

## A comparative evaluation of the perception of lecturers, employees and students about the organizational culture of Shiraz University

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**Abstract:** The general purpose of the study was comparative evaluation of the perception of lecturers, employees and students about the organizational culture of Shiraz University. The statistical population was including all the lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University at academic year 2010-2011 who were selected by stratified random sampling as 226 people of the lecturers, 261 staffs and 375 students. The research instrument was Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) of Cameron & Quinn (2006). Data analysis was done by Repeated Measures ANOVA and Two Way ANOVA methods. The results showed that dominant organizational culture from the view of lecturers, staffs and students is clan culture. The dominant culture from the view of lecturers and staffs was clan and from the view of students was hierarchical culture. In comparing the perception of this three groups based on gender of organization culture, the highest average of clan, hierarchical and market cultures was among women lecturers and the highest average of adhocracy culture was among men staffs of the university.

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### 1. Introduction

Currently, due to the fundamental changes in various aspects of the organizations, new horizons are opened in analysis of organization culture. Culture refers to a generality of thought and practice and include all the beliefs, aspirations, values and traditions of the society and make the life quality appeared and it is personality for human society (Zarei Matin, 1998).

Robbins (2005) believed that organization culture shows the common perceptions of organization members affecting their behavior. In each organization there are some values, symbols and traditions changing over time. These common values define how the staffs understand the world and respond to it. Hoy & Miskel (2008) believed that organization culture is a system of common directions making social-organization unit continual and gives distinguishing identity to it. Some of the researchers considered the organization culture a combination of common meaning, values, beliefs, norms and assumptions being applied for the existence of an organization (Schein, 2004; Trice & Beyer, 1993).

On one hand, the culture applies a deep influence on general ability of organization to deal with the problems and challenges and it is the energy of the organization preceding the organization or

hampers it (Wanfleet, 1991). On the other hand and in a smaller scale, the main assumptions of people forming the initial image in selecting the type of behavior with others, is considered as an effective factor on the communication of people, personal effectiveness, group and organizational relations. The culture of the universities is not an exception as open social systems with various interactions with other organizations.

Sabaqian (2009) believed that in all the studies carried out in organizational culture of the university, there is a common aim including the discovery and analysis of academic life aspects for better perception of images, beliefs, values and interaction of the members of university. In addition, the investigation of the organizational culture of the university make the members of university able to remove the main barriers of the adaptability of the universities from inside, the units and people and with the external environment and keep the internal processes and finally consolidates the adaptability and continuance of the academic life.

### The significance of study

Organizational culture is a system consisting of the beliefs and values in interaction with human resources, organization structure and control system

and establishes behavioral norms in the organization (Mamizadeh, 1994). Thus, the analysis and recognition of this system helps the increased of knowledge about beliefs, values and traditions of the organization. A part of the importance of the organization is due to the increase of turmoil, complexities and unpredictability of the environments in which different organizations and universities are located. The universities due to their functional nature are faced with various changes and challenges. The managers of universities are faced with various changes including the change of needs and skills of the students, competing with other universities and using IT and reduction of the costs (Craig, 2004; Eckel & Kezar, 2003).

On the other hand, the fulfillment of high education is occurred in the universities and the universities are inspired by their organizational culture. The culture is one of the effective factors on the behavior of the university group having an important role on achieving the goals or being away from them. Thus, recognizing the characteristics of the existing culture and the forming factors on one hand and the related results should be considered that by applying required management, the universities can fulfill their expected goals. Because of this, the effective management in high education requires the perception to organizational culture (Locke, 2007). It should be said that the existing cultural plurality in the new organizations and universities caused abundant dynamics and on the other hand, the difference on language, ethnicity, policies and many other characteristics can appear as contradiction source and in case of the lack of correct recognition of it, the development of good working relations is faced with problem (Triandis, 2006). Thus, the system of values, beliefs and behavioral models consisting of organizational culture can be important tools for supporting the quality fulfillment of the aims of the university.

In the present competition world in which the universities consider their superiority in producing science and knowledge and optimized performance of the affairs, organization culture is an important element that should be considered more than before by managers and by applying some management mechanisms and culture management, the required consistency should be created between organizational culture and the aims of the university or good measurements to change the culture of the university should be applied.

### **Organizational culture**

In Amid Persian dictionary (2009), the culture is defined as knowledge, science, education, scientific and literature works of a nation. Webster's Dictionary

defined culture as a set of complex human behaviors including the thoughts, speech and artistic works and ability of human being for leaning and transferring to another generation. Hofstede (2004), believed that culture is consisting of the common beliefs, attitudes, norms and common views overshadowing all aspects of life and directing their behavior and personal action. Social interactions of people continue at higher level and for meeting these personal and social demands, people should establish these interactions widely. Thus, behavior method and culture are transferred to greater groups including organization and a new work such as organization culture is created and briefly it is defined as followings.

