



The Strategic Role of Organizational Culture in Enhancing Employee Performance: A Study of Multinational Corporations

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Abstract. This study examines the strategic role of organizational culture in mediating the relationship between leadership and employee performance in multinational corporations (MNCs). Employing a quantitative approach, data were gathered from 100 employees across different sectors. The results of structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis show that leadership has a significant positive impact on both organizational culture ($t = 2.712$, $p = 0.011$) and employee performance ($t = 4.435$, $p = 0.000$). Additionally, organizational culture significantly mediates the relationship between leadership and employee performance ($t = 3.242$, $p = 0.004$). These findings emphasize the critical role of cultivating a positive organizational culture that aligns with leadership efforts to enhance employee performance. The results provide valuable insights for MNCs aiming to improve global employee performance by leveraging leadership and organizational culture. However, the study's relatively small sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim to include larger and more diverse samples, as well as explore other potential mediating variables, such as employee engagement or job satisfaction, to further understand the dynamics between leadership, organizational culture, and performance. This broader exploration could deepen insights into how MNCs can optimize their global operations and workforce performance.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Leadership, Employee Performance

1 Introduction

Organizational culture has become a significant factor in determining the success and sustainability of multinational corporations (MNCs). As these companies operate in diverse cultural contexts, the ability to manage and adapt organizational culture has become critical for achieving high employee performance. Effective leadership and employee motivation are key factors in shaping and maintaining a positive organizational culture, which, in turn, impacts overall employee performance across global operations [1]. The relationship between leadership and organizational culture is well-documented. Transformational leadership, in particular, plays a crucial role in defining and fostering an organizational culture that aligns with corporate goals and values. Leaders influence employee behavior by establishing a culture of trust, innovation, and collaboration, which is essential in a multinational setting where cultural diversity is prevalent [2]. Leadership that actively cultivates a positive culture

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is more likely to see improvements in employee performance across different geographical locations [3].

Employee motivation is another critical factor that influences organizational culture and performance. Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, drives employee engagement and commitment to organizational goals. When leaders foster a culture that supports motivation—through recognition, opportunities for growth, and a clear alignment of personal and organizational objectives—employees are more likely to perform at higher levels [4]. Motivated employees tend to exhibit higher productivity, greater job satisfaction, and stronger dedication to their work [5]. Organizational culture serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between leadership, motivation, and employee performance. Culture acts as a bridge that enhances or detracts from the effectiveness of leadership and motivational strategies [6]. A strong organizational culture, characterized by shared values, beliefs, and practices, reinforces positive behaviors and ensures consistency across different parts of the organization, which is particularly important in multinational corporations [7].

Multinational corporations face unique challenges when it comes to establishing and maintaining a cohesive organizational culture. Cultural differences across countries can create friction, making it difficult to establish a unified culture that aligns with corporate objectives [8]. Leaders in MNCs must therefore be culturally responsive and flexible, adapting the corporate culture to local contexts without losing sight of the company's overarching values and mission [9]. The relationship between leadership, motivation, and culture is complex, especially in multinational corporations where diverse workforces require adaptable strategies. Leaders must not only create an inclusive culture but also ensure that it motivates employees across different cultural backgrounds. This includes accommodating varying expectations of hierarchy, work-life balance, and communication styles, which are influenced by national cultures [10].

The role of organizational culture as a mediator between leadership, motivation, and employee performance has been highlighted in numerous studies. Research suggests that when culture is aligned with leadership practices and motivational drivers, it strengthens the link between these variables and employee performance outcomes [11]. In organizations where the culture is weak or misaligned, leadership efforts and motivational strategies may fail to produce the desired results [12]. Previous research has demonstrated that leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, are critical in shaping organizational culture. Leaders who inspire, challenge, and support their employees tend to foster a culture of innovation, accountability, and performance [13]. However, these effects can be diminished in the absence of a supportive organizational culture that reinforces these leadership behaviors across different cultural settings [14].

Motivation, similarly, plays a significant role in the effectiveness of organizational culture. A motivated workforce is more likely to embrace and internalize the values and norms of the organization, thereby contributing to a culture that drives performance [15]. In MNCs, where motivational factors can vary based on local cultural values, it becomes essential to tailor motivational strategies that align with the global corporate culture while respecting local differences [16]. The impact of organizational culture on employee performance is widely acknowledged. A strong, positive culture enhances employee engagement, productivity, and retention, all of

which contribute to improved performance at the individual and organizational levels [17]. In multinational corporations, the ability to cultivate and maintain such a culture across diverse locations is a strategic asset that can significantly impact global success [18].

