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Examining Organizational Culture: Insights from a Multiple Case Study Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the cultural dimensions of 3 companies: CAC-Bank, Turkish Airlines, and Fajr-e-Jam Gas Refining Co. Using a multiple case study approach, the research provides an in-depth analysis of cultural dimensions such as involvement, cooperation, information systems, learning, client care, adaptability, strategic direction, rewards and incentives, control systems, agreement, communication, and coordination. The findings highlight the multidimensional nature of organizational culture and its significant impact on corporate dynamics. While organizational culture is inherently complex and challenging to fully analyze due to time and data constraints, understanding these dimensions remains crucial. A well-defined corporate culture positively impacts performance, fostering growth and globalization. Furthermore, this study reveals cultural variations at the organizational level based on the size, type, and age of the firm. A strong organizational culture increases employee productivity and engagement, whereas a weak culture may have adverse effects. Additionally, insights into cultural dimensions benefit stakeholders, including investors and customers, by providing a deeper understanding of a company's values and practices.

Keywords: Organizational performance, Organizational culture, Involvement, Communication

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Introduction

Organizational culture encompasses the values, norms, trust, expectations, and symbols developed by specific groups and shared among employees, shaping institutional operations and outcomes. It has become a critical concept influencing the behaviors and thought processes of professionals worldwide. The growing emphasis on organizational culture stems from the need to enhance competitiveness and ensure organizations can adapt and thrive in evolving environments. This shift has been driven by a broader reevaluation of human resources' role in organizational success.

Despite various definitions of organizational culture, they all emphasize a common theme—shared values and behaviors. Organizational researchers describe it as a system of priorities, assumptions, meanings, and values collectively embraced by members. It influences how employees respond to challenges, expectations, and workplace situations. Organizational culture serves as a framework for interpreting experiences and acts as a social glue, fostering cohesion within and across departments. This study explores the significance of organizational culture, its core concepts, and its impact on organizational change and performance improvement. Turkish Airlines is used as a case study to illustrate how strategic initiatives drive cultural transformation and strengthen organizational identity.

The research builds upon the cultural dimensions framework developed by Ginevičius & Vaitkūnaite [1], establishing a link between organizational culture and performance. Additional dimensions were incorporated after assessing the organizational culture of three companies: Turkish Airlines, CAC-Bank, and Fajr-e-Jam Gas Refining Co.



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Furthermore, the study examines the diversity of organizational cultures within these companies and their role in enhancing performance and competitive advantage. It also explores the interplay between tangible and intangible cultural elements, highlighting their influence on corporate success.

Literature review

Organizational culture

Organizational culture plays a fundamental role in shaping the behavior and mindset of its members. Hofstede [2] emphasized that the thinking process helps distinguish 1 member from another, while Schein [3] highlighted the significance of values and norms in guiding success. Similarly, Kotter and Heskett [4] identified behaviors, beliefs, norms, and values as essential components in fostering an effective organizational culture.

Culture, though an abstract concept, exerts a powerful influence in organizational and social settings. These cultural forces often operate subconsciously, shaping behavior and interactions within organizations. Studying them is crucial not only to understand their impact but also to gain insights into our behaviors and experiences in professional environments [5, 6].

Organizational culture consists of core values, shared beliefs, and collective messages communicated among group members. These cultural elements are not easily perceived by outsiders but significantly influence workplace dynamics, organizational climate, and behavioral consistency. Employee performance, often considered the backbone of an organization, is directly affected by awareness and cultural knowledge fostering commitment and improved behaviors [7].

The concept of organizational culture was first introduced in the scholarly literature by Pettigrew [8] in administrative sciences. Since then, it has been widely explored as a crucial factor influencing business success, employee engagement, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Company performance

Company performance generally refers to the financial and operational success of a business, encompassing key metrics such as profitability, revenue, market share, and efficiency. While financial indicators are crucial, corporate performance also includes broader aspects such as corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and reputation.