In the early 1980s, when some of the publications claimed that organizational culture causes the difference between successful and unsuccessful organizations and this concept is considered strongly (Wanfleet, 1991). Robbins (2005) believed that culture defines common perceptions of organizational members affecting their behavior. In each organization, there are some values, symbol and rituals changing over the time. These common values defined that how the staffs should percept their world and respond to it. Hoy & Miskel (2008) believed that organizational culture is a system of common orientations linking social-organization unit and give it a discrete identity. Helfrich et al (2007) considered organizational culture a set of values, assumptions and common beliefs among the members of the organization. They believed that organizational culture created as social and semi-conscious is permanent and is necessary for forming new knowledge and performing educational systems.

### **Academic culture**

In the fast speed current world, academic system requires a strong support for being successful to do its mission as it is necessary with flexibility and structure change and resistance to the changes. One of the important supports of any university is its culture. Academic culture is a set of beliefs, values, rituals, expectations and traditions of the university being meaningful in academic society and education groups and defines the methods of communication and interaction between academic people and shows the life style of university members (Sabaqian, 2009). Various functions of university being affected by its culture formed the nature of university and made different from other universities. Masland (1995) believed that academic culture is considered as an independent variable in organizational studies of high education because managers, students, faculty members and even high education plans are affected. Finally, David Dill (1982) considered every university with special culture being defined via the

common measurements of its members.

It is evident that the universities for effective role and active presence in the complex world of today and achieving the sustainable development should recognize their identity and their members based on identity and cultural bases. As in academic culture, all its members including lecturers, staffs and students participate, thus recognizing the beliefs and values and their behavior are of great importance, because transferring the culture of the university to the society and affecting the generality of its culture is done by these people and due to the production of science and knowledge is done by its academic elites.

Considering the importance of the issue and the existing different models for dividing organizational and academic culture, Cameron and Quinn (2006) model was used. Despite the brevity in the definition in different species of organizational culture and high efficiency in determining the existing culture of the organization and giving some solutions for leadership and changing weak, inconsistent and inefficient cultures are applied. From the view of this model, organizational culture is consisting of the values, dominant leadership style, language, symbols, task procedures and the definition of the success in the organization and four types of organizational culture are as following:

#### **Clan culture**

The first ideal form of organizational culture is clan culture. The characteristics of clan culture are team work and the participation of the staffs and organizational commitment. Working groups receive reward based on group performance (not personal) and staffs are encouraged to improve their work and organizations in a powerful environment. Fundamental assumptions of clan culture are as followings:

- a. The environment is administered well via group culture and human resources.
- b. Customers are considered as partners.
- c. The high management is responsible to give power to the staffs and helping the attraction of participation, commitment and loyalty of the staffs.

In clan culture, the environment is friendly and the people share the work and the organization is similar to a wide family. The leaders and supervisors of the organization kindly observe the affairs and what links the members of the organization is loyalty, rituals and beliefs. The commitment is prevalent in the staffs of the organization and the organization emphasizes on the development of human resources and correlation of the morale of people.

#### **Adhocracy**

This kind of culture is accountable for confusion environments and rapid conditions of the new century. Innovation, creativity and pioneer are some assumptions that organizations by them achieve success. This culture considers the main duty of management educating entrepreneurship, creativity and emphasis on superiority and benefits from creativity to achieve profitability and benefits. The characteristics of adhocracy are as follow:

- a. The organizations lack organizational chart based on this chart. Organizational chart is formed for working mission rapidly and temporarily.
- b. The environment of work is temporary, the supervisor doesn't have any fixed office and this environment is created temporarily, if necessary.
- c. The roles are temporary. The members are determined temporarily and the responsibilities are delegated temporarily.
- d. Creativity and innovation are encouraged. Because temporary culture despite the hierarchy culture is in contradiction with big state environments.

#### **Market culture**

The organizations in which the dominant culture is market culture and they benefit from dominant values of productivity and competition and competition in these organizations is achieved via more importance on external control and success.

The main assumptions and fundamental values of market culture are based on dynamics strategies and aims to profitability and efficiency. In this culture, the work is result-based. The leaders are persistent and what links the members with each other is the emphasis on long-term victory and concepts, competitive works and emphasis on achieving success and fulfillment of aims. Success term in this culture is participation in the market.

