

# **Impact of Organizational Culture on Service Quality**

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## **Abstract**

The last two decades has placed emphasis on services and the delivery of quality services to customers. The notion that organizational culture impacts on service quality, which in turn influences customer satisfaction and organizational performance, has gained widespread acceptance in both academia and organizational practices. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to establish the existing culture which is adopted in an organization based in the electrical energy industry. This organization was selected to study the impact of culture on service quality. This is a survey based research study. Primary data was gathered with the aid of a questionnaire. Data collected included dimensions of organizational culture (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission) and dimensions of service quality (Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy). Organizational culture and service quality are considered the main variables of this study. Sample size is (n=96), 61 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires, therefore the response rate was moderately low at 63.5%. Descriptive statistical analysis, correlation and regression analysis have been utilized to determine the relations between organizational culture and service quality. The overall findings reveal that organizational culture has a strong significant impact on service quality levels within this organization.

**Keywords** Organizational culture, service quality, correlation

## **1. Introduction**

Service quality within organizations cannot be over-emphasized, it is not voluntary rather a must have to boast economic performance (Tsoukatos, 2011). Service quality from (Aftab, Sarwar, Sultan, Qadeer, 2016) means the degree to which customer's expectations have been met, "It is comparison between expected and perceived service". Good quality service guarantees satisfied customers. Good quality service can be achieved when a quality management system which is a mechanism to manage and continually improve quality of products and services (James & William, 2014) is integrated within business processes.

Quality management system provides confidence to customers that organizations are in control of their processes. With that assurance customers believe that organizations will be able to consistently meet their requirements and even strive to exceed them. A very disappointing behavior though, is that organizations implement quality management system just for certification or "a badge on the wall" not with the customer in mind (James & William, 2014). The beautiful systems don't seem effective because the change that is brought about quality management system is hardly embraced. While treating quality management system as an add-on without integrating it into business processes, one of the benefits the organization misses out is the ability to consistently meet customer's requirements which helps to instill confidence in both the customer and organization, in turn leading to more customers, more sales, and more repeat business.

One of the greatest challenges to successful implementation of a quality management system is posed by organization's culture (Mohammad, Rad, 2006). In order for any quality management system to be effective, the culture of the organization has to be conducive and progressive. Corporative organizational culture supported by good leadership, employees' commitment and involvement, open communication, continuous improvement and customers focus should be developed. The organization should be willing to move from traditional ways of doing things. The dominant problem is an endless number of organizations that have not benefited from the implementation of quality management system, because both management and employees tend to resist change, whether in systems, culture or environment. People are always comfortable in the old ways of doing things, holding on to their set habits, beliefs, values and behaviors upheld in the organization referred to as organizational culture (Fiddy, 2016 and Shahzad, Iqbal, Gulzar, 2013). The sad part is that organizations that resist this change they become less effective, with poor service quality and thus less competitive. That is why (De Feo, 2015) concluded that without continuous improvement, organizations die. In this day, it has become a real concern a decline in the service offered to the client by Organization A.

### **1.1 Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to determine the impact of cultural values on the level of service quality.

### **1.2 Objectives**

- a) To assess the type of culture existing in Organization A.
- b) To assess the impact of existing culture on level of service quality.

### **1.3 Primary research question**

Does negative organizational culture lead to poor service quality?

### **1.4 Secondary research questions**

- a) Is there a significant relationship between leadership and organizational culture?
- b) Is there a significant relationship between communication and organizational culture?

### **1.5 Rationale and significance**

Organizational culture is concerned with the study of how people behave and how that behavior affects the performance of the organization. This research aims to understand the concept of organizational culture deeply and to investigate its relation with service quality. It is my belief that the findings of this study will be useful for identifying areas of improvement in order to improve organizational culture in Organization A.

### **1.6 Organization profile**

The organization has a rich history of electricity maintenance support spanning more than a century. Based in Johannesburg, it is a dynamic business with operations clustered around different product groups. The organization operates along the entire electricity generation value chain. Mainly involved in support services to the energy industry in the electricity generation cycle.

### **1.7 Mission**

We will be world class energy industry support.

