

University organizational culture from students' perspective: A case study at Tra Vinh University using the OCAI tool

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Abstract: This study investigates the concept of current organizational culture (OC) at Tra Vinh University (TVU) from the students' perspective. Utilizing the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), data was collected from a sample of 133 students studying at the university ($n = 133$). The results indicated that perceived culture was mostly clan, followed by adhocracy, hierarchy and market. This piece of diagnostics can be utilized for setting the direction for further development in terms of which the progress of the university's organizational culture will develop towards accelerating the globalization process of the university.

Keywords: Cultural congruence, organizational culture, OCAI

1. Introduction

The study of Organizational culture (OC) has garnered significant attention in academic literature due to its profound implications for organizational success and performance. According to Cameron & Quinn [1], culture refers to the implicit values, underlying presumptions, expectations, and definitions that characterize organizations and their members. The degree to which the organization's culture aligns with its long-term objectives, style, and inclinations, as well as how well-suited it is to the industry's competitive climate, are key factors in determining its success. An identification of how OC manifests among university students and other stakeholders can give campus administrators the knowledge they need to more effectively push for changes that will ultimately be beneficial to the university.

Fulfilling its mission as the province's gateway to the world, *TVU is engaging in a multitude of partnerships, initiatives, and new programs to maintain relevance in the twenty-first century*. In addition to that, the university has implemented an institutional autonomy model. The increasing number of international activities and changes in the university management can be considered the distinguishing organizational culture of TVU. However, it has not yet been established what the organizational culture really is at TVU.

Being a self-organized system based on knowledge and learning principles, TVU's organizational culture is a special case that facilitates a variety of relationships, including those that are formed internally between

faculty, staff, administrators, and students; externally between employers, alumni, prospective students, and their parents; and also partnerships and competitions with other educational institutions. The complexity and diversity of these relationships make it crucial to explore the concept of the university's culture from the viewpoints of many people involved in the organization. Examining university culture from different lenses may reveal new insights into how TVU's culture affects internal stakeholders and the degree to which it has functioned as a special means of fostering member commitment.

For the purpose of this study, TVU's organizational culture is diagnosed using the OCAI developed by Cameron and Quinn [1]. The OCAI's goal is to evaluate the six essential organizational culture dimensions, listed as dominant characteristics (DC), organizational leadership (OL), management employees (ME), organizational glue (OG), strategic emphases (SE), and criteria success (CS). According to Cameron & Quinn [1], the complexity of OC could be made more amenable to empirical inquiry through conceptualization in the form of a typology that enables the classification of relevant variables into a cohesive but constrained phenomenological set. The four types of organizational cultures, as assessed in the OCAI, were explained as follows:

Clan culture

This culture type is shaped by the dimensions of internal organization focus and flexibility / dynamism. Clan culture is defined by Cameron & Quinn [1] as a warm, welcoming workplace where employees

open up a lot about themselves. It resembles a large family. The organization's leaders are viewed as mentors and, in some cases, even as parents. Tradition or loyalty keep the group together. There is a great level of commitment. The organization places a strong emphasis on cohesiveness and morale and highlights the long-term benefits of human resource development. Success is determined by one's ability to care for others and be sensitive to their needs. The organization values consensus, teamwork, and participation highly.

Adhocracy culture

Adhocracy culture, which can also be referred to as entrepreneurship, is located between the focus of external organization and flexible and dynamic dimensions. It is defined by Cameron & Quinn [1] as a vibrant, innovative, and creative workplace. People take chances and put their necks out there. It is believed that leaders are risk-takers and innovators. The organization's dedication to experimentation and innovation serves as its glue. Being at the forefront is emphasized. Long-term expansion and resource acquisition are the organization's top priorities. Success entails acquiring novel and distinctive goods and services. Being a leader in a product or service is crucial. The group supports personal initiative and autonomy.

Market culture

The market, which can also be called a competitive culture, is shaped by the dimensions of external organization focus and stability. Market culture is defined by Cameron & Quinn [1] as a company focused on results. The completion of the task is the main priority. People have goals and are competitive. The leaders are fierce competitors, producers, and drivers. They have high standards and are stern. An emphasis on winning is what binds the group together. Success and reputation are common worries. In the long run, competitive behavior and the accomplishment of quantifiable objectives are the main priorities. Market share and penetration are the metrics used to define success. Leading the market and offering competitive prices are crucial. The competitiveness within the organization is fierce.

Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy, or system culture, is located between internal organization focus and stability and control dimensions. It is defined by Cameron & Quinn [1] as an extremely regimented and regulated workplace. What people do is governed by procedures. The

leaders take great satisfaction in their ability to plan and coordinate, paying attention to efficiency. The most important thing is to keep the organization operating efficiently. The group is held together by formal rules and policies. Stability and performance with effective, seamless operations are the long-term concerns. Reliability in delivery, ease of scheduling, and affordability are definitions of success. Predictability and stable employment are important to human resource managers.

