



The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employees' Performance of Plan International (INGO) in Delivering Services in South Sudan

LEEK EDWARD CHUOL

Nexus International University, Kampala, Uganda

Abstract. For several years, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have aimed to create corporate cultures that align with their core values and beliefs to guide their operations. This study focused on the impact of organizational culture on employee performance at Plan International South Sudan, an international NGO. The study utilized Hofstede's (1980) 6-D model to identify the effects of organizational culture on employee performance, as few studies have used a simplified cultural model to assess the impact of organizational culture on performance in a multinational NGO with diverse cultures in a developing African economy. The study examined the influence of organizational structure, risk-taking, teamwork, competitiveness, strategic goal orientation, and spending culture on employee performance, using an online structured Likert scale questionnaire to survey 153 mid-level to senior staff. Employing a quantitative approach, the study used multiple regression analysis to test six hypotheses drawn from the literature review. The analysis indicated that organizational structure, risk-taking, competitiveness, and spending culture did not significantly affect employee performance. However, teamwork and strategic goal orientation had a significant impact on employee performance. The study also found that teamwork can thrive among employees in a high-power distance multinational organization setting, contrary to the Hofstede (1980) Power Distance Index dimension's principles. Additionally, strategic goal orientation was linked to employees' intrinsic need for job security, which is crucial to their performance. The study provided practical recommendations, outlining the steps organizations can take to improve these aspects of their culture and the costs and implications of implementing them.

Keywords: Influence, organisation, Culture, Employee Performance, South Sudan

1. Background to the Study

This project aims to fill the gap in understanding organizational workplace culture performance, specifically in South Sudan. Organizational development involves several factors contributing to sustainable effectiveness, such as establishing norms, values, and objectives and improving productivity to cultivate employee commitment. The success of an organisation largely depends on its culture. Understanding cultural attributes aids in identifying and establishing cognitive differences among members. Effective culture management involves creating a normative glue that holds overall management effectiveness, thus improving business decisions. This project presents a unique opportunity to shed light on a crucial but understudied aspect of workplace cultural performance in South Sudan, which can contribute to a safer and more secure work environment for employees.

This project, the first of its kind, aims to fill a significant gap in the current understanding of organizational workplace culture performance. While previous research has predominantly focused on high-risk jobs such as policing, there is a dearth of knowledge about the opinions of employees in performance organisations regarding cultural issues in South Sudan. Workplace cultures, in general, have not been given attention, and cultural performance environments have been largely overlooked. Plan International focuses on workplace Culture in the humanitarian sector and social assistance jobs, but all industries are at risk. This project, therefore, presents a unique and intriguing opportunity to shed light on a

crucial but understudied aspect of workplace cultural performance in South Sudan.

Organizational development involves several factors that contribute to sustainable effectiveness. Improving productivity cultivates employee commitment, and establishing norms, values, and objectives can enhance an organization's culture. A strong learning environment is crucial for a successful organizational system. By establishing a robust cultural foundation, employee performance can improve significantly. Employee performance is integral to an organization's development, and their loyalty is contingent on their knowledge and awareness of the culture. Management identification of values and norms can help improve employee performance, and an emphasis on quality can contribute to the overall development of both the organization and its employees. Administrative Science Quarterly first identified the importance of organizational culture in 1979 (Pettigrew, 1979).

Not long ago, it was unimaginable that staff could be influenced by culture in the workplace. Similarly, people perceive cultures and organizational culture performance as safe havens. However, the outcomes of this project could provide a distinctive viewpoint on workers' cultural perceptions in such cultural performance environments. This understanding is pivotal for organizational leaders as it directly influences employees' professional and personal needs and can steer the development of appropriate cultural measures.

According to Jain et al. (2012), stress, violence, and bullying are significant areas of concern in the workplace. Work stress can lead to a hostile work environment and impact product and service quality and the organization's image. Exposure to stress at work can also negatively affect mental and physical health and overall productivity and effectiveness.

The data collected through this project could bring awareness to worker concerns in cultural performance environments and offer organisations, including yours, a unique opportunity to create or improve prevention plans and training regarding workplace cultural performance. By doing so, cultural performance environments can avoid becoming higher risk, as has happened previously with humanitarianism. Additionally, the project results may provide your organization with valuable information to address the cultural performance needs of employees in low-risk environments, potentially improving employee satisfaction and productivity. This understanding may aid in developing or enhancing workplace cultural prevention and preparedness training, which can

contribute to a safer and more secure work environment for your employees.

2. Organizational Culture

Culture plays a critical role in differentiating one organization from another. It encompasses a set of beliefs, values, norms, and attitudes that guide behaviour and decision-making. The success of an organization largely depends on its culture. Understanding cultural attributes aids in identifying and establishing cognitive differences among members. Effective culture management involves creating a normative glue that holds overall management effectiveness, thus improving business decisions. An organization's culture is shaped by attitudes, norms, and beliefs, which leads to strong communication between employees. The similarity of values and beliefs in an organization's culture leads to a perfect association between them. Consequently, it's crucial to maintain a stable structure and integrate a superior standard of organisational culture for effective culture management. Managing cultural differences at different levels is essential to improve performance and sustainability. The norms of employees impact sustainable performance and the management of organisational culture, leading to the attainment of profitability. Therefore, creating an effective organizational culture is critical for success in today's business world.

