the items from strongly agree to strongly disagree. 1 if they strongly agree, 2 if they agree, 3 if they slightly agree, 4 if they were neutral, 5 if they slightly disagree, 6 if they disagree and 7 if they strongly disagree. Questions 1-6 in the commitment portion of the survey measured affective commitment. Questions 7-12 measured continuance commitment. Questions 13-19 measured normative commitment.

To measure culture, Wouters and Maesschalck's (2014) Grid-group culture scale will be used to measure culture as a predictor, or independent, variable. (See appendix D) Items were based on the following culture classification: Hierarchy, egalitarianism, individualism, and fatalism. These classifications derive from group and grid dimensions. The degree of group and grid determines the cultures classification. Simply put, those in a high group and grid fall into a hierarchy classification. Those in a high group and low grid fall into the egalitarianism classification. Those in a low group and high grid fall into a

fatalistic culture. Those in a low grid and group culture fall into an individualism classification. Cameron and Quinn's (1999) culture instruments and grid-group literature provided insight for the making of this instrument. The instrument consisted of 28 items. A 7-point Likert scale was provided for participants to rate their level agreement with the items from totally disagree to totally agree. 1 if they totally disagree, 2 if they disagree, 3 if they somewhat disagree, 4 if they neither agree or disagree, 5 if they somewhat agree, 6 if they agree and 7 if they totally agree. Questions 1-7 in the culture portion of the survey measured hierarchy as a culture dimension. Questions 8-14 measured egalitarianism as a culture dimension. Questions 15-21 measured individualism as a culture dimension. Questions 22-28 measured fatalism as a culture dimension.

Procedures

The survey will be made using "QuestionPro". Participants will receive a link, which will direct them to the survey to which they can either accept or decline participation. They will be instructed to fill out the survey questions. All participants are made aware they can withdrawal from the survey at any time if they please. They will not be allowed to progress to the next section of the survey until they have completed the previous section in full.

SPSS was used to run data analysis. A t-test studying differences in commitment among gender. a correlational analysis was used to infer relationships across dimensions of culture and commitment.

IV. RESULTS

Of 106 participants of this study 33 were male and 73 were female. The average age of males was 36.24. The average age of females was 29. The average education level of males was 15.88. average education level for females was 15.71. the average amount of experience held by males was 11.18 years. The average amount of experience held by females was 8.82 years. Males received an average of 51684.06 in annual income. Females received an average of 75966.67 in annual income.

The amount of entry level jobs for females in this study accounted for 5.7% (9 female participants). 43 held professional jobs accounting for 58.9% of females in this study. 13 held managerial jobs accounting for 17.8% of females in this study. Three were self-employed accounting for 4.1% of females in this study. One was retired accounting for 1.4% of participants in this study. Four participants answered other accounting for 5.5% of participants in this study. None held executive positions, and none were unemployed.

Two males in this study held entry level jobs accounting for 6.1%. 12 held professional jobs accounting for 36.4% of females in this study. 9 held managerial jobs accounting for 27.3% of males in this study. Two held executive positions accounting for 6.1% of the males in this study. 5 were self-employed accounting for 15.2% of males in this study. One was unemployed accounting for 3.0% of males in this study. One participant answered other accounting for 3.0% of males in this study. 1 male participant preferred not to answer accounting for 3.0% of males in this study.

Males and females showed no significant differences in commitment level across any dimensions. A t-test revealed no

significant differences between male and female levels of affective commitment (.986) A t-test revealed no significant differences between gender levels in continuance commitment (.335). A t-test revealed no significant differences between gender levels of normative commitment (.849).

In the interest of the study's purpose to discover a relationship between levels of affective, continuance and normative commitment among different types of cultures, particularly hierarchy cultures, egalitarian cultures, individualistic cultures and fatalistic cultures correlation analysis between each variable rendered mostly positive correlations. A correlation analysis between levels of affective commitment and hierarchy culture revealed a positive correlation between the two variables ($r=.237$) which was found to be statistically significant ($p<.015$) using an α of .05.