The OCAI is an instrument that has demonstrated validity and utility in numerous studies across the landscape of higher education [1, 2]. The survey employed in this study reveals the four types of OC mentioned above by Cameron and Quinn [1].

2. Research content

2.1. Research design and methods

The empirical part of this study is based on primary survey data. A descriptive survey design is used to determine the perceptions of students about the university's culture. Using a survey questionnaire is the appropriate instrument for gathering and collecting data for this research study. The OCAI questionnaire was selected because it offered a way to distinguish between external and internal focus criteria, as well as efficiency criteria (flexibility, incremental progress, and the dynamism of the organization) and stability factors (stability, control).

For the purpose of this study, the OCAI questionnaire was slightly modified by the researcher. The major section of the modified OCAI consisted of six items (i.e., DO, OL, ML, OG, SE, CS). Every item contains four alternatives, which represent four types of OC (A = clan, B = adhocracy, C = market, and D = hierarchy). Depending on how much each option resembles the way the university operates, respondents were asked to split 100 points among the four options. In each item, the option that most closely resembled the university was to receive a higher number of points. The results of the survey were obtained by computing the average of the response scores for each alternative. The mean and standard deviation were descriptive statistics used to analyze the collected data. Once scores were determined for all alternatives, they were used to draw a picture of Tra Vinh University culture.

Students that were chosen in this research were the second, third, and fourth-year formal students of Co-op programs from the School of Agriculture and Aquaculture, and had active academic status, taking

into consideration that they were easy to access and had adequate experience in joining the university, thus having a good understanding of the university culture would be analyzed. The sample was comprised of forty-nine (49) second-year students, thirty-six (36) third-year students, and forty-eight (48) fourth-year students. The questionnaire was printed, delivered to students, and collected in hard copies. Responses from the collected survey questionnaire will be the basis for the researcher's analysis, interpretation, and conclusion of the study.

2.2. Results and discussion

Research results have shown that generally, the four culture types - clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy - have been perceived to exist in TVU, with different portions. An analysis of the mean scores shows that respondents tended to rate a clan culture at the highest mean core ($M_{\text{clan}} = 3.28$, $SD = 10.94$). Adhocracy ($M_{\text{adhocracy}} = 2.53$, $SD = 6.05$) comes in second Hierarchy ($M_{\text{hierarchy}} = 2.16$, $SD = 9.50$) and Market ($M_{\text{market}} = 2.03$, $SD = 6.49$) are the other two cultures perceived to exist at Tra Vinh University. The result is consistent with the finding of Cameron and Quinn [1] that an organization may have more than one form of organizational culture at the same time.

This study depicts that clan culture is the most dominant culture type at Tra Vinh University with the highest mean score (3.28). As assessed in the OCAI, the clan culture emphasizes teamwork, employee involvement initiatives, corporate dedication to staff, the long-term advantages of personal growth, as well as strong morals and collaboration. In a clan culture, employee commitment, empowerment, and involvement dominated the operational process. Dedicated and satisfied employees generate the organization's effectiveness. This suggests that Tra Vinh University is in a good position to improve its management and cultural practices since it can be profitable to adopt a clan culture. One reasonable explanation for clan culture being dominated at TVU can be derived from the National's policy of promoting a "friendly school and positive students" model. The behavior of the organization and its leaders is largely influenced by the national characteristics or dimensions of the culture to which it belongs.

Although not being rated the highest, adhocracy is identified as the second dominant culture in TVU. The result does not support the finding of Cameron & Quinn [1], which stated that adhocracy is generally rated the lowest. However, the strong

emphasis on teamwork, innovation and change (clan and adhocracy) of the university is recognized best match the university's operational orientation, which states that TVU launches its vision as an advanced university with an orientation of application, excellent and unique examples, and international integration.

TVU's cultural profile indicated a high degree of emphasis in the clan quadrant, followed by adhocracy, and low scores in the hierarchy and market quadrants. The clan culture shapes the various dimensions of organizational culture (DC, OL, ME, OC, SE, and CS) suggested that there exists a cultural congruence at the university. The result supports the finding of Cameron and Quinn [1] that most institutions under researches in the last decades have congruent cultures. Having all aspects of the university clear and united around the same values and operating under the same assumptions can help to remove many of the complexities, disconnects, and obstacles that the university can get in the way of effective performance [3].

3. Conclusion

The organizational culture at TVU exhibits a special diversity, in which all four organizational cultures exist at the same time. Clan is the most dominant culture at the time of rating. The presence of cultural congruence indicates a clear focus on clan culture presented at TVU. The university's organizational culture's identification is clear to respondents.

The results from this study might raise some issues to consider for university leaders. The strong clan culture is currently quite pleasant to experience within the university. Yet Cameron & Quinn [1] argued that a combination of a strong clan and a weak market culture in a highly competitive industry may result in a tough survival predicament because of a mismatch between culture and environment. TVU is facing increasing competition from similar public universities and private institutions, both national and international. Therefore, the practice of such a strong culture type should be especially taken into consideration.

References

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