

# The Impact of Organisational Culture on Performance: A Case Study of the Ministry of Public Services in Swaziland

Stewart Kaupa, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Atiku Sulaiman, PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Management Sciences, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek-Namibia

<sup>2</sup>Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business, Namibia University of Science and Technology, Windhoek-Namibia

**Abstract:** *This study investigates the impact of organizational culture on performance using the Ministry of Public Services in Swaziland as a case study. The primary objective of the study was to evaluate the existing organizational culture within this Ministry and its impact on the performance of the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS). A mixed research method approach that allows the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted with the aim of enhancing the robustness of the research findings. The study revealed that currently the Ministry of Public Service is characterized by a hierarchical leadership style which was rigid in terms of innovation and provision of customised services for its customers, particularly within government ministries. Further to that, the study also reveals that there is the absence of a roadmap that will collectively attain the ministry's objectives. The study recommends that a match of the organisational culture with business strategy should be designed and implemented with the intent of delivering superior performance within the Ministry of Public Service. The study also recommends that leadership within Ministry of Public Service develops a strategic plan to articulate the business objectives and the indicators that will effectively reflect the organizational goals. The main limitation of this study was the reluctance to respond to the questions by some key respondents especially where the questions bordered on their responsibility and accountability.*

**Keywords:** Organisational culture, Ministry of Public Service, Organisational Performance, Corporate Strategy

## 1. Introduction

Organisational culture is necessary in shaping employees' attitude to work and improving work behaviour in organisations. The key to organisational performance is a strong culture that must exist within the organization (Kandula, 2006). Accordingly, the differences in organizational cultures can result in the same strategy producing different results for two separate organisations. Organisational culture is referred to as "the underlying values, beliefs and principles that serve as a foundation for an organization's management system, as well as the set of management practices and behaviours that both exemplify and reinforce those basic principles" (Denison, 2011).

Kotter and Heskett (2010) concur with the claim that organisational culture is paramount to high and sustained organisational performance. In their study of 207 organisations over a period of 11 years, the aforementioned scholars observed that organisations with a resilient and adaptive culture recorded financial and economic performance of over 600% in revenue, net income and stock prices respectively. Therefore, organisational culture is increasingly being identified as a key factor in organisational performance and it is against this backdrop that most organisations are rethinking on what to do and how strategic goals and objectives can be optimally attained (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). An advocate of organisational effectiveness advances that transformation and improvement of organisational culture is largely dependent on the development and implementation of a culture measurement tool (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Felipe, Roldán, & Leal-Rodríguez, 2017).

A strong culture can be characterised by a coherent set of beliefs, values, assumptions and practices embraced by most members of the organization (Kotter & Heskett, 2010). A weak culture can be described as one with core values that are not explicit and embraced by the public servants. In an effort to address inefficiencies emanating from weak organisational culture, governments in developing countries or first world states introduced the new reform agenda referred to as New Public Management (Beck & Bozeman, 2007). The global view of the New Public Management (NPM) reform agenda suggests that governments can benefit from working within the organisational culture to reap similar outcomes like those organisations in the private sector. The Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) can benefit from assessing the impact of the ministry's culture towards its performance with the intention of improving the perceived current low performance ratings (Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office, 2013). In this context, organisational performance refers to achieving the goals that the organisation has set by using non-financial indicators such as timeliness (efficiency), quality of output and productivity level of the Ministry. A consideration as highlighted by Schein (2010) is that the growing interest in understanding organisational culture as a contributing factor to organizational performance has led to the conclusion that culture can be thought of as an organizations' value system or DNA, which can be a powerful template that shapes what happens in the workplace.

Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) is one of three central agencies in Swaziland Government and is mandated to create an enabling environment for all the Government Ministries to deliver quality public services in the most efficient and effective manner. The mandate is to be

achieved through the following objectives: To attain effective general public service management, to ensure performance improvement and to attain effective development and utilisation of human resources. The 'Speech from the throne 2013', His Majesty King Mswati III directed government to start operating like a business, to be results oriented in its operations similar to the private sector (Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office, 2013). This directive led to the formulation of the National Strategic Plan themed 'Programme of Action 2013-2018', where strategic performance targets for all Government Ministries were set to be implemented for the period of 5 years (Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office, 2013). The five-year performance target for MoPS is 'a productivity improvement programme embracing a healthy and effective public service and improved service delivery implemented and sustained by 2018' (Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office, 2013).

It is against this background that this study aimed at exploring the impact of organizational culture towards performance in the MoPS, with focus on determining the significance of the role of culture efficacy in service delivery. It is anticipated that insight and findings from this study will inform leadership and management practices within the Ministry of Public Service and by extension all government Ministries in Swaziland. Furthermore, the findings from this study will contribute towards the implementation process of the Performance Management System (PMS) across other ministries.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Organisational culture

There has been an increase in interest from scholars to decode organizational culture and the impact it has on organizational performance (Denison 2011; Kotter & Heskett, 2011; Schein 2010). This concept has been examined to attribute to optimal performance of business and government parastatals in developed countries like Japan and United States of America (Kotter & Heskett, 2011). Notably, there is a dearth of literature in the context of developing countries, in particular those with similarities to Southern Africa or Swaziland. Whilst there may exist studies on the impact of organisational culture on performance in developed countries, such studies lack the homogeneity aspect of the similarity in the socialisation pattern of most of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Hofstede (2007) asserts that the socialisation pattern forms an essential component in the concept of organisational culture. Hofstede further states that SADC exhibits similarities in its national socialisation pattern which is translated into the workplace. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) suggest that organisational culture also provides the fundamentals of understanding the distinction that may exist in successful organisations which operate in the same national culture. The aforementioned author further asserts that a distinct correlation exists between the national and organisational culture traits. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) posit that the employees form part of the broader community and therefore their value system is transmitted into the

workplace because people carry their values, beliefs and assumptions.

