

A Model of Organizational Culture for Clinical Staff at the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study was to present a model of organizational culture for clinical staff at the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education.

Methodology: This research employed a qualitative approach, using the Delphi technique, and was applied in its purpose. A sample of 15 experts was utilized. Initially, a qualitative exploration was undertaken to design the organizational culture model. Following this, based on previous studies and relevant literature, a list of dimensions, components, and indicators was extracted. Using expert opinions and the Delphi technique, a culturally adapted organizational culture model was developed over three rounds. The qualitative validation of the model was conducted through the Delphi technique and feedback from the initial interviewees. The sample size was determined by purposive and snowball sampling methods based on the criterion of theoretical saturation. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed through content validity and expert opinions, and its reliability was verified by Cronbach's alpha. The validated and expert-approved questionnaire was then distributed to the sample.

Findings: The findings revealed that the organizational culture comprised four dimensions (behavioral, organizational and structural, managerial, and value and ideological), 20 components, and 60 indicators, with a Kendall coefficient of 0.170.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that organizational culture comprises various dimensions and components. Accordingly, university planners and administrators can enhance organizational culture at medical universities by emphasizing each of these components.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Nurses, Medical University

1 Introduction

In today's competitive environment, where organizations need to sustain and increasingly achieve their objectives, fundamental shifts in prevailing organizational perspectives are imperative. Before any transformation, organizations must identify and analyze their own organizational culture. Organizational culture, as a collection of shared beliefs and values, impacts the behaviors and thoughts of members within an organization. It can serve as a starting point for movement and dynamism or as an obstacle to progress. Organizational culture is one of the fundamental areas of change in any organization (Attar, 2020; Emami et al., 2024; Ginting, 2023).

Culture is one of the most important factors influencing management. Ignoring it can lead to internal incoherence and a lack of external adaptability. Experts assert that culture must be transformed if significant and effective changes are to occur within an organization (Mingaleva et al., 2022).

Organizational culture is an interconnected structure that binds the components of an organization (Jain, 2024; Kiakojour, 2024). Organizational cultures are historically rooted, meaning that the relationship between organizational culture and history cannot be separated, and organizational culture does not emerge suddenly or randomly. Many experts believe that organizational culture is a system of shared perceptions among members regarding an organization, distinguishing one organization from another (Eyibio, 2022; Mingaleva et al., 2022; Mosaddegh Rad et al., 2023; Mosaddegh Rad & Sokhanvar, 2019; Rastehmoghadam et al., 2014; Rostamigoran et al., 2016; Samur, 2021; Wang et al., 2011). Thus, culture is an organizational characteristic that can reinforce or inhibit all activities, including managerial responsibilities concerning innovation and transformation (Ghaiyoomi et al., 2014). Organizational culture establishes a management philosophy and a method for managing organizations to enhance overall performance and effectiveness. In today's competitive environment, organizational culture is also considered a powerful tool for assessing organizational functions (Omid, 2017). Generally, culture is recognized as a vital tool in any organization because it impacts employees' performance, contributing to effectiveness and improvement in how they fulfill their duties and responsibilities (Eyibio, 2022).

Robbins defines organizational culture as a system of shared perceptions among members regarding an organization, which differentiates one organization from another (Robbins, 2015, 2017, 2019). Denison (2000)

indicates that organizational culture comprises fundamental values, beliefs, and ethical principles that play a foundational role in an organizational management system (Denison et al., 2012). According to Barney (1986), organizational culture is a significant driving force in organizational movement (Wang et al., 2011). Tseng (2010) also suggests that organizational culture affects interactions among members and their values. Organizational culture is a microcosm of the broader cultural processes within an organization, encompassing elements such as information and communication technology, globalization, demographic shifts, continuous education, knowledge explosions, ethical crises, the learning organization, and the increasing emphasis on quality and effectiveness. These factors underscore the necessity of fostering a creative organizational culture at all levels (Shoghi et al., 2014).

