



# Adaptive Organisational Culture and Academic Performance in Higher Education Institutions

Muskan Mishra\*1, Navjyoti Singh\*2, Maunish\*3, Nancy Singh\*4, Komal\*5, Anjali Yadav\*6

\*1,2,3,4,5,6 MBA Student, Department of MBA, IIMT College of Engineering, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India.

## How to Cite this Article:

Mishra, M., Singh, N., Maunish, , Singh, N., Komal, & Yadav, A. (2026). Adaptive Organisational Culture and Academic Performance in Higher Education Institutions. International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, <i>02</i>(05).

<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i5.847>

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<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i5.847>

## ABSTRACT

Organisational culture is a critical determinant of employee performance, particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where academic excellence, collaboration, and innovation are essential. This study adopts a conceptual, secondary-data-based approach to examine how organisational culture influences employee performance in HEIs. By synthesising existing literature, reports, and theoretical models, the study identifies key cultural dimensions, including leadership style, academic autonomy, communication patterns, and institutional values. The findings suggest that a supportive and participative culture significantly enhances faculty performance, research productivity, and institutional effectiveness. The study provides insights for policymakers and administrators to foster a performance-oriented culture in educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Organisational Culture, Employee Performance, Higher Education, Faculty Productivity, Institutional Effectiveness

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture is a fundamental determinant of employee behaviour and performance, particularly within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where knowledge creation, academic autonomy, and institutional excellence are central objectives. It encompasses shared values, beliefs, norms, and practices that guide how individuals interact and perform within an organization. According to Edgar H. Schein, organizational culture operates at multiple levels, including artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions, all of which influence employee attitudes and productivity (Schein, 2010).

In the context of HEIs, organizational culture plays a critical role in shaping faculty engagement, teaching effectiveness, and research output. Institutions that promote collaborative, innovative, and participative cultures tend to achieve higher levels of employee performance and institutional effectiveness. The Competing Values Framework, developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, highlights that cultures emphasising flexibility and internal cohesion (clan culture) or innovation (adhocracy culture) are particularly beneficial in academic environments (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).



Moreover, existing literature suggests that supportive leadership, academic freedom, and effective communication significantly enhance faculty motivation and job satisfaction (Tierney, 1988; Smart & St. John, 1996). Conversely, rigid bureaucratic cultures may hinder creativity and reduce performance outcomes. Therefore, understanding the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance in HEIs is essential for fostering academic excellence and sustainable institutional growth.

## 2. Literature Review

Organizational culture has been widely recognized as a key determinant of employee performance across sectors, including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Scholars have emphasized that culture shapes employee attitudes, behaviours, and productivity through shared values and norms.

Early work by Edgar H. Schein (2010) conceptualised organisational culture as a multi-layered construct influencing employee perceptions and actions. Similarly, Geert Hofstede (1991) highlighted that cultural dimensions such as power distance and individualism significantly affect workplace behavior and performance outcomes.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. For instance, Abbas Ali et al. (2020) found that supportive and innovative cultures enhance employee productivity and engagement. Likewise, Stephen P. Robbins and Judge (2017) emphasized that strong cultures foster commitment and improve overall organizational effectiveness.

In the context of HEIs, research indicates that culture plays a crucial role in academic performance. Tierney (1988) argued that institutional culture shapes faculty work patterns, decision-making, and communication processes. Smart and St. John (1996) further found that adaptive cultures significantly improve institutional effectiveness and faculty satisfaction.

The Competing Values Framework proposed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn (2011) identifies four culture types—clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy—each influencing performance differently. Studies suggest that clan and adhocracy cultures are more effective in HEIs due to their focus on collaboration and innovation (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Research by Deal and Kennedy (2000) demonstrated that strong organizational cultures lead to higher employee motivation and productivity. Similarly, Denison (1990) established a direct link between culture and organizational effectiveness through adaptability, involvement, and consistency.

Recent studies have also explored the mediating role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For example, Alharbi et al. (2019) found that organizational culture significantly impacts employee performance through increased job satisfaction. In line with this, Nguyen et al. (2020) reported that supportive leadership and communication enhance faculty engagement and research productivity in universities.