In other words, the culture in the external environment influences the organisational culture. This calls for an assessment of the values that embody the organization and evaluate them against the value system of the larger community (Boonstra, 2013; Wagner & Hollenbeck, 2010). Moreover, this assessment requires an alignment with the identified culture so that this is synchronized with the organisational objectives to ensure a fit exists.

Yilmaz and Ergun (2008) hold the view that organisational culture is a collection process where members of one organisation are differentiated from another. Therefore, organisational culture is a construct that may be used to gain competitive advantage as well as to align employees toward the achievement of the corporate strategy. Furthermore, the construct is described as the glue, the net that keeps people in the organisation hooked in and engaged (Robbins & Sanghi, 2007). Notwithstanding the above, research points out that there are instances where the market environment may not be receptive to the organisational culture and this rejection is illustrated to that of a human body where an organ transplant may not be receptive to the new organ (Gilley, Godeck & Gilley, 2009). For example, when a transplanted heart is rejected by the body; the system fails. In a similar manner, while it is argued that organisational culture can be a powerful tool and may positively impact organisational performance, there are instances where the market may not adapt well to a certain organisational culture (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov 2010). Unsuccessful mergers are one example, wherein the market environment may not recognise the new entrant due to a conflict or the misalignment between the market and the values the organization upholds. The business environment requires alignment with its people and values; in this regard leaders are viewed as influential to an extent that they transfer the organisation's personality to new entrants in the organisation as the accepted conduct.

Ouchi (2009) cites organisational culture as an evasive phenomenon because of its underlying features like core beliefs and assumptions which may be taken for granted or overlooked. Wagner and Hollenbeck (2010), state that organisational leadership needs to employ an intentional approach and effort in diagnosing organisational culture. There may be no right or wrong organisational cultures, behavioural scientists have submitted that successful organisations have been found to have a strong culture which is characterised by common understanding of the corporate strategy, organisational objectives and the role of employees in the realisation of those objectives (Drucker and Maciariello, 2008; Porter, 2010; Wagner & Hollenbeck, 2010).

Organisational culture is the character of the organisation that has been formed overtime not only by the leaders but by the members in the workplace. It has further been described as the software of the organisation's mind (Denison, 2011), however not easily changed. The study by Schein (2010) on organisational culture can be used to illustrate its intricacies and its importance in organisational performance. The

leaders and managers need to peel away at the layers that are manifested to understand what is at the heart of the organisation (Schein, 2010). The first most visible layer is the often-stated values. For example, in the MoPS the core values include; Professionalism, Equity and Integrity (Swaziland Prime Minister's Office Report, 2009). It becomes apparent that the beliefs that may influence MoPS, also include how employees discuss issues that are faced by the organisation (Schein, 2010).

The next deeper layer in this model are the behaviours which relate to the day to day activities in the operations of an organisation similar to MoPS. Lastly, the most deep-rooted layer of the model is the paradigm or set of assumptions. These could relate to the assumptions held in common and although taken for granted, this aspect is deeply embedded in the organisation but largely determines how the organisation operates (Korte & Chemack, 2007). While there are studies that have been conducted on organisational culture and organisational performance (Denison, 2011; Kotter, 2007; Schein, 2010), there are fewer studies that have examined the causal effect of the two constructs in the context of public sector (Cameron and Quinn, 2011). Few studies have been published in the context of developed countries like Australia, New Zealand and Ireland; however, the researcher has not identified similar studies in the context of developing countries in particular Sub-Saharan Africa in particular Southern Africa (Abu-Jared, Yusof & Nikbon, 2010).

### 2.1.1 Strong culture vs. weak culture

According to Kotter (2007) in an organisation with a strong culture the following features may be identified; firstly, the employees understand and are responsive to the culture. Secondly, there is clarity on the roles and goal attainment that leads to optimal organisational performance, therefore research suggests that there is minimal requirement for policies and procedures (Boonstra, 2013). Lastly, there is consistency in behaviour of the employees and customers (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). On the other hand, a weak culture is characterized by minimal alignment of business values and employee behaviour and to a large extent is not consistent to the objectives of the organisation. Ouchi (2009) indicates the need for procedures and bureaucracy that are beneficial for business effectiveness such an instance. Since Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) mention that organizational culture is similar to national culture, one can only attempt to influence and not change everything about the culture no matter how weak a culture it is. The aforementioned authors reiterate that organisational culture develops overtime and therefore there are no quick fixes.