### **1.8 Vision**

To be a sustainable within the Enterprise Group of organizations, providing high quality, with the primary focus to our customer.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Organizational culture**

(Shahzad, Iqbal, Gulzar, 2013, Mohelska, Sokolovab, 2015) defined organizational culture as a set norms, beliefs, values and behaviors upheld in an organization. According to (Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, Neale, 2007, Mohelska, Sokolovab, 2015) culture serves as a control mechanism that guides and shapes employees' attitudes and behavior and influences organization's actions to conducting business. (Belias, Koustelios, Vairaktarakis, Sdrolias, 2015) mentioned that culture is the organization's "operating system" or "organizational DNA". Studies have characterized organizational culture along four dimensions: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission (Gillespie, et al., 2007, Shahzad, et al., 2013). Involvement focuses on employees' commitment and sense of ownership. Consistency refers to the existence of organizational systems and processes that promote same way of doing things. Adaptability is the organization's flexibility to change. Mission refers to the degree to which an organization is clear on why it exists and where it is headed.

(Permarupan, Saufi, Kasimc, Balakrishnan, 2013) categorizes organizational culture, into negative and positive culture. For an organizational culture to be positive or negative, there are certain conditions that compels a particular category of culture to exist within an organization. Organizations with following conditions are said to hold positive culture and organizations that hold the opposite have negative culture. These conditions include: Clarity: whereby organizational goals are shared and made clear among everyone in the organization. Standards: Clearly defined standards to be followed. Responsibility: The feeling that employees have authority delegated to them. Flexibility: Degree to which employees feel there are no unnecessary rules or procedures and new ideas are clearly communicated. Team Commitment: working positively together.

A review of literature on organizational culture reveals that a majority of writers (Laforet, 2016, Gillespie, et al., 2007, Panagiotis, Alexandros, George, 2014) have the same view that strong culture in the organization is very helpful to enhance the performance of the employees which leads to goal achievement and increases the overall performance of the organization. (Gillespie, et al., 2007) also suggests that "customer satisfaction is a predecessor of service quality". Based on the above literature analysis, the studies conducted hypothesized that: Strong organizational culture enhances customer satisfaction. A questionnaire survey was used to collect data on organizational culture and results of customer satisfaction surveys. Descriptive statistics, Correlation and Regression Analysis has been applied to find out the association between organizational culture and customer satisfaction. The results of these studies proved that there is a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and positive organizational culture.

### **2.2 Service Quality**

A review of literature on the concept of service quality reveals that service quality acts as the source of a powerful competitive advantage weapon in the market place (Givarian, et al., 2013). Despite the importance of service quality, the concept is not well given attention by the organizations. (Al-Ibrahim, 2014) defined service quality as an overall attitude towards a service of an organization. Services are evaluated not only by the outcome but also by the delivery process and the service (Tsoukatos, 2011). Other literature contains similar definition and concluded that the quality of a service, as perceived by the customer, is a result of a comparison between the expectations of the customer and his real-life experiences (Chowdhary, Prakash, 2007). (Kang, James, Alexandris, 2002, Givarian, et al., 2013) believe it is not easy to measure service quality. The most important standard of measurement of service quality is whether customers are satisfied. (Givarian et al., 2013) suggested general characteristics as standard used by customers to evaluate the quality of services are the five SERVICE QUALITY dimensions are: Tangibles-Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials, Reliability-Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, Responsiveness-Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, Assurance-Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence and Empathy- Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. Based on the above literature analysis, the study conducted used a questionnaire survey method derived from SERVICE QUALITY

model to collect data on their organizational culture and customer satisfaction levels. The results of the study indicated that the poor the organizational culture, the poor the quality of service offered, and ultimately the lower the customer satisfaction levels.