Interested in discovering the existence of a correlation between levels of affective commitment of employees and the strength of egalitarian culture in the workplace, a correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation the two variables ($r=.568$). This was found to be statistically significant ($p<.001$) using an α of .01.

A correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between levels of affective commitment of employees and the strength of individualistic culture ($r=.481$). This was found to be statistically significant ($p<.001$) using an α of .01.

Fatalism did not meet any of the pretest criteria and therefore a correlational analysis was not able to be ran. No correlations were found between continuance commitment in any dimension of culture.

This study was interested in discovering a relationship between employee levels of normative commitment and the strength of hierarchy culture in their workplace. A correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between the two variables (.281) which was found to be statistically significant ($p<.004$) using α at .05 level.

This study was interested in discovering the existence of a correlation between levels of normative commitment of employees and the strength of egalitarian culture in the workplace. A correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between the two variables (.615) which was found to be statistically significant ($p<.001$) using α of .01.

This study was interested in discovering the existence of a correlation between levels of normative commitment of employees and the strength of Individualistic culture in the workplace. correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between the two variables (.578) which was found to be statistically significant ($p<.001$) using an α of .01.

V. CONCLUSION

Egalitarian cultures showed the highest correlation with affective and normative commitment from culture dimensions. Egalitarian cultures give employees the feeling they are equals in the workplace and in their groups.

Positive correlations between Individualistic culture showed higher correlations to affective and normative commitment than hierarchy cultures. In individualistic cultures employees are autonomous. Feelings of commitment to organization with weak group ties can be compensated if the employees feel ownership over their work.

Fatalism never met criteria to run analysis. This is not a surprising finding considering fatalistic cultures are said to be the most unpredictable. However, this is considered a limitation of the study because passive cultures were not able to be studied. Future research should focus on more ways to gain insight on fatalistic cultures.

While hierarchy cultures showed a lower correlation between affective commitment and normative commitment than egalitarian cultures and individualistic cultures, it still showed a positive correlation. This supports the idea that individuals do not like to feel restricted to role classifications, however strong feelings of group affiliation can improve attitudes. Respect for those holding roles and the hope of possibly moving up is a possible explanation. Since this is not a representative sample and correlations cannot explain the causes for behavior this up for speculation.

There was no significance found for continuance commitment across any of the culture dimensions studied. A possible explanation for these findings is that the majority of the sample were young, professionals, with high levels of education. It is possible that the individuals in this sample do not necessarily have the necessity for a job and income. they view their jobs as socially acceptable explaining the higher levels of normative commitment. Future studies can attempt to obtain a more representative sample in order to gain insight on commitment levels of older, more established individuals, in different culture settings.

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in an anonymous survey about Organizational culture and commitment, which is being conducted by Martha Armengol, a graduate student at Carlos Albizu University (CAU), as part of a research course project. This survey is anonymous, you will not be asked to include your name or any other identifying information. There are no known risks for participation in anonymous online surveys. If you feel uncomfortable with any part of the survey, you may discontinue at any time without any penalty or consequence. In addition, there are no specific benefits to you for your participation. If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete a series of questions including basic demographic information as well as questions related about [subject matter of the survey]. The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The results of this survey may be published. The data from this project will be stored in a password protected file and only the researchers will have access to it. The data may be combined with the data from other studies and published as part of other papers. No identifying information will be included in any publications. Results will be available to you upon request by contacting Martha Armengol, Marmengol910@sunmail.albizu.edu and 786-266-1233, in approximately 6 months. Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Martha Armengol, Marmengol910@sunmail.albizu.edu and 786-266-1233. If you have a question or concern that cannot be addressed by the primary researcher, you may contact her supervisor and professor for this course project, Toni DiDona, PhD at tdidona@albizu.edu. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time with no penalty. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

APPENDIX B

Demographics

Directions: Please follow the following demographic questions.
(If you wish not to answer a fill in the question you may type in 00.)