The current organisational performance in the MoPS is not satisfactory (Swaziland Prime Minister's Office, 2016), the leadership may initiate intentional efforts to transform the current culture to one that can drive and improve performance. This may be a vital ingredient towards unified goal attainment leading to optimal organisational performance (Schein, 2010), and recording an increase in the current rating of its annual performance within the Prime Minister's Office. Eaton and Kilby (2015) affirm this by stating that the absence of a strong and effective culture has

been attributed to poor performance in organisations. As Wagner and Hollenbeck (2010) state, that this therefore implies imperativeness to the managers and organisation's leaders to understand and leverage on this key driver to organisational performance. Successful multinational corporations attest to the notion of organisational culture being an essential factor in the excellence of their businesses, these including Howard Shultz the founder of Starbucks Coffee Company and Founder the of Apple, Steve Jobs (Childress, 2013).

### 2.1.2 Private vs. public sector organisational culture

Cameron and Quinn (2011) submit that while profit making enterprises may vary from nonprofit organisations such as MoPS, similarities exist with regard to their organisational culture and its impact to organisational performance. These scholars observe that in larger organisations like governments, sub-cultures exist to a noticeable degree at the level of departments and teams. Sub-cultures can be defined as the mini cultures that are found in units, sections or departments in organisations. In other words, these mini cultures are the components that can be seen as the building blocks which constitute the overall organisation's culture (Schein, 2010). This difference between private and public organisations may be propelled by the type of organisational structure in the sense that most public organisations are characterised by bureaucracy and yet most private organisations opt for a flat structure that enables more efficiency in its processes. While this study was aimed at exploring the construct by analysing the most dominant culture type, an acknowledgement of the findings in literature about sub-cultures remains relevant in the discussions and findings of this study. Cameron and Quinn (2011) further observe that another difference may occur between private and public, where the latter may be influenced by political control while the private organisations may be influenced by market controls. Anheier (2014) adds that the political authority and its activities can become a limitation when managers plan and facilitate strategy.

## 2.2 Development of organisational culture

In relation to culture, Denison (2011) suggests that an organisation can be illustrated by an 'iceberg' where about 10% of it is normally visible and tangible above the water surface. These, according to the scholar are the norms and behaviours of employees. The remaining 90% that is below the water is what sinks the ship when a collision takes place, and similarly this scholar postulates, the deep-rooted features of organisational culture may have a larger impact in business success or failure. In the analogy of the 'iceberg' the level below the water are the personal values and attitudes which tend to be less visible but can be spoken of (Schein, 2010). Cultural values and assumptions form the deepest part of the 'iceberg' and can be observed in the manner in which day to day operations are run. Subconsciously, leaders develop the culture by influencing and steering the organisation towards a certain direction, creating an unwritten code that is powerful to the extent that the employees emulate the leader in the subconscious manner. The personality of the organisation develops overtime and this template develops the shared values to



represent the common traits of the workplace (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Leaders in organisations play a pivotal role in the development of culture, therefore critical continuous awareness of their own values may provide insight into the factors hindering or propelling organisational performance.

### 2.3 Measurement of organisational culture

Research highlights two broad approaches that have been used to study this phenomenon; process-oriented (Schein, 2010) and classification approach Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010). Process-oriented approach adopts the view that shared values developed overtime help groups within the organisation deal with challenges from its external adaptation and internal integration (Schein, 2010). In this regard the process of socialisation requires an enquiry that is qualitative in nature. The motivation for this approach is on the basis that the meaning behind this process is sought to contribute to existing knowledge (Singh, 2007).

A limitation observed in this approach as stated by Yilmaz and Ergun (2008), is that it lacks a systematic comparison between similar studies, and in addition, is its inability to contribute towards theory building and hypothesis testing. To counteract this shortfall a large sample would suffice, however worth noting is that small and more focused groups is an innate feature to this qualitative approach (Anheier, 2014).

Classification approach is a quantitative approach conducted to contribute to theory by drawing a comparative analysis. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) collected data from IBM employees in more than 40 countries. The assessment focused on these six dimensions', which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, long term orientation/short term orientation, and indulgence/restraint. The main objective was to determine the differences between the country's cultures in relation to organisational performance. The aim of the study was to identify contributing factors towards business excellence so that the information could be used in the study of organizations. Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) found that a strong connection exists between societal and organisational culture. A review of these approaches has led Schein (2010) to the assertion that the use of questionnaires was not effective in highlighting the deep-rooted assumptions in the construct of organisational culture. The shortcoming of questionnaires in similar studies has led to the suggestion that a combination of approaches would increase the reliability of results on organization culture (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008). The above-mentioned author therefore advises the use of mixed approaches and methodological triangulation to provide validity to this phenomenon.

### 2.4 Measuring organisational performance

Collins (2010), Kotter (2007) and Korte and Chermack (2007) suggest that the measurement of organisational performance seems to vary across organisation types. The metrics used from one company to another may be influenced by the line of business a company is in, for

instance, research points out that profit making organisations are mostly driven by the bottom-line. Therefore, financial performance measures like Return on Assets (ROA) (Kotter and Heskett, 2010) seem a more appropriate measure. On the other hand, non-profit making organisations like government may subscribe for non-financial performance indicators which comprise of efficiency, customer satisfaction or quality. Studies validate this variation on the account that performance measures employed should link to the goals and objectives relevant to each and every organisation (Yilmaz and Ergun, 2008; Mathew, 2007; Wagner & Hollenbeck, 2010). In the case of the Swaziland Government, the Prime Minister's Office measures organisational performance by using non-financial measures which comprise of Timeliness, Quality, and Efficiency (Swaziland Prime Minister's Office, 2009).