Furthermore, technological and global changes have influenced organizational culture in HEIs. According to OECD (2022), digital transformation and innovation-driven cultures are critical for improving academic performance and global competitiveness. Similarly, UGC (2021) reports highlight the importance of institutional culture in achieving quality benchmarks in Indian higher education.

Despite extensive research, there remains a gap in integrating cultural dimensions with performance outcomes, specifically in HEIs using conceptual frameworks. Therefore, this study aims to synthesise existing literature to better understand the relationship between organisational culture and employee performance in higher education.



### 3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two widely accepted theories of organisational culture: the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and Schein's Model of Organisational Culture. These models help explain how culture influences employee performance, especially in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

#### Competing Values Framework (CVF)

Developed by Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, the CVF classifies organisational culture into four types based on two dimensions:

(1) Flexibility vs. Control and (2) Internal vs. External focus.

##### 1. Clan Culture (Collaborative)

- Focus: Internal + Flexibility
- Characteristics: Teamwork, participation, trust
- In HEIs: Promotes faculty collaboration and engagement
- Impact: High job satisfaction and performance

##### 2. Adhocracy Culture (Creative)

- Focus: External + Flexibility
- Characteristics: Innovation, risk-taking, adaptability
- In HEIs: Encourages research, creativity, and new teaching methods
- Impact: Enhances innovation and productivity

##### 3. Market Culture (Competitive)

- Focus: External + Control
- Characteristics: Goal-oriented, performance-driven
- In HEIs: Focus on rankings, output, and results
- Impact: Improves efficiency and accountability

##### 4. Hierarchy Culture (Control)

- Focus: Internal + Control
- Characteristics: Rules, procedures, stability
- In HEIs: Bureaucratic systems and formal structures
- Impact: Ensures consistency but may reduce flexibility

#### Schein's Model of Organisational Culture

Proposed by Edgar H. Schein, this model explains culture at three levels:

##### 1. Artefacts (Visible Level)

- Physical structures, dress code, policies, rituals
- Example: Classroom setup, institutional rules



## 2. Espoused Values (Declared Level)

- Organisational goals, mission, and strategies
- Example: Vision for academic excellence

## 3. Basic Assumptions (Deep Level)

- Unconscious beliefs and perceptions
- Example: Belief in academic freedom or hierarchy

## 4. Research Objectives

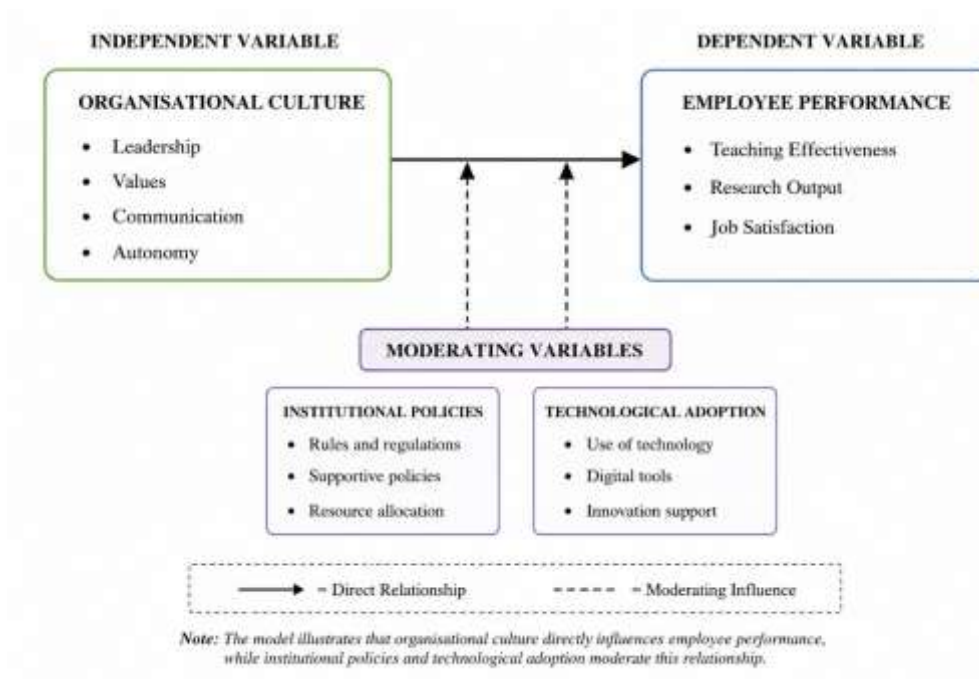
1. To examine the impact of organisational culture on employee performance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
2. To identify key cultural dimensions (such as leadership, values, and communication) influencing faculty performance and productivity.
3. To analyse how organisational culture contributes to job satisfaction and overall institutional effectiveness in HEIs.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a conceptual research approach as it aims to develop a theoretical understanding of the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Unlike empirical studies, which rely on primary data collection, conceptual research focuses on synthesizing existing theories, models, and empirical findings from prior studies.