Organizational outcomes, on the other hand, represent the specific results an organization aims to achieve. These outcomes can extend beyond financial success to include goals such as enhancing customer satisfaction, increasing employee engagement, and achieving strategic or operational objectives.

Effective coordination between business functions is essential for ensuring customer needs are met in a cost-effective and timely manner. This requires aligning organizational goals, establishing clear communication channels, and streamlining processes for better information flow. Furthermore, inter-organizational collaboration with external partners, such as suppliers and distributors, plays a vital role in optimizing overall business performance. Such coordination demands careful planning to ensure all functions work together toward the organization's overarching objectives.

In summary, while company and corporate performance primarily refer to operational and financial success, organizational outcomes encompass a broader range of strategic goals that contribute to long-term growth and sustainability [9, 10].

Materials and Methods

A study is a research method that involves an in-depth, detailed examination of a specific subject, such as a group, person, or organization. In this study, a multiple-case study approach was employed, which involves analyzing 2 or more cases to examine the same phenomenon across different contexts. This method was chosen to highlight variations across industries and to explore the differences and similarities between organizations.

The multiple-case study approach follows a descriptive viewpoint, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of organizational culture and its impact. By conducting multiple case studies, researchers can identify recurring patterns and trends that may not be evident in a single-case analysis. This approach enhances the reliability of findings by enabling comparisons across different industries while also acknowledging divergence where unique characteristics exist [11].

Results and Discussion

Using a multiple case study approach to analyze organizational culture offers a deeper understanding of its various dimensions. This method enables researchers to compare different organizations within an industry to identify common themes and unique variations in cultural characteristics. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, the study captures a holistic view of how organizational culture shapes business operations.

Key cultural dimensions examined include involvement, collaboration, information systems, continuous learning, client relations, adaptability, strategic vision, incentives, governance structures, communication, consensus-building, and

coordination. The study highlights the interconnected nature of these dimensions and their role in shaping workplace dynamics. A strong organizational culture enhances corporate performance, employee motivation, and operational efficiency. Additionally, stakeholders such as investors and customers benefit from understanding these cultural aspects, as they reflect a company's values and strategic priorities.

Prior research supports the critical role of cultural factors in shaping organizations. Oliver and Kandadi [12] identified ten primary drivers of knowledge culture, including leadership, organizational structure, reward mechanisms, professional communities, and business processes. Similarly, Santti *et al.* [13] explored the impact of business model development on organizational culture, emphasizing the challenges of fostering a unified culture within SMEs. These studies reinforce the idea that organizational culture is both dynamic and influenced by multiple internal and external factors.

Despite its significance, assessing organizational culture presents challenges. The abstract and evolving nature of culture, coupled with time and data limitations, can hinder a comprehensive evaluation. However, understanding cultural dimensions remains essential in today's competitive and globalized business landscape, as it directly influences an organization's adaptability and long-term success.

Case study: Turkish Airlines

Turkish Airlines, established in 1933, is Turkey's national flag carrier and operates as a publicly traded company. Specializing in global cargo transportation and passenger, it serves over 305 cities worldwide.

Renowned for its service excellence, Turkish Airlines has been awarded "Europe's Best Airline" by Skytrax for six consecutive years. The company has seen exponential growth, doubling in size twice over the past decade, making it one of the most expansive airline networks globally. Alongside financial success, it maintains strong profitability and industry-leading margins.

The airline's corporate culture is built on three fundamental values: transparency, equity, and safety. It operates 11 subsidiaries, covering training, ground services, aircraft catering, maintenance, and fuel supply [14]. These cultural principles and subsidiary operations play a vital role in sustaining Turkish Airlines' reputation and operational excellence on a global scale.