### 2.5 Impact of organisation culture on performance

Literature indicates that organisational culture as a social construct influences behaviour of employees in the workplace (Schein, 2010). Therefore, where a strong culture exists, scholars observed a positive correlation between organisational culture and organisational performance (Peter & Waterman, 2004 as cited in Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Denison, 2011; Robbins & Sanghi, 2007; Yilmaz and Ergun, 2008). Research in organisational studies account for reasonable evidence to suggest that organisational performance may be significantly impacted by a strong culture (Boonstra, 2013; Gilley, Godek & Gilley, 2009). Kotter and Heskett (2010) submitted findings of a study that has contributed to the body of knowledge as well as towards theory building, which present that organisational culture has significant positive impact on organisational performance. Kotter and Heskett (2010) conducted a study of 207 companies over a period of 11 years to examine the relationship between organisational culture and performance. The organisations that were identified to have consistent business excellence had similar traits such as; adaptability, innovative and customer oriented. These organisations had a more adaptive culture, which was intentional about remaining relevant in the market environment (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

## 3. Methods

A mixed method approach was adopted in this study with the aim of enhancing the robustness of the research findings and ensuring incorporation of crucial elements of organisational culture. The qualitative aspect of this study entailed the use of an exploratory study to capture in-depth information about corporate values, organisational performance and strategy alignment in tandem with the existing organisational culture (Schein, 2010). The quantitative aspect of the study was done in two parts; through conducting a survey to determine the current organisational culture of the MoPS, and; through the use of data extracted from quarterly performance target reviews on the MoPS in the Policy and Programme Coordinating Unit (PPCU) reports for the period 2015 to 2019. Methodological triangulation was used to increase credibility and validity of the results in the analysis to

determine the link between the performance ratings and organisational culture (Azilia & Rankin, 2012) at MoPS.

### Population

The target population for the quantitative approach comprised of employees in MoPS which was the focus Ministry of the study. Specific focus was made to employees who had at least five years in the organisation and therefore possessed institutional memory. This target group was viewed as having been acclimatised to the work culture (Schein, 2010). According to human resource records MoPS has a staff compliment of N=83 employees. 10 Heads of Departments (HoDs) were identified as the most suitable respondents for providing 'rich' information about the culture of the organisation based on their level of responsibility in providing direction in the implementation of annual performance targets.

### Sample

The sample for the quantitative data was drawn using the simple random sampling technique. All MoPS employee positions were assigned consecutive numbers from 1 to 83 and a random number generator was used to select the sample size. For the qualitative data, expert judgment sampling technique was used for the Heads of Departments. This was a non-probability sampling technique also known as purposive sampling. There was no random sampling involved and some elements in the sampling frame having a zero probability to be selected (Kumar, 2012). In this instance the elements were specifically chosen based on the judgment of the researchers. The participants were experts in the implementation process of the annual performance targets, and these were noted to be the HoDs because of the special knowledge that they possess (Creswell, 2013; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009; Yin, 2014). The population size for HoDs was noted to be relatively small thus discarding a need to determine a sample for the interviews. However, preliminary engagements with the HoDs revealed that 4 of the 10 Heads had worked for less than 5 years in the Ministry. The criteria for qualification as a respondent for this research required an employee to have worked for at least 5 years at MoPS and an eventual sample size of n=6 was determined for this category.

### Research Instrument and Data Collection Procedure

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews for qualitative data. The questions were designed in such a way that they addressed the research objective with the intent to assess the impact of organisational culture on performance. A face-to-face interview was conducted for the Heads of Departments using a structured interview guide where the respondents were allowed to express their opinions (Andish, Yousefipour, Shahsavari-pour & Ghorbanipour, 2013). In addition, primary data was also collected from MoPS employees through the use of a structured questionnaire designed in line with the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) which draws the aspects of culture. The latter questionnaire was a validated and the quantitative instrument based on the Competing Values Framework (CVP) developed by Robert Quinn and Kim Cameron (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

For secondary data, document review was adopted for this study. reports, policies and strategies from both PPCU and MoPS were analysed and relevant information documented. In addition, particular focus was given to examination of PPCU reports on the performance targets and ratings of the Ministry of Public Service forextraction of data on performance by MoPS. Moreover, academic or theoretical and empirical literature within the Sub-Saharan Africa region on the impact of organisational culture on organisational performance formed party of the secondary data collected for this study.

A letter of permission to conduct this research was endorsed by the Principal Secretary at MoPS. A sample of the Heads of Departments in MoPS was interviewed face-to-face and results were recorded in writing. The interviews were administered after appointments were secured and consent forms signed. The OCAI was used as the questionnaire with closed-ended questions which were hand distributed to the sampled staff members who had consented to participate in the survey.

## 4. Results from the Study

The OCAI survey was sent to 23 employees of MoPS and all of them responded, representing a 100% response.

### OCAI Instrument

OCAI uses six dimensions that Cameron & Quinn (2011) claim have the fundamental aspects of culture within an organization. The dimensions are Dominant Characteristics, Organisational Leadership, Management of Employees, Organisational Glue, Strategic Emphasis, and Criteria for Success. Each dimension was analyzed in detail to ensure that more insight was provided that would otherwise not have been possible in the overall analysis of the organisational culture. Table 1 below illustrates the scores of each sub dimension expressing both the current and preferred ratings.