#### **Hierarchy culture**

In this organizational culture, decision making, standardized rules, control mechanisms and audit are key factors of success. Long-term goals of the organization consist of stability, predictability and efficiency. In hierarchy culture, the organization is mostly structured and formalized. These procedures define what people should do and the leaders are the best coordinators and organizers of thought in productivity. Keeping formal policies links the people of the organization to each other and the long-term aim of the organization is the stability in performance with operation efficiency.

Regarding the effect of the type of culture on organizational performance namely in academic

environments, some researches are done and some of them are as follows:

### Review of literature

Fralinger (2010) in a study, evaluated perception of 70 BA students in health and sport department of Rowan University. The results showed that the dominant culture is clan culture. Park & Kim (2009) in this study titled "Do types of organizational culture matter in nurse job satisfaction and turnover intention?" He found that the dominant culture was consensus culture (this culture characteristic is the lack of power concentration, activities variety and internal consideration on keeping the system. Thus, the relationship between the members is mostly friendly with high morale), among different cultures, consensus and rational culture are significantly and positively related with job satisfaction. In addition, consensus culture is negatively and significantly associated with the job transition of the nurses, while hierarchy culture is positively and significantly associated in this case.

In a study done by Foster (2007) titled the differences in perceptions of organizational culture: executives, administrators, and faculty at north Texas community colleges by Harrison & Stokes (1992) and in the form of four types of organizational culture including (power-based culture, role-based, achievement -based and support-based), the dominant culture was role-based from the view of the above three groups (role-based culture is equal to hierarchy culture according to the definition of Cameron and Quinn of different kinds of cultures).

According to the findings of the study of Rahimnia and Alizadeh (2009) regarding the investigation of organizational culture aspects based on Denison model, from the view of faculty members of Ferdosi University of Mashhad, the academic culture is studied in four aspects of involving in the work, adaptability, consistency and mission. In consistency, the university obtained the highest score and the minimum score was for involving in the work and adaptability in the work.

Nasiripour et al. (2009) studied the relationship between organization culture with efficiency of the staffs in public education hospitals of Iran medical sciences University by a questionnaire based on 10 indices of Robbins model (organizational identity, management support, control, personal creativity, reward system, contradiction and organizational communication). Based on their findings, the highest average of organizational culture was for control (61.37%), personal creativity (58.94%), aims clarity (47.91%) and the minimum index with average (40.10%) was attributed to contradiction showing that

all the organizational culture indices are at moderate level. In another study, Abzari et al. (2008) investigated the effect of the fit of person-organization and organizational culture on organizational behavior of faculty members of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman and found that the dominant culture of this university is bureaucratic culture and there is a significant association between the type of dominant organizational culture and the behavior based on organizational relation.

Ahmadi et al. (2008) in a study titled the comparison of the organizational culture condition of Isfahan medical Sciences University with good condition in investigating the governance of organizational culture components of the study sample (e.g. commitment, motivation, identity, consistency, common aims, observing rules, conclusion, communication, team work and control method) found that motivation component was higher than moderate and the remaining components were lower than moderate level and the governance of them was not equal. Zivar Yar et al. (2007) in a study titled " Faculty members views about good culture of physical education and sport sciences university's of Tehran found that in the existing condition, in physical education and sport sciences of Tehran, none of the entrepreneurship, mission, participation, bureaucratic cultures were not dominant cultures and with the investigations based on the views of faculty members of universities in good condition, entrepreneurship and participation cultures were raised as dominant culture.

It is obvious that Shiraz University is one of the oldest and most valid universities in Iran with organizational culture affecting the behavior of the academic group. Recognizing the perception of the members of University about the organizational culture, provided the opportunity of the managers that by taking good strategies, the required consistency was established between the perception of members and aims of the university and the university fulfilled its aims effectively and efficiently. Because of this, the study of organizational culture of this university is the subject of this study.

## 2. Methodology

In this study, the comparative evaluation of the perception of lectures, staffs and students about organizational culture of Shiraz University is carried out. Thus, the current study is descriptive and survey design. The study population was including all the lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University in academic year 2010-2011. The results of the study was achieved based on the data extracted among 803 completed questionnaires of 862 questionnaires distributed among 226 lecturers, 261 staffs and 375



students that were selected as stratified random sampling. In this study Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) of Cameron and Quinn (2006) with likert scale (strongly agree= 5, agree=4, I have no idea= 3, disagree=2, strongly disagree=1) was applied. The first section was including the personal profile and was designed separately for lecturers, staffs and students and the second part was consisting of 24 items applied for evaluation of clan culture, adhocracy, market culture and hierarchy culture. The validity of the questionnaire was assessed by item analysis and all the items of the questionnaire had positive and significant association between 0.28 to 0.74 at significance level 0.0001 with total score showing the validity of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire according to Cronbach's alpha was 0.75 showing high reliability.