Fajr-e-Jam (Kangan) Gas Refining Co

JAM GROUP CO. is a leading supplier of chemical and manufacturer additives catering to various industries, including Oil and Gas, Mining, Water Treatment, Textile, Leather Tanning, PVC, and Detergents. Established in 2014 by a team of experienced business and technical professionals, the company quickly expanded into international markets, thanks to its strong commitment to commercial and technical excellence.

A key milestone for the organization was its role in extracting gas from the 6-million-phase of South Pars. By introducing a dynamic and continuous quality improvement process, the company significantly enhanced the research and development (R&D) efforts in gas production—an area previously underdeveloped.

The company's value chain system focuses on producing high-quality products aligned with market demand and customer satisfaction. Its sales strategy follows a structured distribution model:

Products are sold to regional representatives, ensuring effective market penetration.

Representatives then distribute the products to sub-groups, responding to customer needs while adhering to organizational policies.

In 2018, Fajr-e-Jam (Kangan) Gas Refining Co. implemented total quality management (TQM) to improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. This strategic shift enabled the company to expand its market share across the region, reinforcing its position as a key player in the gas refining industry.

Corporate agricultural credit bank (CAC Bank)

The Cooperative Agricultural Credit Bank (CAC Bank) was founded following Law No. 9 of 1982, resulting from the merger of two financial institutions (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Dimensions of organizational culture in Turkish Airlines, Fajr-e-Jam (Kangan) Gas Refining Co., and CAC bank

Dimensions	Turkish Airlines	Fajr-e-Jam (Kangan) Gas Refining Co.	CAC bank
Involvement	Employees have a supportive environment for decision-making and idea-sharing. The workplace encourages participation in solving work-related challenges and improving processes. The	Workplace sentiment data is assessed to create a benchmark for a healthy organizational culture. The work environment minimizes risks, enhances employee retention, and promotes diversity and productivity.	The work environment supports collaboration and unity among employees. Employees are encouraged to share ideas and suggestions for improving work processes.

	atmosphere fosters teamwork and collaboration, ensuring employees are comfortable and motivated in their roles.	Workplace factors influence employee engagement and career growth.	
Cooperation (collaboration)	Managers seek input from subordinates. Teams with diverse expertise are formed for new projects to ensure success. Depending on the situation, both individual and group solutions are applied. Department managers collaborate to execute tasks based on specialization and work relations. Employees work in a team-oriented manner, engaging in discussions and consultations to resolve challenges and improve work processes. Teamwork is prioritized over individual work for significant tasks.	Managers receive practical guidance on fostering a strong company culture and improving performance. Collaboration aids in promoting the company to customers and the broader community, serving as an indirect public relations strategy. Employees are drawn to workplaces that align with their values, enhancing retention and talent acquisition. Employees are encouraged to enhance job performance and contribute to the company's success.	Employees engage with managers in a team-based setting, promoting discussions and collaboration for problem-solving and process improvements. Department managers work together based on specialization and task requirements. Project teams with diverse skills are formed for successful project execution.
Transmission of information	Critical updates and communications are delivered promptly through email and SMS.	A quantitative method is used to assess information based on objective, measurable factors rather than subjective perceptions.	Information flow across departments is slow and inconsistent, affecting decision-making efficiency. Personal differences sometimes hinder the exchange of information, leading to incomplete or delayed communication. The information-sharing process is bureaucratic and repetitive.
Learning	Employees receive training aligned with international civil aviation regulations.	To assess and analyze gaps according to TQM standards at Fajr Jam Gas Refinery, data is collected from managers and experts. The significance of each TQM indicator is determined using the best-worst method (BWM) technique.	The bank invests in continuous employee training programs tailored to pre-identified needs. Financial assistance is occasionally provided to employees pursuing higher education or specialized professional development programs.
Care about clients	Turkish Airlines continuously enhances existing services and develops new ones to meet customer needs. Customer feedback is regularly gathered to improve services. The company prioritizes customer satisfaction.	Communication processes and systems are automated. Customers have various options for business transactions, making honesty and authenticity crucial in client interactions. The company fosters partnerships with customers, maintaining an open, two-way dialogue to provide tangible support rather than just verbal assurances.	Customer satisfaction is evaluated annually or upon significant changes. The bank invests in refining existing services and introducing new offerings, particularly digital banking solutions. While the bank prioritizes customer needs, some clients express frustration over bureaucratic procedures requiring head office approval. Branch managers build strong relationships with VIP customers.
Adaptability	The company swiftly responds to external changes. Employees readily adapt to organizational transformations, especially as the fleet expands and aviation regulations evolve.	The company maintains a structured approach to managing unexpected business and environmental changes. Employees are adaptable to shifts in external conditions.	The response to external changes is slow. Employees strive for continuous performance improvement despite occasional dissatisfaction. Some unresolved issues persist for extended periods. Teamwork helps address complex challenges.
Strategic direction	The company has well-defined long-term strategies, goals, and operational plans. Tasks are executed according to structured	The company aligns its strategies to ensure long-term stability. Operations follow structured plans that reflect organizational goals.	The bank has established strategic goals and operational plans. The organization's vision was successfully realized in multiple