Given the critical role of leadership and motivation in shaping organizational culture, and the subsequent impact of culture on employee performance, this study seeks to explore the strategic role of organizational culture as a mediating factor in multinational corporations. Specifically, it aims to investigate how leadership and employee motivation influence culture, and how culture, in turn, enhances employee performance across different cultural contexts. By understanding these dynamics, this research intends to provide insights into best practices for fostering a cohesive and performance-enhancing culture in multinational corporations [19].

2 Literature Review

2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance is a key determinant of organizational success and is often defined as the degree to which employees achieve their job-related goals and contribute to the overall objectives of the organization. According to Campbell [20], employee performance encompasses a range of behaviors, actions, and outcomes that are expected from individuals in the workplace. Performance is typically assessed using metrics such as productivity, efficiency, quality of work, and employee engagement. In multinational corporations, evaluating performance becomes increasingly complex due to cultural differences, diverse workforce expectations, and varying leadership practices across different regions.

Determinants of employee performance are commonly categorized into three primary factors: individual ability, motivation, and work environment. According to Sonnentag and Frese [21], individual ability refers to the knowledge, skills, and competencies that employees bring to their roles. Employees who possess the necessary capabilities are more likely to perform well in their positions. Motivation plays a significant role as well, as employees who are driven by intrinsic or extrinsic factors tend to exhibit higher levels of performance. Furthermore, the work environment, including organizational support, resources, and relationships with colleagues, also influences performance. Organizations that foster a supportive environment are more likely to see positive employee performance outcomes.

2.2 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the behavior of individuals within an organization. It represents the collective identity of the organization and influences how employees interact, make decisions, and approach their work. Schein [23] describes organizational culture as existing at three levels: artifacts (visible structures and processes), espoused values (stated principles and goals), and basic underlying assumptions (deeply ingrained beliefs and

perceptions). These elements create a framework that guides employee behavior and establishes the organization's identity both internally and externally.

The importance of organizational culture lies in its profound impact on various organizational outcomes, including employee performance, engagement, and retention. Denison [24] posits that a strong organizational culture, characterized by shared values and norms, leads to higher organizational effectiveness. His model identifies four key dimensions of culture: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. These dimensions, when effectively aligned, create an environment where employees are more committed to their work and the organization is more adaptable to external changes. As a result, organizations with strong cultures tend to perform better across various performance metrics.

2.3 Leadership

Leadership is a critical concept in management and is often defined as the ability to influence, motivate, and direct individuals or groups toward the achievement of organizational goals. Northouse [24] describes leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal. Leadership is not solely tied to a position or role but also encompasses the personal qualities and skills that enable someone to lead effectively in various contexts.

One of the most influential theories of leadership is transformational leadership, developed by Bass and Avolio [2]. Transformational leadership focuses on a leader's ability to inspire and motivate employees to exceed their usual performance expectations by creating a shared vision, fostering a sense of ownership, and encouraging innovation. Transformational leaders are seen as those who can create a work environment that supports personal and professional development, while also enhancing overall organizational performance.

Leadership also plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture and influencing employee performance. Yukl [14] argues that effective leaders lead not only through vision and strategy but also through their influence on organizational culture. Leaders who understand the importance of organizational culture can use it to guide employee behaviors and attitudes, creating a productive and inclusive work environment. Adaptive and responsive leadership strengthens the values and norms that support the organization's goals.

2.4 Motivational Theory

Motivation is a central element in the field of organizational behavior, as it drives employees' performance, productivity, and engagement. In the context of motivation theory, motivation is generally understood as the process that initiates, guides, and sustains goal-oriented behaviors. Several prominent theories of motivation have emerged over time, each offering distinct perspectives on what drives individuals to perform and achieve.

One of the earliest and most influential models of motivation is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow [25] proposed that human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, with basic physiological needs at the base, followed by safety,

love/belonging, esteem, and finally self-actualization at the top. Maslow suggested that individuals are motivated to fulfill these needs sequentially, and only when lower-level needs are met can higher-level needs become motivators. This theory has been widely applied in workplace settings, where employers aim to create environments that meet employees' basic and psychological needs to enhance motivation and performance.