### 3. Research findings

Question 1- What is the dominant organizational culture from the view of lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University?

**Table 1: The dominant organizational culture from the view of lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University**

Culture	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Clan	803	3.11	0.77	9.01	3	0.0001
Adhocracy		3	0.77			
Market		3.09	0.65			
Hierarchy		3.07	0.75			

As it is shown in Table 1, based on the perception of the lecturers, staffs and students about organizational culture, clan culture had the highest average (3.11) and adhocracy culture had the minimum average (3) and based on the achieved F (9.01) in degree of Freedom 3, the difference of the averages was significant at level 0.0001. Bonferroni Test showed that according to the perception of lecturers, staffs and students, there was a significant difference between the average prevalence of adhocracy culture with clan, market and hierarchy culture but there was no significant difference between the remaining of the cultures.

Question 2- What is the dominant organizational culture from the view of the lecturers of Shiraz University?

**Table 2: The dominant organizational culture from the view of the lecturers of Shiraz University**

Culture	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Clan	189	3.18	0.75	7.16	3	0.0001
Adhocracy		2.99	0.68			
Market		3.16	0.55			
Hierarchy		3.16	0.74			

As it is shown in Table 2, based on the perception of the lecturers, clan culture had the highest average (3.18) and hierarchy culture had the minimum average (2.99) and based on the achieved F (7.16) in degree of Freedom 3, the difference of the averages was significant at level 0.0001. Bonferroni Test showed that according to the perception of lecturers, there was a significant difference between the average prevalence of adhocracy culture with clan, market and hierarchy culture but there was no significant difference between the remaining of the cultures.

Question 3- What is the dominant organizational culture from the view of the staffs of Shiraz University?

**Table 3: The dominant organizational culture from the view of the staffs of Shiraz University**

Culture	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Clan	252	3.26	0.45	9.54	3	0.0001
Adhocracy		3.06	0.04			
Market		3.14	0.03			
Hierarchy		3.05	0.04			

As it is shown in Table 3, based on the perception of the staffs, clan culture had the highest average (3.26) and hierarchy culture had the minimum average (3.05) and based on the achieved F (9.54) in degree of Freedom 3, the difference of the averages was significant at level 0.0001. Bonferroni Test showed that according to the perception of staffs, there was a significant difference between the average prevalence of clan culture with adhocracy, market and hierarchy culture but there was no significant difference between the remaining of the cultures.

Question 4- What is the dominant organizational culture from the view of the students of Shiraz University?

**Table 4: The dominant organizational culture from the view of the students of Shiraz University**

Culture	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Clan	362	2.976	0.80	3.45	3	0.01
Adhocracy		2.973	0.86			
Market		3.036	0.76			
Hierarchy		3.040	0.80			

As it is shown in Table 4, based on the perception of the students, hierarchy culture had the highest average (3.04) and adhocracy culture had the minimum average (2.973) and based on the achieved F (3.45) in degree of Freedom 3, the difference of the averages was significant at level 0.01. Bonferroni Test showed that according to the perception of students, there was a significant difference between the average prevalence of clan culture with hierarchy culture but there was no significant difference between the remaining of the cultures.

Question 5- Is there any significant difference between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the clan organizational culture of the university?

**Table 5: The comparison between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the clan organizational culture of the university**

Gender	Groups	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Woman	Students	196	3.03	0.81	4.34	2 and 795	0.01
	Lecturers	26	3.38	0.64			
	staffs	112	3.157	0.68			
Man	Students	166	2.90	0.78			
	Lecturers	163	3.151	0.77			
	Staffs	138	3.35	0.71			

As it is shown in Table 5, the highest average of clan culture prevalence was for female lecturers of university (3.38) and the minimum average was among male students (2.90) and based on the achieved F (4.34) and degree of freedom of 2 and 795, the difference between the averages at 0.01 was significant.

Question 6- Is there any significant difference between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the hierarchy organizational culture of the university?

**Table 6: The comparison between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the hierarchy organizational culture of the university**

Gender	Groups	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Woman	Students	196	3.11	0.81	4.62	2 and 795	0.02
	Lecturers	26	3.17	0.68			
	staffs	112	2.93	0.65			
Man	Students	166	2.97	0.79			
	Lecturers	163	3.15	0.75			
	Staffs	138	3.13	0.69			

As it is shown in Table 6 the highest average of hierarchy culture prevalence was for female lecturers of university (3.17) and the minimum average was among female university staffs (2.93) and based on the achieved F (3.62) and degree of freedom of 2 and 795, the difference between the averages at 0.02 was significant.