	plans derived from the company's strategic objectives. Clear policies and procedures guide work at all levels. Turkish Airlines achieved notable success, even generating profits during the lockdown period.	The corporate vision highlights the company's aspirations and long-term objectives.	areas during the study period. Policies and procedures clearly define task execution across departments and sectors. Work is systematically carried out according to predefined strategic plans.
Reward and incentive system	Employees receive higher salaries compared to other airlines, making Turkish Airlines a top choice for new graduates. The company operates in compliance with regulations to ensure a secure work environment. Additional financial benefits include coverage for kindergarten fees, private insurance, and double salaries.	Reward programs motivate employees to achieve specific objectives and contribute to a positive workplace environment.	Employees receive competitive salaries, incentives, and recognition for exceptional performance. Innovation is rewarded through financial and non-financial incentives. The bank ensures workplace safety by adhering to regulations and balancing reward and disciplinary measures. Additional benefits include study assistance for employees and their children pursuing higher education. Employees collectively contribute financial support to the families of deceased colleagues.
System of control	Internal regulations and policies govern workflow. Employees have the autonomy to work efficiently while coordinating with their managers.	The company employs output control mechanisms to assess measurable production outcomes.	Internal regulations and policies structure the bank's operations. Employees have the flexibility to work efficiently while engaging with their managers to complete tasks effectively.
Communication	Managers engage in discussions rather than issuing direct commands. Communication among employees is mostly informal and friendly. Manager-employee interactions are formal yet maintain an open-door policy for addressing issues.	Business communication objectives play a crucial role in strategy execution and must be clear and measurable. Employee interactions are mostly friendly. Communication goals emphasize the effective exchange of knowledge, information, and emotions.	Communication with top management is predominantly formal. Interactions between managers are both formal and friendly. Manager-employee communication is professional yet welcoming, while communication among employees is largely informal.
Agreement	Employees view Turkish Airlines as a family-like organization. There is mutual agreement and collaboration in problem-solving. Resistance to change exists but remains within a normal range typical of most organizations.	Large-scale purchases, acquisitions, and contractual agreements are governed by formal purchase agreements that specify effective dates and terms.	Employees perceive the bank as a close-knit organization. Most rules and policies are widely accepted by employees. Collaboration and agreement among staff help resolve challenges. A degree of resistance to change exists but remains within expected limits.
Coordination and integration	Departments share common goals and complementary tasks. Team formation is seamless, allowing smooth collaboration for problem-solving and project initiation. Information flow between departments is well-coordinated, with detailed procedures and instructions guiding operations.	Communication priorities are established. Sales department feedback enhances collaboration between marketing and sales teams, improving brand awareness and customer conversion. Staying on schedule and within budget enhances efficiency, while client feedback improves customer satisfaction.	Team formation is smooth, facilitating joint efforts to resolve issues and launch new projects. Information flow is well-coordinated to support task execution. Departments work towards shared objectives, ensuring seamless integration of responsibilities.