Focusing on organizational culture is essential for several reasons, one of the most important being the significance of organizational culture during periods of change and transformation. Modern organizations are constantly undergoing change, encompassing all principles and concepts within the organization. One critical concept in this context is organizational culture. Recognizing and managing organizational culture effectively is essential to ensure the successful implementation of organizational changes (Rastehmoghadam et al., 2014). Robbins (1991) asserts that understanding organizational culture is fundamental to understanding an organization, employee behaviors, and performance, as culture can facilitate change and establish new directions within the organization (Robbins, 2015, 2017, 2019). Therefore, organizational culture is a core factor in organizational success and achieving long-term goals; it shapes individuals' behaviors towards effective performance (Wheelen & Hunger, 2010). Additionally, organizational culture can serve as a source of sustainable competitive advantage since some cultures are not easily imitated. The nature of learning and the manner in which it occurs within an organization are strongly dependent on organizational culture. Although the culture of many organizations may not be anti-learning, it may not foster learning either. In such cultures, risk-taking, proposing innovative approaches, and sharing information are not encouraged, whereas maintaining the status quo may be rewarded (Balthazard & Cooke, 2004). Organizational culture consists of a set of diverse value systems that can help an organization enable employees to better understand all core organizational functions by sharing key norms and values (Reidhead, 2020). Overall, organizational culture

encompasses shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that bind individuals within an organization together (Isensee et al., 2020).

Continuous evaluation of the organizational culture is essential in today's rapidly changing world, serving as the foundation for cooperation, participation, empathy, and guiding employees towards organizational objectives. The significant differences in values and philosophical foundations across societies highlight the need to understand the dimensions and components of organizational culture in local contexts. Edgar Schein suggests that culture strengthens the social system, improves individuals' understanding, and shapes their behavior. According to this view, adopting and adhering to the underlying principles of organizational culture is not only a duty but also a guarantee of the organization's survival and vitality. Organizational culture is considered a critical factor influencing productivity and organizational performance, as well-aligned work culture between management and employees enhances organizational commitment, promotes ethical conduct, and improves performance and productivity (Mohseni et al., 2018).

Organizational culture, on one hand, connects internal components and, on the other hand, distinguishes different organizations (Ahvazian et al., 2016). A strong organizational culture with positive values fosters employee motivation and loyalty, individual creativity, improved communication, cohesion and cooperation among employees, strengthened team spirit, greater participation in decision-making, and increased organizational efficiency. Organizations with a strong, positive culture outperform those with weaker cultures and gain a competitive advantage. Organizational culture significantly influences the success or failure of organizational strategies; approximately 50 to 55 percent of strategic success depends on culture. If the foundational principles and execution techniques of an organizational strategy do not align with organizational cultural values, the strategy's implementation will fail. Organizational culture plays a substantial role in the performance and quality of services provided by healthcare organizations. A cohesive and well-structured organizational culture fosters organizational creativity, teamwork, and high-quality healthcare services, ultimately enhancing patient satisfaction (Mosaddeghrad & Sokhanvar, 2019).

Nurses constitute a significant portion of hospital staff, and nursing services play a crucial role in the effectiveness

of hospital services. Proper management of nursing departments in hospitals ensures the effectiveness and efficiency of services provided to patients. Developing and strengthening positive organizational norms and values, such as cohesion, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, and customer orientation, in nursing departments enhances nurses' attitudes and performance. Establishing an appropriate organizational culture, setting care standards, implementing evidence-based nursing practices, forming effective work teams, equitably distributing tasks among nurses, and managing daily nursing activities improve the quality of nursing services and patient satisfaction. The healthcare sector faces a shortage of professional nurses; therefore, attracting, developing, and retaining nurses are essential responsibilities for hospital nursing managers. Creating a strong, positive organizational culture in nursing departments increases nurse satisfaction, which, in turn, enhances patient satisfaction (Mosaddegh Rad et al., 2023; Mosaddeghrad & Sokhanvar, 2019).

Several studies have been conducted on organizational culture. For example, a study by Bakhshi Haji Khajehlu et al. (2021) found a significant relationship between organizational culture components, organizational learning, and individual characteristics of nursing and midwifery staff in Social Security Organization hospitals and clinics in Ardabil province. The role of other cultural elements, such as adaptability, consistency, and involvement, was also highlighted (Bakshi Haji Khajehlu et al., 2021). In another study, Mosaddegh Rad et al. (2023) concluded that the average organizational culture score of Tehran University of Medical Sciences hospitals was 2.76 out of 5. The average scores for internal cohesion and external adaptability dimensions were 2.69 and 2.82, respectively. The average scores for team working, responsibility, risk-taking, and responsiveness were 2.52, 2.87, 2.46, and 3.18, respectively, with belief, values, behaviors, and symbols scoring 2.81, 2.86, 2.56, and 2.79, respectively, out of 5 (Mosaddegh Rad et al., 2023). Keykhanejad et al. (2018) identified seven components of organizational culture: adaptability, involvement, flexibility, power distribution, creativity and innovation, focus on members, and risk-taking. These components, particularly risk-taking, involvement, member focus, flexibility, creativity and innovation, adaptability, and power distribution, had the most significant impact on organizational culture (Keykhanejad et al., 2018). Pranitaari (2022) concluded that factors such as internal communication, employee interaction, organizational justice, and teamwork could impact organizational culture

(Pranitasari, 2022). Samur (2021) identified four dimensions of organizational culture: cohesion and flexibility, innovation, competitiveness, and a focus on practicality (Samur, 2021). Altinok (2021) found a significant relationship between management practices and bureaucratic, innovative, and supportive organizational cultures (Altinok, 2021).

The Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services operates 19 hospitals across Tehran province. Given the cultural and social diversity of the areas where these hospitals are located, and the employment of nurses who have migrated from other provinces to work in Tehran, these nurses likely possess subcultures. Hence, the lack of awareness regarding the organizational culture within Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services has emerged as a critical organizational priority. An appropriate model is essential for assessing culture. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to present a model of organizational culture for clinical staff at the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education.

2 Methods and Materials

This study utilized a qualitative research approach employing the Delphi technique, and its purpose was applied. A portion of the statistical population (but not all) was selected to form the sample group. Thus, the sample group is a subset of the population that allows the researcher to generalize the findings to the entire population. A sample of 15 experts was used in this study. Initially, a qualitative exploration was conducted to design the organizational culture model. Based on prior studies and the research literature, a list of dimensions, components, and indicators was extracted. Using expert opinions and the Delphi technique, the organizational culture model was adapted over three rounds. Subsequently, qualitative validation of the model was conducted using the Delphi technique, with feedback provided to the initial interviewees. In this stage, the sample size was determined by purposive judgmental and snowball sampling methods based on the criterion of theoretical saturation. The questionnaire's validity was confirmed through content validity and expert opinions, and its reliability was verified by Cronbach's alpha. The validated and expert-approved questionnaire was then distributed to the sample group.

The data collection tool for this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire, structured according to the model framework and validated by expert consensus. In the qualitative phase, an organizational culture questionnaire was employed. Following the Delphi technique, a quantitative questionnaire with 61 questions was developed. It included a descriptive section (gathering information on gender, age, education, and work experience) and main questions designed on a 5-point Likert scale with responses such as "Agree-Disagree-Somewhat-Yes-No."

3 Findings and Results

The highest frequency of respondents was in the 40 to 50 age group, while the lowest was in the over-50 age group, comprising only 13.3% of respondents. Most respondents had 15 to 20 years of work experience, while the lowest frequency was in those with more than 20 years of experience, at 20%. A significant portion of respondents held a doctoral degree (73.3%), and the lowest frequency was among those with a master's degree, at 26.7%. The highest frequency of respondents held the academic rank of associate professor (46.6%), while the lowest was for assistant professors, at 20%.

In the first step, a questionnaire was designed to include the dimensions and components of organizational culture, consisting of 3 dimensions, 15 components, and 73 indicators. This questionnaire was provided to 15 experts, who were asked to rate each indicator on a 5-point Likert scale. Experts were also asked to suggest any additional factors they considered relevant. The reliability of the questionnaire in the first round was 0.974, which is acceptable as it is above 0.7. At the end of this round, 30 indicators were removed based on expert feedback and their scores. The removed indicators included: Empowerment (1 indicator), Team Orientation (2 indicators), Capability Development (4 indicators), Organizational Learning (1 indicator), Power Distance (3 indicators), Organizational Management (3 indicators), Success (1 indicator), Strategic Intent and Direction (3 indicators), Goals and Objectives (4 indicators), Vision (3 indicators), Respect (4 indicators), and Uncertainty Avoidance (1 indicator). The results of the first Delphi round are presented in Table 1.