The use of secondary data from peer-reviewed journals, academic books, and institutional reports ensures a comprehensive and reliable foundation for analysis. The application of established frameworks such as the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and Schein’s Model further strengthens the theoretical grounding of the study.

## 6. Conceptual Model



SOURCE: Self-Construct



## 7. ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of existing literature and secondary data reveals a strong and consistent relationship between organizational culture and employee performance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The findings indicate that different cultural dimensions—such as leadership, values, communication, and autonomy—play a crucial role in shaping faculty performance, research productivity, and job satisfaction.

A collaborative (clan) culture promotes teamwork, trust, and participation, which significantly enhances faculty engagement and teaching effectiveness. Studies suggest that when academic staff feel supported and valued, their commitment and performance levels increase. Similarly, an innovative (adhocracy) culture encourages creativity, research activities, and the adoption of new teaching methodologies, thereby improving research output and institutional competitiveness.

Conversely, a highly bureaucratic (hierarchical) culture, commonly observed in HEIs, ensures stability and control but may limit flexibility and innovation. While structured policies and procedures are necessary for maintaining academic standards, excessive rigidity can reduce employee motivation and hinder performance. Market-oriented cultures, focusing on results and performance indicators such as rankings and publications, can drive productivity but may also increase pressure and stress among faculty members.

The analysis also highlights the moderating role of institutional policies and technological adoption. Supportive policies related to appraisal, rewards, and academic freedom strengthen the positive impact of culture on performance. Likewise, technological advancements, including digital learning platforms and research tools, enhance teaching efficiency and research productivity.

Overall, the discussion suggests that a balanced organisational culture that integrates collaboration, innovation, and structured governance is essential to improving employee performance in HEIs. Institutions that successfully align their cultural values with academic goals are more likely to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and overall institutional effectiveness.

## 9. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the critical role of organizational culture in shaping employee performance within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). By synthesizing existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the findings confirm that organizational culture is not merely a contextual factor but a strategic determinant of faculty effectiveness, research productivity, and job satisfaction.

The analysis demonstrates that cultures characterized by collaboration, innovation, and participative leadership significantly enhance employee engagement and performance outcomes. In contrast, overly rigid and bureaucratic cultures, although necessary for maintaining institutional stability, may restrict creativity and limit academic growth. The study further establishes that a balanced cultural orientation—integrating elements of flexibility, accountability, and shared values—is essential for achieving sustainable institutional effectiveness.

Moreover, the role of moderating factors such as institutional policies and technological adoption is crucial. Supportive governance structures, transparent appraisal systems, and the integration of digital tools strengthen the positive relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. In the context of evolving higher education systems, particularly with the growing emphasis on digital transformation and global competitiveness, cultivating an adaptive and innovation-driven culture has become increasingly important.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of organizational culture in HEIs by reinforcing its direct and indirect influence on employee performance. It underscores the need for educational leaders and policymakers to actively design and nurture a culture that aligns with academic goals, fosters innovation, and enhances overall institutional excellence. Such an approach is vital for ensuring long-term sustainability and competitiveness in the higher education sector.



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