Company performance

Company performance encompasses both non-financial and financial aspects of an organization, assessing how effectively a company executes its business strategy. Several metrics are used to gauge improvements in company performance. It was reported by the Financial Tribune [15] that Fajr Jam Gas Refining Company produced more than 6% higher output compared to the same period last year.

Founded in 1982, Cooperative and Agricultural Credit Bank [16] began as a state bank focused on providing specialized loans for sectors like fisheries and agriculture. Since 2004, with the support of the government and under new management, the bank expanded its services to offer a full range of commercial banking solutions for both corporate and retail clients. Within just seven years of operating in the commercial banking sector, the bank showed remarkable performance, achieving the highest market growth rate in customer deposits—over 141%, according to the 2010 financial statements [16].

Turkish Airlines focused on growth strategies, including expanding its destinations and increasing its focus on cargo transportation. The airline increased its staff by 10% and saw a profitability rise of 2%.

Based on this information, it can be concluded that Turkish Airlines met its targets for 2019. Despite past epidemics, it appears that insufficient lessons were learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Crisis management is a strategic process, and considering the impact of the crisis, flexible, adaptable, and easily manageable strategies should be devised. Reactive, proactive, and interactive strategies can be employed to address the crisis. Reactive strategies anticipate the crisis and take appropriate actions. Proactive strategies, on the other hand, aim to foresee potential crises and implement preventive measures. An interactive strategy involves continuous learning and adapting the system based on the evolving effects of the crisis. Globally, proactive behavior was lacking, and as the crisis spread worldwide, airlines, including those in Turkey, began adopting an interactive approach to crisis management. By the first quarter of 2020, it was evident that Turkish Airlines management had adopted an interactive strategic approach to handling the crisis. The primary goal of crisis management is to minimize its impact and restore normalcy as quickly as possible. Upon reviewing THY's annual reports and executive interviews with the media, it was found that the airline's management quickly implemented the crisis management process and took necessary steps to reduce the crisis's effects. The crisis primarily affected THY's operational and administrative functions, with no disruptions in cooperation. However, it led to more centralized decision-making, an increased burden on top management, changes in the organizational climate, high economic costs, and significant stress on the business [17].

Conclusion

The pandemic has significantly altered consumer lifestyles and expectations. Purchasing behavior is influenced by various factors, with quality, price, and convenience remaining key considerations. However, it is now apparent that customers are willing to pay more for safety, whether in shopping, lodging, or travel.

These shifts in consumer behavior also impact employees. Due to changing circumstances, decisions are now made more swiftly, and resilience relies on agility and rapid responses. The “work from home” policy offers both benefits and challenges for employees and companies. While it provides flexibility, it also brings an increased workload, lengthy meetings, and difficulty maintaining motivation.

Turkish Airlines, CAC-Bank, and Fajr-e-Jam Gas Refining Co. maintain core cultural elements while integrating aspects from different countries. One critical factor driving their success is brand culture and management. Organizational culture plays a vital role in enhancing performance for organizations focused on long-term success. Additionally, leadership is crucial in fostering a healthy work environment, guiding the organization through cultural changes, and adopting new practices.

These companies prioritize fairness, transparency, and responsibility, ensuring they comply with both mandatory and voluntary principles in all their activities.

Limitations and dimensions for future research

This study examines cultural differences in three distinct companies, utilizing both primary and secondary data within a limited timeframe. Organizational culture and performance encompass numerous dimensions, and culture itself is a complex phenomenon with many facets. Many visible elements of culture are not showcased on company websites, and ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent and protecting participant privacy, must be accounted for in case study research. Future research could adopt a longitudinal approach with mixed methods to explore these dimensions further.

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