Table 1 illustrates the scores of the sub-dimensions as contained in the OCAI. The scores of "now" and "preferred" reflect the discrepancies that should inform the culture change initiatives where needed. Each sub-dimension has been displayed in Table 1 according to the highest scoring to the lowest.

**Table 2:** The scores of each sub dimension expressing both the current and preferred ratings

Dominant characteristic			
	Now		Preferred
D (Hierarchy Culture)	35	C (Market Culture)	31.3
C (Market Culture)	26.5	B (Adhocracy Culture)	23.7
A (Clan Culture)	24	A (Clan Culture)	22
B (Adhocracy Culture)	14	D (Hierarchy Culture)	14.8
Organisational Leadership			
	Now		Preferred
D (Hierarchy Culture)	27.2	D (Hierarchy Culture)	26.3
A (Clan Culture)	23	B (Adhocracy Culture)	25.9
C (Market Culture)	23	A (Clan Culture)	25
B (Adhocracy Culture)	16.7	C (Market Culture)	14.1
Management Employees			
	Now		Preferred
D (Hierarchy Culture)	32.8	A (Clan Culture)	35

A(Clan Culture)	29	B(Adhocracy Culture)	22
C(Market Culture)	22.8	C(Market Culture)	19.3
B(Adhocracy Culture)	15.4	D(Hierarchy Culture)	11.1
Organisational Glue			
	Now		Preferred
D(Hierarchy Culture)	41.7	B(Adhocracy Culture)	30.7
C((Adhocracy Culture)	22	A(Clan Culture)	26
B(Adhocracy Culture)	18.7	C(Market Culture)	21.1
A(Clan Culture)	15	D(Hierarchy Culture)	12.8
Strategic Emphasis			
	Now		Preferred
D(Hierarchy Culture)	41.7	A(Clan Culture)	28
A(Clan Culture)	24	B(Adhocracy Culture)	23.7
C(Adhocracy Culture)	22	D(Hierarchy Culture)	21.1
B(Adhocracy Culture)	18.5	C(Market Culture)	18.9
Criteria for Success			
	Now		Preferred
D(Hierarchy Culture)	35.2	A(Clan Culture)	34
A(Clan Culture)	31	D(Hierarchy Culture)	23.7
C(Market Culture)	16.5	B(Adhocracy Culture)	22.2
B(Adhocracy Culture)	14.1	C(Market Culture)	11.7

Table 2 below makes a visual of the level of contrast between the ‘now’ and ‘preferred’. In particular, the study highlights these discrepancies and its significance so that reasonable discussion may give indication on the level of change management intervention that may be needed. On the other hand, in the instances where the level of contrasts or discrepancies is minimal it is an indication that the MoPS may not need extensive efforts to align culture to strategy.

All Dimensions	Now	Preferred	Difference
Clan - Average of all A responses	25.5	29.5	4.0 (+)
Adhocracy - Average of all B responses	17	25.8	8.8 (+)
Market - Average for all C responses	22.9	20.3	2.6 (-)
Hierarchy - Average of all D responses	35.5	19.1	16.4 (-)
<b>Dominant Characteristics</b>	1. Now	7. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	24	22	2.0 (-)
B. Adhocracy	14	23.7	9.7 (+)
C. Market	26.5	31.3	4.8 (+)
D. Hierarchy	35	14.8	20.2 (-)
<b>Organisational Leadership</b>	2. Now	8. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	23	25	2.0 (+)
B. Adhocracy	16.7	25.9	9.2 (+)
C. Market	23	14.1	8.9 (-)
D. Hierarchy	27.2	26.3	0.9 (-)
<b>Management of Employees</b>	3. Now	9. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	29	35	6.0 (+)
B. Adhocracy	15.4	22	6.6 (+)
C. Market	22.8	19.3	3.5 (-)
D. Hierarchy	32.8	11.1	21.7 (-)
<b>Organisational Glue</b>	4. Now	10. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	15	26	11.0 (+)
B. Adhocracy	18.7	30.7	12.0 (+)
C. Market	22	21.1	0.9 (-)
D. Hierarchy	41.7	12.8	28.9 (-)
<b>Strategic Emphasis</b>	5. Now	11. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	24	28	4.0 (+)
B. Adhocracy	18.5	23.7	5.2 (+)

C. Market	22	18.9	3.1 (-)
D. Hierarchy	41.7	21.1	20.6 (-)
<b>Criteria of Success</b>	6. Now	12. Preferred	Difference
A. Clan	31	34	3.0 (+)
B. Adhocracy	14.1	22.2	8.1 (+)
C. Market	16.5	11.7	4.8 (-)
D. Hierarchy	35.2	23.7	11.5 (-)

Discrepancies in overall culture and sub-dimensions between now and preferred

**Sub-Dimensions of OCAI**

**Dominant Characteristics**

The results captured in figure 1 reveal that MoPS consists of a combination of the four cultures with the scores of each culture varying in strength. The highest point for the present dominant culture was Hierarchy culture with a score of 35.0 points, implying that the work environment was mostly formal and structured. The Market culture, where employees tend to be results-driven, was registered as second highest score for the “now” item with 26.5 points. The Clan culture recorded a close third score of 24.0 points signaling the existence of a family style atmosphere within the Ministry. The attributes of the Adhocracy culture were noted to be the least visible, with a score of 14.0 points indicating minimal existence of creativity and innovative in the Ministry’s activities. The Clan culture with 29.5 points was scored highest as the “preferred” dominant culture. This reflected a discrepancy of 4.0 points between the current and desired culture which is relatively not a substantial difference. However, MoPS may consider investing in this area. The second highest score of a preferred culture was the Adhocracy culture with 25.8 points. The Adhocracy culture was recorded as accounting the least score in the present culture, thus requiring 8.8 points increase from the now to the preferred culture at MoPS. The closeness in the preference of the Clan and Adhocracy cultures is suggestive that the respondents desire a work environment that is both entrepreneurial and innovative in nature while allowing for relatedness engagements. The Market culture and Hierarchy culture accounted of the lowest scores of 20.3 points and 19.1 points, respectively. The implication of the latter scores signals that respondents preferred a work environment that offers more flexibility and was less focused on outcomes.