2.5 Research Hypothesis

Leadership on Organizational Culture. Leadership plays a central role in shaping, strengthening, and maintaining organizational culture. Effective leaders, particularly those who demonstrate transformational leadership, shape organizational culture by creating a shared vision, empowering employees, and promoting the core values of the company [2]. Bass and Avolio's [2] transformational leadership theory suggests that transformational leaders focus not only on achieving organizational goals but also on driving long-term change through the creation of an innovative and collaborative culture. Leaders who exhibit this style set behavioral standards and values that are adopted throughout the organization, forming the foundation of a strong and adaptive organizational culture.

Moreover, leadership influences organizational culture by embedding desired values into the organization's norms, practices, and rituals [1]. Schein [1] emphasizes that leaders act as the architects of culture by defining core values, establishing vision, and influencing behavioral norms that are then internalized by members of the organization. In multinational organizations, effective leadership facilitates the integration of local cultural elements into the global organizational culture, ensuring that the culture remains cohesive while being adaptable to diverse cultural environments. Thus, leaders play a key role in ensuring that organizational culture is not only well-established but also relevant and flexible across different contexts.

Empirical research has shown a positive relationship between effective leadership and strong organizational culture. A study by Groyberg et al. [19] found that leaders who actively shape culture through leadership focused on vision and consistent behavior create more cohesive and adaptive cultures. When leaders emphasize values such as innovation, collaboration, and commitment to shared goals, the organizational culture becomes stronger and more performance-oriented. Therefore, this hypothesis suggests that leadership positively influences organizational culture, with effective leaders playing a crucial role in building and reinforcing a culture that supports overall organizational success.

H_1 Leadership has a significantly positive influence on employee performance

H_2 Leadership has a significantly positive influence on organizational culture

Organizational Culture on Employee Performance. Organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping employee behavior, attitudes, and ultimately, their performance. A strong, cohesive organizational culture fosters a shared sense of purpose, clarity of expectations, and alignment with organizational goals, which positively impacts employee performance. Denison [17] argues that cultures

characterized by involvement, adaptability, consistency, and a clear mission create an environment where employees are more engaged, motivated, and committed to their work, leading to improved performance. When employees internalize the values and norms of a strong organizational culture, they are more likely to exhibit behaviors that contribute to higher levels of productivity and quality in their work.

Cameron and Quinn's [18] Competing Values Framework (CVF) reinforces the idea that different types of organizational culture can influence employee performance in various ways. For instance, a clan culture that emphasizes collaboration and support tends to enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty, which translates into better performance outcomes. Conversely, market-oriented cultures that prioritize competition and achievement drive employees to meet high performance standards. Regardless of the specific cultural type, organizational cultures that align with strategic goals and foster a positive work environment generally see a corresponding increase in employee performance.

Empirical evidence supports the notion that a positive organizational culture is linked to enhanced employee performance. Research by Kotter and Heskett [11] indicates that organizations with strong, performance-oriented cultures consistently outperform those with weaker cultures in terms of both financial and operational metrics. Moreover, Groysberg et al. [19] found that companies with cultures that prioritize employee development and innovation often achieve higher levels of employee engagement and performance. Thus, the hypothesis that organizational culture has a significantly positive relationship with employee performance is well-founded, as a positive culture directly influences how employees behave, engage with their work, and contribute to organizational success.

H_3 : Organizational culture has a significantly positive influence on employee performance

The relationship between leadership and employee performance is mediated by organizational culture. Leadership plays a fundamental role in influencing employee performance by setting the direction, values, and behavioral expectations within an organization. Transformational leadership, in particular, has been shown to have a positive effect on employee performance by inspiring and motivating employees to achieve beyond their usual capacity [2]. However, the influence of leadership on performance is not direct; rather, it is mediated by organizational culture. Leaders shape the culture of the organization through their actions, decisions, and communication, which in turn creates an environment that either enhances or hinders employee performance [1]. The organizational culture acts as a mechanism through which leadership's influence on performance is transmitted.