### **2.3 Total Quality Management (TQM)**

TQM is a culture of an organization committed to total customer satisfaction and embraces continuous improvement (Mohammad, Rad, 2006). For such a culture to exist quality management system should be integrated into business process. Quality management system is defined as a mechanism to manage and continually improve quality of products and services and can build a strong culture, which can positively improve the organization's competitiveness and performance (Irani et al., 2004). (Al-Ibrahim, 2014) mentioned that the lack of positive culture defeats the idea of implementing quality management systems which its main purpose is to encourage an organization to strive for continuous improvement in its operations in order to achieve customer satisfaction. The outcomes of some research works have reported that quality in the delivery of goods or services is now accepted as a critical tool to gain competitive advantage (Al-Ibrahim, 2014). TQM is a complete change in an organization's culture and the way people behave at work, encouraging the organization to continually improve the quality of its products or services. On the other hand, organizational culture is a major interference to TQM implementation, often because of resistance to change (Mohammad, Rad, 2006).

### **2.4 Hypothesis**

From the literature reviewed it is clear that organizational culture plays a role in the level of service quality in an organization hence the following hypothesis are developed for finding results in Organization A.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is association between organizational culture and service quality

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no association between culture of organizational culture and service quality

## **3. Research methodology and design**

The purpose of this study is to assess the type of culture existing in Organization A and its impact on level of service quality. The study will also examine how does leadership and communication influence an existing organizational culture. Organizational culture is taken as an independent variable while service quality is taken as dependent variable, leadership and communication will be taken as moderating variables.

### **3.1 Research paradigm**

The literature reviewed revealed that service quality is an important competitive tool. While organizational culture has a major impact on quality results. The question that comes up at this point is whether the organizational culture contributes to poor service quality. In order to find an answer to this question, it is hypothesized that a relationship exists between the organizational culture and service quality. In order to test this hypothesis factual knowledge is needed. Thus for this kind of research, suitable research paradigm is Positivism. Positivism adheres to the view that only factual knowledge gained through observation (senses), including measurement is trustworthy (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Further relates to the viewpoint that the researcher needs to concentrate on facts. Common sense should not be allowed to bias the research findings. Methodology to be employed is survey research and technique to collect data about the organizational culture of Organization A and perceived service quality is a questionnaire.

According to (Smith, Thorpe, Jackson, 2008), positivist is usually quantitative and involves the use of numerical measurement and statistical analysis of measurements to examine social phenomenon. The advantages of the positivist research are that it places great premium on objectivity and reliability of findings and encourages replication. Its shortcoming however is that it may not be applicable to social sciences and business research because social phenomena cannot be accurately and reliably measured.

### **3.2 Quantitative vs. Qualitative research**

(Smith, et al. 2008) argues that the distinction between quantitative and qualitative philosophies and research methods is sometimes overstated. It is therefore important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Positivism adopts a clear quantitative approach to investigating phenomena, as opposed to post-positivist approaches, which aim to describe and explore in-depth phenomena from a qualitative perspective. While quantitative and qualitative research methods are often seen as opposing and polarized views, they are frequently used in conjunction with one another (Smith, et al. 2008)

### **3.4 Population and sampling**

The study will be conducted for employees based at the head office of Organization A. The head office has about 1000 employees from different business units. Random sampling will be used to assure that each employee has equal opportunity to be selected. This technique is preferred because it provides the most accurate estimates of what is true in the population (Smith, et al. 2008). Data will be analyzed using correlation and regression analysis

#### **3.4.1 Sample size**

Population size (N) = 1000

Assuming Confidence interval (Error) = 10%

Assuming Confidence level = 95%,

Standard deviation: Since the survey has not been administered yet, the safe decision is to use 0.5 to ensure that the sample will be large enough.

At 95% confidence level, Zscore = 1.96 (From the Z – table)

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Sample size (n)} &= (\text{Zscore})^2 * \text{StdDev} * (1 - \text{StdDev}) / (\text{Error})^2 \\ &= ((1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5)) / (0.1)^2 \\ &= 96\end{aligned}$$

### **3.5 Data collection method**

A written questionnaire will be used for data collection. This technique is chosen because, it can be sent to a large number of people, and allow them to complete at their own time. This may save the researcher expenses since email is typically cheaper than telephone calls. Advantage of this technique is that it allows anonymity of respondents which is aimed at sincerest and most representative completion of the questionnaires, than they would be in personal interviews, especially when addressing sensitive issues.