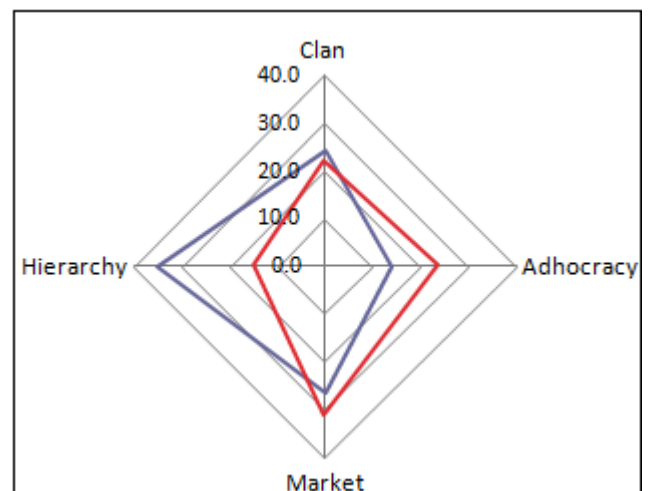


Figure 4.1: OCAI plot for dominant characteristics



The existing culture within MoPS

This study considered the underlying dominant characteristics that were viewed as being prevalent within MoPS. The results gathered from the qualitative data revealed that the existing main dominant trait of MoPS was that of a hierarchy culture.

## 5. Discussions of Results

This section presents a discussion on the findings from the employees' survey and interviews. Despite the unavailability of such studies on the impact of organisational culture on performance in the public sector within the Southern Africa region, this study attempted to link the findings to recent literature and theoretical views of scholars.

The study revealed that the dominant features at the ministry of public service comprised of a rigid structure, control and conformity. This finding was noted to be in line with an analysis of the data gathered in the qualitative responses, where the HoD's pointed to lack of flexibility as a consequential stumbling block. This was particularly because implementation of performance targets called for MoPS to reroute its processes to be relevant to the current and future demands of the environment. Denison (2011) advances that the existence of such a culture is likely to be a bottleneck to effective delivery of output. The MoPS is tasked with creating an enabling environment for all government ministries through delivery of effective human resource services to its customers. The drivers of performance within these ministries remain its human capital, and therefore the role and presence of MoPS within government ministries becomes pivotal towards successful attainment of annual performance targets. It therefore becomes imperative for MoPS to invest in practices and systems that will facilitate and encourage optimal performance instead of being primarily focused on rule-bound procedures that are inflexible and frustrate adaptation to change. In agreement with the view expressed by Denison (2011), Schein (2010) and Yin (2014) argue that a work environment characterized by rigid systems, policies and procedures has the repercussion of delays in effective implementation and consequently stifles overall performance.

This study also revealed the presence of a high level of conformity to processes and procedures within MoPS which has the effect of stifling out of bounds thinking. While this seemed to bring consistency and order in the daily operations, it however, was noted to be a hindrance to creativity. Ouchi (2009) echoes these sentiments arguing that there is a need for procedures and bureaucracy in an organisation, but these should be implemented in such a way that they are beneficial and should lead to business effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the study also found that the focus on conformity resulted in discouraging innovation in the processes and ultimately negatively impacting on the drive for continuous process improvement. This echoes the findings of a study by Cameron and Quinn, (2011), which shows that organisations that have consistent business excellence display traits such as; adaptability, innovative and customer oriented. These organisations have

a more adaptive culture, which is intentional about remaining relevant in the market environment. According to the findings. The MoPS was viewed as being ineffective in its daily operations as a result of being rigid to the point of not creating an enabling environment to other government ministries in the delivery of the services.

The study further revealed the existence of a silo culture, where internal departments within MoPS worked in isolation of the other. In the interviews with HoDs there was consistency in the submission of this argument, these Heads also admitted to being victims as well as perpetrators of this unconstructive work culture. Managers from successful multinational enterprises invest both time and resources to ensure that information flows freely between sections, units and departments (Porter, 2010). This then ensures that all aspects of the organisation are functioning effectively. Boyle (2008) states that this is another contributing factor to how silo cultures enter the organization. Schein (2010) further concurs that departments especially in a large organization tend to work in isolation. As a result, there are no platforms for other departments to appreciate what the interdepartmental roles are towards the attainment of the overall ministry or organizational goal. This view is strengthened by Denison (2011) that in the absence of teamwork silo cultures may crop up. The aforementioned author further cautions that in recent years the silo culture has been recorded as one of the leading causes of organizational ineffectiveness.