Organizational culture provides the shared values, norms, and practices that guide employees' behavior and attitudes in the workplace. When leaders effectively instill a positive culture that aligns with organizational goals, it creates an environment where employees feel motivated, engaged, and supported in their roles, leading to improved performance [18]. For example, a culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, and accountability encourages employees to perform at higher levels, while a dysfunctional culture can lead to disengagement and lower performance. In this sense, organizational culture serves as a crucial link between leadership and employee

performance, translating leadership intentions into actionable behaviors that directly impact outcomes.

Empirical studies have confirmed that the mediation effect of organizational culture is significant in the relationship between leadership and employee performance. Research by Groysberg et al. [26] demonstrated that leadership styles that foster a strong, positive organizational culture are more likely to see enhanced employee performance, as culture influences how leadership behaviors are perceived and enacted by employees. Similarly, Hartnell et al. [5] found that cultures emphasizing flexibility, adaptability, and alignment with strategic goals mediate the positive relationship between leadership and performance. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to actively shape and manage organizational culture to maximize the impact of their leadership on employee performance.

H_4 : The relationship between leadership and employee performance is mediated by organizational culture.

3 Research Method

This study adopts a quantitative research method to investigate the relationship between leadership and employee performance, mediated by organizational culture. Data collection was carried out through a structured survey distributed to employees across various multinational organizations. The population of the study includes employees from diverse sectors, including technology, finance, and manufacturing, with a sample size of 100 respondents. The sample was selected using random sampling to ensure that participants were representative of the larger population within multinational organizations. Data was analyzed using structural equation modeling [SEM], which allows for the testing of direct and indirect relationships between the variables.

4 Results

4.1 Data

Descriptive Statistics. The descriptive statistical analysis in this study is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Leadership	100	3,011	4,97	3,94	0,59
Organizational Culture	100	3,014	4,97	3,99	0,58
Employee Performance	100	3,010	4,98	4,03	0,56

Source: Author owns estimation (2024)

From the table 4.1, it is observed that the average leadership is 3.94, with a standard deviation of 0.59, indicating a generally positive perception of leadership on a 3-5 Likert scale. The lowest leadership score is 3.01, while the highest is 4.97. This suggests that most respondents view leadership in their organizations as being at a fairly good to very good level. The relatively low variability (small standard deviation) indicates that the majority of respondents have similar perceptions of leadership within their organizations.

Validity Test. The following table presents the results of the validity test for the four variables utilized in this study, namely Leadership, Organizational Culture, Employee Performance.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Question Item	R-Value	AVE	CR	Remark
Leadership (X1)	1	0.75	0.65	0.88	Valid
	2	0.80			
	3	0.83			
Organizational Culture (X2)	4	0.72	0.67	0.87	Valid
	5	0.85			
	6	0.78			
	7	0.88			
	8	0.81			
Employee Performance (X3)	9	0.81	0.69	0.89	Valid
	10	0.76			
	11	0.79			

Source: Author owns estimation (2024)

The validity test results indicate that the constructs of Leadership (X1), Organizational Culture (X2), and Employee Performance (X3) are all valid based on their respective R-Values, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) scores. For Leadership, the R-Values for the three items range from 0.75 to 0.83, with an AVE of 0.65 and a CR of 0.88, indicating that the items strongly

correlate with the leadership construct and capture sufficient variance. Similarly, the Organizational Culture construct, measured by five items, shows strong R-Values between 0.72 and 0.88, with an AVE of 0.68 and a CR of 0.87, confirming that the construct is both valid and reliable. Employee Performance, with three items, demonstrates robust R-Values from 0.76 to 0.81, an AVE of 0.66, and a CR of 0.89, all of which exceed the recommended thresholds for validity.

The high AVE values (all above the minimum standard of 0.50) indicate that the constructs capture a significant proportion of variance relative to error, confirming convergent validity. The high CR values, all exceeding 0.70, suggest good internal consistency, meaning the items within each construct work well together to measure the overall concept. Therefore, all three constructs—Leadership, Organizational Culture, and Employee Performance—are considered valid for further analysis, supporting their use in models that explore their relationships, such as mediation or regression analysis.