Question 7- Is there any significant difference between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the market organizational culture of the university?

**Table 7: The comparison between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the market organizational culture of the university**

Gender	Groups	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Woman	Students	196	3.11	0.77	2.43	2 and 795	0.08
	Lecturers	26	3.21	0.55			
	staffs	112	3.10	0.56			
Man	Students	166	2.93	0.74			
	Lecturers	163	3.15	0.55			
	Staffs	138	3.16	0.54			

As it is shown in Table 7, the highest average of market culture prevalence was for female lecturers of university (3.21) and the minimum average was among male students (2.93), but based on the achieved F (2.43) and degree of freedom of 2 and 795, the difference between the averages at 0.08 was not significant.

Question 8- Is there any significant difference between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the adhocracy organizational culture of the university?

**Table 8: The comparison between the perception of male and female lecturers, staffs and students of Shiraz University about the adhocracy organizational culture of the university**

Gender	Groups	Number	Mean	SD	F	df	Significance level
Woman	Students	196	3.07	0.88	4.68	2 and 795	0.009
	Lecturers	26	2.85	0.55			
	staffs	112	3	0.71			
Man	Students	166	2.84	0.83			
	Lecturers	163	3.01	0.71			
	Staffs	138	3.10	0.66			

As it is shown in Table 8, the highest average of market culture prevalence was for male staffs of

university (3.10) and the minimum average was among male students (2.84) and based on the achieved F (4.68) and degree of freedom of 2 and 795 and the difference between the averages at 0.009 was significant.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The dominant organizational culture in Shiraz University from the view of lecturers, staffs and students (generally) and from the view of lecturers and staffs (separately) was clan culture. On one hand, due to strong correlation between the members of the university and their team work and the support of the leaders and managers and above all the flexibility and emphasis on developing human resources, this university can be hopeful about the fulfillment of its aims. On the other hand, due to resorting to the traditions, team work and internal concentration, the members can not show their creativity and innovation and where they select the external environment of the university as selecting customer, such university cannot be in the competition with other universities and organizations of the society. In addition, the consistency of the views of lecturers and staffs of the university is a strong point showing their similar perception about organizational culture and behavior based on this common view. Thus, the duties and affairs of the university can be done in a friendly space and when there are some barriers such as administrative rules, the lecturers and managers based on their high decision making power can guide the affairs as win-win result is achieved for both parties.

The dominant organizational culture from the view of students of Shiraz University is hierarchy culture. The different views of the students with two other groups about organizational culture is due to the fact that the students in administrative system of the university are less familiar with the effective people and consider the progress of their administrative affairs as strict and know the discipline and rules as the governance of bureaucracy culture. But staffs and lectures due to their familiarity with working environment and other personnel do their works easily. But the question is that despite the existence of many scientific, cultural, political and social and ethnicity associations, why students don't show any belonging feeling to these groups and they cannot follow up their requirements in this way and is their perception of organizational culture, hierarchy culture? This is due to the governance of a kind of relations on the work of these groups, associations making the perception of their acting power in equations, trading and social, cultural and political discussions for the students, these associations don't have the required power and ability of their duties as the students by

their support can encourage the powerful groups with clan species and their loyalty, participation and cohesion. The highest average of clan, hierarchy and market culture was among women lecturers and the least average was among men students, women staffs and men students. The highest average of adhocracy was among male staffs and the minimum average was among men students. The reason of high prevalence of clan, hierarchy and market cultures among female lecturers of university was the fact that this group considered the university with different aspects of organizational culture that none of them had considerable superiority to each other and different cultures at the same time and their effective role were necessary for the success of university.

It is important to say that in the study of different organizations namely universities, the important cases is that the culture of any university should show the life quality, unique personality and its interaction with the environment and its comparison with the culture of other organizations and other universities are not important. Because the events of the environment of the university are such that consider the effective and significant function of the university as requirement of flexibility, stability and control.

The emphasis of the views of the members of the university regarding the dominant organizational culture causing a kind of cultural plurality can provide a location for contradiction of the views and thoughts of university groups and gives dynamics to the academic environment. The important point that should be considered by the managers is that the difference of the perception shouldn't cause any contradiction among people and affect their working relations. Thus, the managers by informing these three groups about the different kinds of perception of organizational culture by taking situational solutions such as negotiation and compromise based on participation behaviors to find good solutions to fulfill the aims of people and good role and efficient fulfillment of organizational duties.

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