Over and above the effects of silo culture on organisational performance such as ineffective communication was also highlighted as another aspect that had infiltrated the current management style of the leadership at MoPS. HoDs attested to the existence of non-formalised and well-structured platforms to ensure information flow. It was noted that the Ministry lacked an internal communication plan and departmental sharing platforms. Consequently, ministry meeting forum were in reaction to customers or external stakeholder needs. Platforms such as monthly meetings for discussions on strategic issues and progress on implementation of activities were noted to be rare occurrences. The scarceness of such platforms limited opportunities to engage and input in activities undertaken in other departments within the ministry and further diminished possibilities for internal collaborations and teamwork that could break the observed silo culture.

The study also strived to identify aspects of organisational culture that unite both management and employees within MoPS. The results from the OCAI for this sub-dimension of organisational culture indicated a relatively low score on current assessment compared to the preferred score. The conclusion drawn from this result was that employees at MoPS were of the view that the ministry was currently fixated on bureaucratic processes depicted by formal rules and stringent policies. Employees understood this to be MoPS method of ensuring smooth running of the organization.

The findings as reflected in the OCAI indicated that the main strategic emphasis of MoPS were efficiency, controls and stability. The scores noted for each of these three

aspects displayed minimal variance. This implied the characteristics of all the four culture types and was represented within MoPS although in varying degrees. This conclusion was supported by HoDs interview findings which highlighted the existence of misalignment in the strategy being affected. This was noted to be mainly attributed to the fact that currently MoPS did not have a strategic plan, and hence the practice was that internal departments used their discretion in the design of activities based on their respective understanding of MoPS.

### **The impact of organisational culture on organisational performance in MoPS**

Core values are the foundation for an organization's vision and therefore frame the culture of that organization (Schein, 2010). The findings from this study revealed that MoPS core values were for the most part not known to the employees. While there were instances where employees exhibited some understanding, there seemed to be no deliberate efforts made to infuse these values in the operations as per the definition of MoPS. The importance of comprehension of core values within an organisation is highlighted by Cameron and Quinn (2011). These scholars advance that a distinct feature of successful organisations is that they tend to place strategic emphasis in those aspects that are linked to the strategic objectives.

The results from this study also indicate that employees seem not to be cognisant with the set annual performance targets for MoPS. The development process of the targets was undertaken exclusive of employees and efforts were not made to articulate the provisions of these targets. As such, employees remained oblivious to the ministry's performance targets and their expected roles towards feeding to the target's implementation matrix. The exception was noted to be employees that were specifically assigned within various departments to ensure the achievement of these targets. According to Schein (2010), in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency it is paramount for both managers and employees to invest in uniform interpretation and application of core values in the organization and create an inclusive culture.

The findings further highlighted that MoPS's definition of achieving success relies on dependable delivery and consistent provision of services to its customers. Criteria of success are rightly placed when aligned to the strategic objectives so that organisational performance measures can reflect such milestones. Drucker and Maciariello (2008) state that organisations benefit from continuously scanning the environment within which they operate as this allows the organisation to define its success in line with the demands of the market. In light of this view, it is clear that MoPS does not benefit from this argument by the latter authors because this ministry is from time to time required to adapt to succeed and yet has been using the same operating system amid the dynamics of the demands from the market.

In a similar tone, the study reveals that the performance of MoPS in relation to effective delivery of services has tended to be negatively impacted by the existing inadaptable and rigid hierarchical culture. Reference is made to the findings of a study that was done by Kotter and Heskett (2010),

organisations that were found to record high organisational performance were adaptable and customer focused in nature. These organisations, in addition, shared similar values and goals. The bureaucratic feature of this culture within MoPS is supported by rigid policies and procedures which were noted to frustrate timely delivery of services particularly for human resource personnel stationed in other government ministries. The effect of these constraints as noted in the interview responses includes flouting of procedures by officials within government ministries in a bid to meet the respective ministerial set annual performance targets with the Prime Minister's Office. A head of department indicated that this has now become part of the process in submitting performance targets. This implies further that there is no ownership of these performance targets and that these do not form part of their daily duties and responsibilities. Ultimately, MoPS was viewed as being inefficient and susceptible to lawsuits in the event legislation was contravened.

This undesired impact therefore points to the need for better ordered and organised processes to ensure consistency in service delivery. Further, there is signal for incorporation of measurable results which is likely to have an encouraging effect and sense of achievement to employees that may fuel job satisfaction. Cameron and Quinn (2011) put forward that there should be an effort of striking a balance that gets things done in an organization, and these things would need to be aligned to its mission and vision.

The existence of a silo culture was another finding revealed from this study, with both HoDs submitting to be contributors to this culture. Denison (2011) posits that for employees to remain motivated silos need to be broken down. The aforementioned author signals that silos can result in a huge dent on organisational performance as seen when the chain of command conducts works in vacuum of one another.

## **6. Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to assess the impact of organisational culture on organisational performance in the Ministry of Public Service in Swaziland. The findings from this study support theory development in that organisational culture has been found to be a significant factor in organisational performance. These findings contribute to theory in the following ways; firstly, it confirms that core values translate into the norms, beliefs and assumptions, and by extension these form the employee behaviour and secondly, the absence of communicated values leads to disintegration in employee attitudes towards organisational goals which lead to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the organisation.

## **7. Recommendations**

Based on the key findings presented above the study recommends a match of the organisational culture with business strategy at MoPS because this match is associated with superior performance.