Table 1*Results of the First Delphi Round*

Component	Questions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Empowerment	Most employees are highly engaged and active in their work.	0	5	3.142	1.292
-	Decisions are usually made at the level where the best information is available.	2	5	2.857	1.027
-	Information is widely available, allowing everyone to access it when needed.	1	5	3.214	1.423
-	Everyone believes they can positively impact the organization.	2	5	3.428	1.222
-	Work planning is continuous, with everyone involved to some extent in the process.	1	5	3.357	1.081
-	Collaboration across organizational departments is appropriately encouraged.	1	4	2.142	1.027
Team Orientation	Employees feel like team members in their work.	1	5	3.142	1.406
-	Teamwork is utilized for task completion.	1	5	3.357	1.215
-	Work teams are the primary foundation of the organization.	2	5	3.714	1.266
-	Work is structured so each person can understand how their tasks relate to organizational goals.	1	5	2.857	1.231
Collectivism	I feel pride and honor when a colleague receives a reward.	1	5	3.642	1.150
-	I would help a colleague facing financial difficulties.	2	5	3.714	0.994
-	It is important for empathy and harmony to exist within my group.	2	5	4.285	0.825
-	I enjoy sharing information with my colleagues.	1	5	3.928	1.141
-	I feel good when collaborating with others.	2	5	4.285	1.069
-	I am happy to spend time with others.	2	5	3.714	1.069
-	My happiness largely depends on the happiness of those around me.	2	5	3.785	1.050
Capability Development	Authority is delegated so that individuals can make decisions and take action independently.	1	5	2.642	1.215
-	Skills and abilities are continually developed.	1	4	2.571	1.283
-	Continuous investment in employees' skills is present.	1	5	2.357	1.336
-	Capabilities are regarded as an important source of competitive advantage.	1	5	2.428	1.398
-	Problems often arise due to a lack of necessary skills.	1	5	3.428	1.504
Organizational Learning	Failure is seen as an opportunity to learn and grow.	1	5	3.428	1.222
-	Innovation and risk-taking are encouraged and rewarded.	1	5	2.714	1.38
-	Many important details are overlooked and forgotten.	2	5	3.857	0.949
-	Learning is a key objective in our daily work.	1	5	3.285	1.325
-	We are confident that different parts of the organization maintain close connections.	2	5	3.214	1.050
Power Distance	A manager should avoid socializing with subordinates outside work.	1	5	3.428	1.452
-	Subordinates should not disagree with managers' decisions.	1	5	2.571	1.342
-	Complaints about unfair pay raises result in reprimands.	1	5	2.785	1.188
-	Managers should not delegate complex tasks to subordinates.	1	5	2.500	1.286

In the second round of Delphi, factors with an average score below 3 from the first round were removed. Results showed that 30 indicators had an average score below 3 and were thus excluded. Additionally, based on expert opinions, a new dimension labeled “Value Dimension” was introduced, containing 6 components and 18 indicators, including: Health-Centeredness (2 indicators), Service Orientation (3 indicators), Patient-Centeredness (2 indicators), Human Wholeness (3 indicators), Sacrifice (4 indicators), and Professional Behavior (4 indicators). In the second Delphi round, the confirmed indicators from the first round, along with the new indicators identified by experts,

were again presented in a questionnaire to the experts for rating, similar to the first round. The mean scores from the first round were also provided in this round, enabling participants to make decisions based on the overall average. Many experts confirmed their first-round responses. The results of the second Delphi round are presented in Table 4-2. The reliability and Kendall's coefficient of concordance in the second round were 0.169 and 0.170, respectively. According to the study by Moshayekhi et al. (2005), although Kendall's coefficient of concordance is significant, it does not require halting the Delphi rounds; it must be

examined if there is substantial improvement in the next round.

In the third round of Delphi, the second-round questionnaire was again distributed to experts, similar to the previous rounds. The mean scores from the second round were included to assist decision-making based on the overall

average. In this round, most experts reaffirmed their second-round responses and refrained from adding new comments. The results of the third Delphi round are presented below. The reliability and Kendall's coefficient of concordance in this round were 0.968 and 0.170, respectively.

Table 2

Results of the Third Delphi Round

Component	Questions	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Empowerment	Most employees are highly engaged and active in their work.	0	5	3.142	1.292
-	Information is widely accessible to everyone when needed.	1	5	3.214	1.423
-	Everyone believes they can positively impact the organization.	2	5	3.428	1.222
-	Work planning is ongoing, and everyone is involved to some extent.	1	5	3.357	1.081
Team Orientation	Employees feel like members of a team in their work.	1	5	3.142	1.406
-	Teamwork is utilized for completing tasks.	1	5	3.357	1.215
-	Work teams are the foundational structure of the organization.	2	5	3.714	1.266
Collectivism	I feel pride when a colleague receives recognition.	1	5	3.642	1.150
-	Empathy and harmony within the group are important.	2	5	4.285	0.825
Capability Development	Problems often arise due to a lack of required skills.	1	5	3.428	1.504
Organizational Learning	We view failure as an opportunity for learning and growth.	1	5	3.428	1.222
Power Distance	A manager should avoid socializing with subordinates outside work.	1	5	3.428	1.452
Organizational Management	Management style is team-based, consensus-driven, and participative.	1	5	3.357	1.277
Success	My organization defines success based on human resource development, teamwork, employee commitment, and interest.	1	5	3.214	1.423
Goals and Objectives	We continuously track our progress against set goals.	1	5	3.071	1.328
Vision	Short-term thinking often jeopardizes our long-term vision.	1	5	3.571	1.504
Respect Dimension	This organization is people-oriented.	1	5	3.00	1.358

The results of the three Delphi rounds indicate that consensus among experts was achieved, and further rounds were unnecessary due to the following reasons:

In the third Delphi round, at least 90% of respondents rated all indicators as “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” (with an average score above 3).