2.1 Counter Culture

Teams. Countercultures arise when certain values and beliefs within an organization clash with the dominant culture. Such opposing cultures can hinder rather than help the organization's performance. On the other hand, a strong and cohesive organizational culture can greatly contribute to the success of management teams and the overall performance of the organization. (Kerr, J., & Slocum, J. W., Jr. 2005).

2.2 Sub Culture

According to Schein's definition in 1995, subcultures can be identified as segments within an organization that have distinct norms, values, and beliefs based on factors such as geographical location, job requirements, and departmental goals. Employee commitment to the organization is influenced by their perception of the culture, as noted by Lok, Westwood, and Crawford in 2005. Additionally, social interactions in the workplace can be important for certain subgroups.

2.3 Strong Culture

It is crucial for an employee's cultural values and beliefs to align with those of their organization. In fact, when an employee embraces a significant portion of an organization's culture, it is a strong indicator of the strength of its values and beliefs (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Managers have successfully worked to reduce any gaps in employee relationships thus far. It is important that employees consider the rules of the organization to be of utmost importance. Top managers' policies, procedures, and objectives should influence employee behavior to gain a competitive advantage.

2.4 Weak Culture

The loosely connected cultures within an organization can foster innovation by shaping the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs of individuals. This asset is key to managing and meeting the growing demands of cultural management. When based on shared values and beliefs, these loosely connected cultures can form ideal relationships, as suggested by Deal and Kennedy in 1982. The challenge lies in creatively managing the differences between personal objectives and organizational goals to establish a seamless connection between them.

3. Purpose Statement

This qualitative exploratory case study investigates how employees perceive the likelihood of cultural performance in the workplace in generally considered safe organisations. The study will consist of an online survey distributed to all 400 Plan International employees in South Sudan. The survey will be followed by personal phone interviews with interested participants, where we will delve deeper into their perspectives and concerns. The Plan International is in various parts of the ten states in the country, representing diverse demographics. The study's results may apply to other low-risk cultural performance organisations throughout South Sudan. The data collected may help Plan International recognize, understand, and address their employees' cultural performance concerns in the workplace. This understanding may aid in developing or improving cultural performance in the workplace to reduce violence prevention and preparedness training. Additionally, the findings may raise awareness of the possibility of workplace cultural performance sensitivity in organisations where it is not typically considered, leading to better prevention and incident readiness through creating or improving policies, procedures, and training.

4. Importance of the Project

It is specific to organisational culture performance within the humanitarian sector in South Sudan. Therefore, it is crucial to gather more recent and comprehensive data on the experiences and perspectives of workers in assumed low-risk environments to understand workplace culture issues better. This will aid in developing effective preventive measures, policies, and support systems for employees. This initiative can potentially increase cultural performance awareness and its importance in the workplace and set clear standards of cultural performance.

5. Proposed Project Approach

This project will focus on workers' cultural performance concerns and perceptions in seemingly low-risk environments. The project will be conducted in three parts. Part one will include writing an Introduction to explain the project, a Literature Review to synthesise relevant research, and a Project Plan/Methodology outlining how the project will be conducted.

Part two will focus on data collection, where personal responses from around 400 Workers throughout South Sudan will be solicited through an anonymous online survey. As this project uses a qualitative method, a field test will be conducted for face validation before distributing the survey to participants. The field test will be conducted with workers not connected to the project. Moreover, the plan international Executive Director will also review the survey questions for face validation before the survey is conducted. Participants who would like to share information beyond the survey will be allowed to speak with the researcher in a personal follow-up phone interview. This will be a semi-structured interview, allowing the researcher to ask additional questions to gain clarification or further information from participants' answers. Data analysis will also be conducted during this part of the project.

Part three of the project will be the final write-up of the results and researcher recommendations based on the collected data, overall project research, and the researcher's academic program. The results and recommendations developed through the project can be used by organisations to improve or create policies, procedures, and training regarding workplace cultural performance, and to address the cultural effect needs associated with employees' performance concerns. Scholars and practitioners can also use the results as foundational data regarding workers in seemingly cultural performance environments.

6. Over-arching Study Question(s)/Statement of Project Intent

The following four over-arching questions will be addressed through this project.

7. Findings and Conclusion

As data analysed and explored by SPSS shows the correlation between cultural environment and job performance satisfaction, any organisation has positive and significant relationships. Also, the organisation's productivity depends on the work environment; if the organization's environment is satisfactory and comfortable, the organization's productivity increases. If is not, the organization's management in the organization should pay more attention to the work environment to make it satisfactory and comfortable for the employees.

Teamwork is highly valued and encouraged at Plan International, leading to positive employee performance outcomes. Interestingly, this culture persists even in a bureaucratic structure.

While Plan International is a highly competitive organization, this doesn't necessarily translate to improved employee performance. To see better results, the competition culture among employees needs to shift.

Strategic goal orientation plays a significant role in employee performance at Plan International. When employees are confident in the organization's long-term goals, they feel more secure and motivated, resulting in better job quality.

Plan International's spending priorities heavily focus on project and humanitarian services delivery rather than human resources. As a result, the organization's spending culture has little impact on employee performance.

8. Recommendations

- Management should try to build a work environment that attracts, retains, and motivates its employees, helping them work comfortably and increasing the organisation's productivity.
- Management holds periodic meetings for employees to air grievances as a motivation factor and should counsel them on their relationships with subordinates.

- In the future, more significant random sampling research should be conducted.
- It is recommended that it be a policy in the organisation, and Management should consider it an important factor.

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