The study also recommends the breakdown of the silo culture that is predominant at MoPS and instead create an inclusive culture which allows the free-flow of information and shared vision and goals.

The rigid structures, control and conformity culture existing at MoPS should be carefully monitored so as not to hinder creativity and innovation.

## References

- [1] Abu-Jared, I. Y., Yousof, N. A., & Nikbin, D. (2010). A review paper on organizational culture and organizational performance. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 1(3), 26-46.
- [2] Andish, H.A., Yousefipour, M., Shahsavari-pour, H., & Ghorbanipour, A. (2013). Organizational culture and its impact in organisations. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 5(1), 1126-1130.
- [3] Anheier, H.K. (2014). *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Nonprofit-Organizations-Management-Anheier-2014-05-17/dp/B01JXRIM78>
- [4] Beck, T., & Bozeman, B. (2007). 'Public Values: An inventory'. *Administration and Society*, 39 (3), 354-381.
- [5] Bonstra, J.J. (2013). *Cultural Change and Leadership in Organization: A Practical Guide to Successful Organisational Change*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- [6] Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. (2006). *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*. Beijing: China Renmin University: University Press.
- [7] Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. (2011). *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.
- [8] Childress, J. R. (2013). *Leverage: The CEO's Guide to Corporate Culture*. Kindle Edition Version Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com>.
- [9] Collins, J. (2010). *Bring on the Books for Everybody: How Literary Culture Became Popular Culture*. University Press: England
- [10] Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- [11] Denison, D. (2011). *Corporate Culture and Organizational Effectiveness*. Denison Consulting. New York: Wiley.
- [12] Drucker, P., & Maciariello, J.A. (2008). *Management Revised Edition of Management Tasks and Responsibilities Practices*. New York: Harper and Row.
- [13] Eaton, D., & Kilby, G. (2015). Does your culture support your business strategy? *Journal for Quality and Participation*, 37(4), 4-7.
- [14] Felipe, C. M., Roldán, J. L., & Leal-Rodríguez, A. L. (2017). Impact of organizational culture values on organizational agility. *Sustainability*, 9(12), 2354.
- [15] Flamholtz, E., & Randle, Y. (2011). *Corporate Culture: The Ultimate Strategic Asset*. Stanford California: Stanford Press.
- [16] Gilley, A., Godeck, M., & Giley, J.W. (2009). Change resistance and the organization immune system. *Advanced Management Journal*, 74(4), 4-10.
- [17] Hofstede, G. (2007). Culture: Organizations, personalities and nations. *European Journal of International Management*, 1(1/2), 14-18.
- [18] Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G.J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. USA: McGraw Hill.
- [19] Kandula, S.R. (2006). *Performance Management*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
- [20] Korte, R.F., & Chermack, T.J. (2007). Changing organizational culture with scenario planning. *Futures*, 39(6), 645.
- [21] Kotter, J. (2007). Leading change: Why transformation effort fail. *Harvard Business Review*. 96-103.
- [22] Kotter, J.P., & Heskett, J.L. (2010). *Corporate Culture Performance*. New York: The Free Press.
- [23] Kumar. R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. California: Sage
- [24] Kumar, R. (2012). Using phenomenological research methods in qualitative health research. *International Journal of Human Sciences*, 9.
- [25] Ouchi, W.G. (2009). *The Secret of TSL: The Revolutionary Discovery That Raises School Performance*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- [26] Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R.H. (2004). *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from Americas Best-Run Companies*. London: Profile Books.
- [27] Porter, M. (2010). *HBR's 10 Must Reads on Strategy "What is Strategy"*. New York: Harvard Business Press.
- [28] Ricardo, R. (2006). Corporate culture revolution: The management development imperative. *Journal of Management Psychology*.
- [29] Robbin, S.P., & Sanghi, S. (2007). *Organizational Behavior*. New Delhi: Pearson Education.
- [30] Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. England: Prentice Hall.
- [31] Schein, E.H. (2010). *Leadership and Organizational Culture*. New York: Wiley.
- [32] Singh, K. (2007). *Qualitative Social Research Methods*. New Delhi: Sage India
- [33] Swaziland. Ministry of Public Service. (2009). *Annual Performance Report*. Mbabane: Ministry of Public Service.
- [34] Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office. (2009). *Programme of Action*. Mbabane: Prime Minister's Office.
- [35] Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office. (2013). *Annual Performance Review Report*. Mbabane: Prime Minister's Office.
- [36] Swaziland. Prime Minister's Office. (2016). *Annual Performance Review Report*. Mbabane: Prime Minister's Office.
- [37] Wagner, J.A., & Hollenbeck, J.R. (2010). *Organisational Behaviour: Scoring Competitive Advantage*. New York: Routledge.

- [38] Yilmaz, C., & Ergun, E. (2008). Organizational culture and firm effectiveness: an examination of relative effects of culture traits and the balanced culture hypothesis in an emerging economy. *Journal of World Business*, 43, 290-306.
- [39] Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. California: Sage.

### **Author Profile**

**Dr Stewart Kaupa** is a senior lecturer in the school of Management Sciences at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. He lectures Strategic Marketing Management, Research Methodology, Consumer Behaviour and, Value and Supply Chain Management amongst others

**Dr Atiku** is a senior lecturer at the Harold Pupkewitz Graduate School of Business, Namibia University of Science and Technology