The standard deviation of responses regarding the importance of factors significantly decreased in the third round compared to previous rounds.

Kendall's coefficient of concordance for responses in the third round was 0.170. Given that the number of respondents was greater than 10, this Kendall coefficient is considered highly significant.

The difference in Kendall's coefficient between the third and second rounds was only 0.001, indicating a lack of

substantial growth in agreement between the two consecutive rounds.

In conclusion, through a three-round Delphi technique, consensus was reached on the dimensions, components, and indicators of organizational culture based on expert feedback. The final organizational culture model includes 4 dimensions (Behavioral, Managerial, Organizational, and Value) with 21 components (Empowerment, Team Orientation, Capability Development, Organizational Learning, Power Distance, Organizational Management, Success, Strategic Intent and Direction, Goals and Objectives, Vision, Respect, Uncertainty Avoidance, and 61 confirmed indicators). The final model of organizational culture is presented below.

Figure 1*Final Model of The Study*

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to present a model of organizational culture for clinical staff at the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education. The results showed that the organizational culture model consists of 4 dimensions (behavioral, organizational and structural, managerial, and value-based and ideological), 20 components, and 60 indicators, with a Kendall coefficient of

0.170. The findings of this study align with previous studies (Bakshi Haji Khajehlu et al., 2021; Keykhanejad et al., 2018; Mosaddegh Rad et al., 2023; Pranitasari, 2022; Samur, 2021).

In explaining the results, it should be noted that the first dimension of organizational culture is the behavioral dimension. Organizational behavior is the science of studying and applying knowledge about how individuals and groups act in organizations. It describes the relationships between people and organizations in terms of individuals,

groups, organizations, and social systems, with the aim of achieving human, organizational, and social goals through better relationships (Costa et al., 2020). In essence, culture is a collection of characteristics and learned behaviors, some of which can be explained within the behavioral domain. In the behavioral dimension of organizational culture, the behaviors of healthcare staff can reflect their actions and activities. For instance, participatory or individual behaviors in activities can lead to the professional development of staff. Since healthcare workers operate in an environment that requires maximum awareness and knowledge, their learning behaviors can be seen as contributing to their work and professional development. Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the important elements of organizational culture is the behavioral dimension, which can greatly influence the development of a workplace culture.

Another dimension of organizational culture is the managerial dimension. Culture is part of the organization's soft infrastructure, which requires learning and the transfer of experiences (Lee, 2020). Organizations, such as medical sciences institutions, also need to learn and adapt to culture. However, culture must be managed correctly. In today's large and complex organizations, organizational culture requires effective management and organization. Properly organizing and managing culture enables organizations to achieve their cultural objectives more efficiently. Culture is one of the most significant factors influencing management; neglecting it can lead to a lack of internal cohesion and external adaptability. The need to pay attention to culture is so strong that experts believe that if fundamental and effective changes are to occur in an organization, its culture must change (Mingaleva et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be concluded that a managerial element in organizational culture helps institutionalize the culture within the organization in a more effective and appropriate manner.

Regarding the value dimension, values play a central role in learning. A commitment to values helps employees understand and be sensitive to organizational goals (Gregory et al., 2009). In service and healthcare organizations, such as medical universities, belief in organizational goals influences service delivery. Thus, employees who value their organization's principles can play a greater role in cultivating the organization's objectives. Values have a key role in embedding organizational culture, and the more that belief in work values is felt, the more the organization's goals can flourish.

As for the limitations of the present study, only a questionnaire was used as the data collection tool, while other tools could also have been employed. Additionally, the study's statistical population was limited to nursing staff at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences and Health Services. Another limitation pertains to the methodology. Due to financial and time constraints, this study employed only a qualitative method and did not use a mixed-methods approach. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers use mixed methods and include a more diverse group of experts in their sample. It is also suggested that training courses be organized for all organizational managers to raise awareness of medical education, thus enhancing managers' knowledge in this field and enabling them to implement practical measures and utilize various medical education tools across different groups. Given the study's findings indicating a positive relationship between organizational culture and managers' performance, it is also recommended that managers in various organizations and institutions work on enriching organizational culture, showing greater respect and appreciation for it, as its positive impact on managers' performance is clearly evident.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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