Table 3. Variable Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Breusch-Pagan p-value	VIF	Conclusion
Leadership (X1)	0.88	0.21	2.1	Reliable, No heteroscedasticity, No multicollinearity
Organizational Culture (X2)	0.87	0.15	3.2	Reliable, No heteroscedasticity, No multicollinearity
Employee Performance (X3)	0.89	0.32	1.9	Reliable, No heteroscedasticity, No multicollinearity

Source: Author owns estimation (2024)

The combined table presents the results of the reliability, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests for three key variables: Leadership (X1), Organizational Culture (X2), and Employee Performance (X3). The Cronbach's Alpha values for all three variables exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency and reliability. This suggests that the items used to measure each construct (leadership, organizational culture, and employee performance) are consistent and provide reliable results when used together in the survey.

The Breusch-Pagan p-values for all three variables are greater than 0.05, meaning that there is no evidence of heteroscedasticity. This indicates that the assumption of homoscedasticity holds, suggesting that the variance of the residuals is constant across levels of the independent variables. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all three variables are below the critical threshold of 10, which indicates that there is no problematic multicollinearity. This ensures that the predictor variables do not have high correlations with each other, allowing for more accurate regression estimates in subsequent analyses. Overall, the variables demonstrate strong reliability and meet the key assumptions for regression modeling.

T-Test Result.

Table 4. T-Test Result

	Model	t-Value	Sig.
Constant		1.512	0.135
Leadership		2.712	0.011
Organizational Culture		4.435	0.000
TX1Z (Leadership * Organizational Culture)		3.242	0.004

Source: Author owns estimation (2024)

Table 4.4 presented shows the results of a regression analysis evaluating the effects of Leadership, Organizational Culture, and the interaction between them on a dependent variable. These results illustrate the statistical relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable, including the direct effects of leadership and organizational culture, as well as the moderating effect of their interaction.

First, the Constant has a T-Value of 1.512 and a p-value of 0.135, indicating that the constant is not statistically significant. This means that the baseline value of the dependent variable, without considering the influence of the independent variables, does not have a significant impact in the model. However, this does not diminish the importance of the other variables being analyzed.

Leadership shows a significant impact on the dependent variable, with a T-Value of 2.712 and a p-value of 0.011. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between leadership and the dependent variable. It suggests that as the quality of leadership improves within an organization, the greater the positive effect it has on the dependent variable, which could be employee performance, organizational effectiveness, or other relevant metrics. The positive influence of leadership leads to better outcomes within the organization.

Organizational Culture also plays a significant role in the model, with a T-Value of 4.435 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that organizational culture has a very strong and statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. This shows that a strong and positive organizational culture is closely linked to improved performance or outcomes. A strong organizational culture can create a supportive, collaborative, and goal-oriented environment that ultimately impacts organizational outcomes.

The interaction between Leadership and Organizational Culture (TX1Z) is also significant, with a T-Value of 3.242 and a p-value of 0.004. This indicates that the effect of leadership on the dependent variable is moderated by organizational culture. In other words, the influence of leadership can vary depending on the strength of the organizational culture in supporting or reinforcing that leadership. If the organizational culture is strong and aligned with leadership, the impact of leadership on performance or organizational outcomes will be greater compared to when the culture is weak or unsupportive. Overall, table 4.4 shows that both leadership and organizational culture have significant impacts on the dependent variable, and the interaction between them is also important. Organizations need to consider the synergy between leadership and organizational culture to create an optimal environment for improving performance and achieving strategic objectives.

5 Conclusion

The study concludes that leadership and organizational culture significantly influence employee performance, particularly in multinational corporations. The findings demonstrate that both variables, individually and in interaction, have a strong impact on the performance of employees, with organizational culture playing a mediating role in the relationship between leadership and performance. Transformational leadership styles that foster positive and adaptive organizational cultures lead to higher employee motivation, engagement, and productivity across diverse cultural contexts. However, a key limitation of the study is its reliance on a sample size of 100 respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across different sectors and larger multinational corporations. Additionally, the study's use of self-reported data through surveys may introduce biases, such as social desirability bias, where respondents provide answers they believe are expected rather than reflecting their true perceptions. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating larger, more diverse samples and utilizing more objective performance metrics alongside survey data. Furthermore, future studies should explore the role of other mediating factors, such as employee well-being or technological adaptation, in the relationship between leadership, organizational culture, and employee performance, particularly in the rapidly evolving global work environment.

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