The questionnaire package provides basis for describing employees' perceptions of the characteristics of organizational culture existing in the organization and the level service quality within the organization. In total, four dimensions that characterizes organizational culture (Gillespie, et al., 2007, Shahzad, et al., 2013) (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission) and five SERVICE QUALITY dimensions (Givarian, et al., 2013) that define service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) will form part of the questionnaire.

#### **3.5.1 Definition of organizational culture dimensions**

- **Involvement**- Focuses on employees' commitment and sense of ownership, leadership commitment
- **Consistency**- Refers to the existence of organizational systems and processes that promote same way of doing things.
- **Adaptability**- The organization's flexibility to change.
- **Mission** - Refers to the degree to which an organization is clear on why it exists and where it is headed.

### **3.5.2 The five SERVICE QUALITY dimensions are:**

- **Tangibles**-Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials
- **Reliability**-Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
- **Responsiveness**-Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
- **Assurance**-Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence
- **Empathy**- Caring, individualized attention the organization provides its customers

### **3.6 Validity of the study**

Validity test was conducted using Content validity. To evaluate validity, content validity index for individual items (I- CVI) is used (Yaghmale, 2003). Panel of 6 content experts were asked to review the relevance of each question on a 4-point Likert scale (Yaghmale, 2003) (1= not relevant, 2= somewhat relevant, 3= relevant, 4= very relevant) Then for each question, number of experts giving 3 or 4- relevant score is counted; then proportion is calculated against 1or 2 – non-relevant). Questionnaire contains 20 questions, the 1<sup>st</sup> ten is describing the culture, and the last ten is about service Quality. According to (Singha, Singhb, Moomc, Singhd, 2015) for six or more experts, I- CVI should not be less than 0.78. For five or fewer experts, I- CVI should be = 1

I- CVI proportion is 0.94, which is above 0.78, this means the questionnaire is valid; it covers the representative sample of the variables to be measured.

## **4. Reliability of the study**

### **Cronbach's alpha:**

A method of calculation using the formula:  $R = k/k-1 (1-\Sigma\sigma_1^2/\sigma_y^2)$  k = total number of items in list  $\sigma_1^2$  = variance of individual items  $\sigma_y^2$  = variance of total test scores. An alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered as acceptable reliability.

Test-Retest reliability was used to assess instruments reliability. Reliability is established using a pilot test by collecting data from participants not included in the sample. The initial questionnaires were administered to a sample of 20 employees in July 2017. 10 people actually returned a completed survey, giving a response rate of 50%. The second questionnaires were administered to the same group (10 Participants who returned the questionnaires) in August 2017. Correlation coefficient (Pearson) is calculated on excel to measure the relationship between two sets of results at different times.

The reliability coefficients were found to be 0.97 and 0.95 for organizational culture and service quality. Strength of relationship between +/- 0.7 to 1.0 is strong, which means the strength between the two scores obtained is strong, therefore the questionnaire was reliable.

### **4.1 Correlation and regression analysis**

Correlation is a statistical measure that indicates the extent to which two or more variables fluctuate together. Strength of relationship between +/- 0.7 to 1.0 indicates strong, +/- 0.3 to 0.69 indicates moderate and +/- 0.0 to 0.29 indicates weak to none. A positive correlation indicates the extent to which those variables increase or decrease in parallel; a negative correlation indicates the extent to which one variable increases as the other decreases. R Square is the coefficient of determination. It expresses the proportion of variation in **y** which is explained by variation in **x**.

#### 4.1.1 The correlation between culture and service quality

Table 1. Correlation matrix

Organizational culture dimensions		Service quality dimensions				
		Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Involvement	<i>r</i>	0.698	0.644	0.736	0.668	0.637
	<i>p</i>	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00
Consistency	<i>r</i>	0.683	0.600	0.693	0.695	0.692
	<i>p</i>	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00
Adaptability	<i>r</i>	0.665	0.627	0.640	0.682	0.648
	<i>p</i>	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00
Mission	<i>r</i>	0.682	0.674	0.663	0.691	0.685
	<i>p</i>	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00	*0.00

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (1-tailed)

Table 1 shows that there is a significantly moderate relationship between:

- Involvement and Tangibles ( $r = 0.698$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Reliability ( $r = 0.644$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Responsiveness ( $r = 0.736$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Assurance ( $r = 0.668$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) and Empathy ( $r = 0.637$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).
- Consistency and Tangibles ( $r = 0.683$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Reliability ( $r = 0.600$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Responsiveness ( $r = 0.693$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Assurance ( $r = 0.695$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) and Empathy ( $r = 0.692$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).
- Adaptability and Tangibles ( $r = 0.665$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Reliability ( $r = 0.627$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Responsiveness ( $r = 0.640$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Assurance ( $r = 0.682$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) and Empathy ( $r = 0.648$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).
- Mission and Tangibles ( $r = 0.682$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Reliability ( $r = 0.674$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Responsiveness ( $r = 0.663$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), Assurance ( $r = 0.691$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) and Empathy ( $r = 0.685$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ).

#### 4.1.2 Multiple regression analysis

Table 2. Regression analysis

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.941	0.887	0.885	0.30932

- Predictors: (Constant), Involvement, Consistency, Adaptability and Mission
- Dependent variable: Service Quality

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) is an estimate of the percentage variation in the dependent variable (Service Quality) which can be predicted from the independent variable (Organizational culture dimensions). This coefficient shows how well the multiple regression model fits the data. A value close to zero shows a weak fit whereas a value close to one implies a good fit. The  $R^2$  - value of 0.887 in Table 2, indicates that 88.7% of the variation in Service Quality can be explained by the 4 predictor variables identified in the regression equation. Therefore the hypothesis can be accepted.

#### 4.2 Research framework

The following research framework had been developed to represent the significant relationship between organizational culture and service quality.

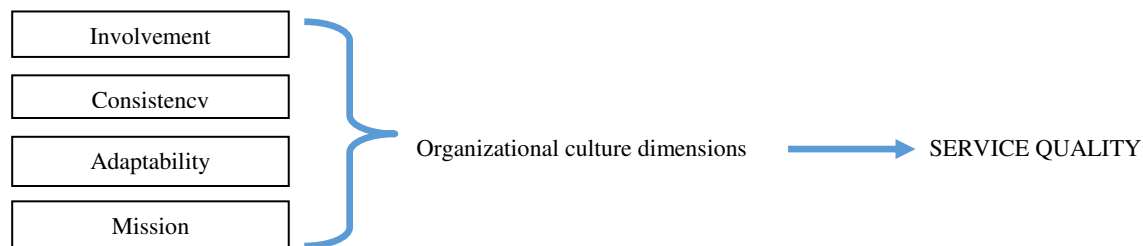


Figure 1. Path diagram of the relationship between organizational culture and service quality

## **5. Conclusion**

There are several factors which influence service quality but this study focused on organizational culture. The study arrived at the following findings after conducting the study:

- Employees are not clear of what is expected of them in their roles, and they are not aware of the customer requirements, however it has been determined that there is a significant relationship between organizational culture and service quality, this has created more awareness and understanding amongst employees.
- The qualitative analysis found that organizational culture plays a significant role on service quality and there is a strong positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

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## **Biographies**

**Nita Sukdeo** is currently a full time senior lecturer in the field of Quality and Operations Management, and the BTech Quality programme leader in the Department of Quality and Operations Management, at the University of Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa. She obtained a Masters in Quality from the Durban University of Technology and a PhD in Engineering Management from the University of Johannesburg. She is an upcoming young researcher in the field of total quality management and operations management. Her field of expertise also include quantitative analysis, quality management systems, quality auditing and risk assessment. She is a qualified Lead Auditor, proficient in ISO standards and certification. She is one of the directors of the Society for Operations Management in Africa (SOMA), as well as a senior member of the South African Society for Quality (SASQ).

**Yonela Gantsho** is currently a SHEQ Advisor responsible to provide SHEQ advisory services and facilitate continual improvement. She obtained a Diploma in Chemical Engineering from Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Bachelor of Technology in Quality from University of Johannesburg. In addition to that, she has completed courses in ISO standards, International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety and Root Cause Analysis Technique.