1. What is your gender?

- a) Male
 - b) Female
2. What is your age in years?
3. Which best describes your racial/ethnic identity?
- a) White/Non Hispanic
 - b) Black/African American Hispanic/Latino
 - c) Asian
 - d) Multiracial
 - e) Other
4. How many years of education have you completed? (If you finished high school you would answer 12, if you have a bachelor's degree you would answer 16, a doctoral degree would be 20)
5. Which best describes your current job?
- a) entry level
 - b) professional
 - c) managerial
 - d) executive
 - e) self-employed
 - f) retired
 - g) unemployed
 - h) other
6. How many years of experience do you have in your current field?
7. What is your annual income? (in thousands)
8. are you a U.S. immigrant?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) prefer not to answer
9. What is your first language spoken at home?
10. What is your marital status? single
- a) Married
 - b) Divorced
 - c) Widowed
 - d) Other
 - e) prefer not to answer
11. Which best describes your household? single income household
- a) dual income household
 - b) more than 2 income household prefer not to answer
12. Approximately how many individuals does your workplace currently employ?
- a) Less than 50
 - b) 50-100
 - c) 100-500
 - d) over 500
 - e) prefer not to answer

APPENDIX C

Commitment Scale

Directions: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.
2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.
3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization.
4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.
5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.
6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.
7. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.
8. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.
9. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.
10. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.
11. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere.
12. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.
13. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.
14. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.
15. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.

16. This organization deserves my loyalty.
17. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.
18. I owe a great deal to my organization.

Likert scale: 1 (*strongly agree*), 2 (*agree*), 3 (*slightly agree*), 4 (*neutral*), 5 (*slightly disagree*), 6 (*disagree*), 7 (*strongly disagree*)

APPENDIX D

Culture Scale

Directions: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. In my organization, when employees break the rules there is an extensive inquiry about what happened and why.
2. My organization emphasizes clear lines of accountability.
3. My organization believes success depends on a clear and authoritative system of rules being in place and respected.
4. In my organization not behaving according to one's status or role in the organization is not tolerated.
5. In my organization, it is expected that clients follow proper procedures.
6. In my organization, the relationships we have with other organizations are based on rules and operating procedures which are proscribed for that organization.
7. The glue that holds this organization together consists of a sense of duty and respect for the distinct roles of each of the professions and tiers of management.
8. In my organization the shared opinion of the staff is taken into account when promotions are given.
9. The top executive of my organization emphasizes consensus on all levels of the organization.
10. My organization emphasizes teams within which all members are equally important.
11. My organization defines success as promoting the organization's values.
12. In my organization decisions are made by consensus.
13. In my organization exploiting one's personal power or influence, or "pulling rank" is not tolerated.
14. The glue that holds this organization together are shared values and commitment to our common principles.
15. In my organization, employees are promoted on the basis of individual performance.
16. In my organization, when employees break the rules a mix of incentives and sanctions is used in order to prevent it in the future.
17. The top executive of my organization emphasizes that it is important to evaluate every employee's performance individually.
18. My organization defines success on the basis of good individual performance.
19. In my organization promotions that are given on the basis of tenure alone are resented.
20. In my organization, we consider the relationship between clients and professionals important.
21. The glue that holds this organization together is the fact that it is useful for everybody to work together in the same organization.
22. In my organization, short-term thinking often compromises the long-term vision.
23. It is difficult to know what is important for the top executive of my organization.
24. My organization is characterized by the fact that we constantly have to react to things over which we have no control.
25. My organization defines success on the basis of dealing with each months or years problem as they come.
26. In my organization, clients have to be satisfied with what they get.
27. In my organization, we deal with other organizations only when it is necessary, otherwise there is no reason to.
28. There is nothing holding this organization together and binding its members to one another except for the fact that the law or the management has decided that this organization should exist.

Likert Scale: 1. Totally disagree 2. Disagree 3. Somewhat Disagree 4. Neither Agree or Disagree 5. Somewhat Agree 6. Agree 7. Totally Agree

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