

Beyond Cultural Alignment: Exploring Organizational Development, Transformation, Adaptability, Stability, and Competitiveness

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Abstract

Organizational culture is increasingly shaped by the capacity of organizations to maintain cultural alignment while responding to organizational change, transformation, and competitive pressures. Previous research has emphasized the importance of organizational values, value-based leadership, and strategic alignment in shaping cultural alignment and employee outcomes. However, several dimensions identified in prior framework development—including organizational development, organizational transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness—remain insufficiently explored through empirical qualitative inquiry. This study aims to explore how these dimensions interact in organizational practice and how they contribute to the development and maintenance of cultural alignment. Building on the Gap in Organizational Culture framework developed in previous research, this study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach to investigate organizational experiences, practices, and perceptions related to cultural development and change. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with organizational leaders and employees and analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo. The analysis will focus on identifying recurring themes, relationships, enabling conditions, tensions, and organizational mechanisms associated with development, transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness. The study is expected to extend existing organizational culture research by moving beyond the identification of cultural alignment toward a deeper understanding of how organizations develop and sustain alignment while navigating transformation and environmental change. The findings will contribute to the refinement of the Gap in Organizational Culture framework and provide practical insights for organizational leaders seeking to strengthen cultural adaptability, organizational resilience, and sustainable competitiveness.

Keywords: Organizational Culture; Cultural Alignment; Organizational Development; Organizational Transformation; Organizational Adaptability.

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INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture has increasingly been recognized as a dynamic and consequential dimension of organizational life, particularly as organizations confront technological disruption, changing stakeholder expectations, competitive pressures, and continuous transformation. Rather than functioning merely as a stable set of shared values and norms, culture influences how organizational members interpret change, coordinate activities, respond to uncertainty, and construct collective meanings about their work (MacQueen, 2020; Sackmann, 2021; Schein & Schein, 2017). Contemporary perspectives consequently emphasize that organizational culture is not simply an organizational attribute but a social and interpretive process through which members construct meaning and reproduce or modify patterns of behavior. The dynamic character of culture is particularly important because organizations must simultaneously preserve continuity and respond to changing internal and external conditions.

This tension between continuity and change represents one of the central challenges of contemporary organizations. A culture that provides stability can strengthen coherence, shared identity, and predictable patterns of action; however, excessive reliance on established routines and assumptions may constrain flexibility and responsiveness. The literature on organizational culture change has

therefore increasingly moved beyond the assumption that culture is simply something that organizations possess or that managers can directly redesign. MacQueen (2020), for example, conceptualizes organizational culture as a complex and dynamic process through which organizational members construct and apply meaning to their work lives. From this perspective, culture and organizing are mutually connected rather than separate processes. This is particularly relevant when organizations experience transformation because changes in structures, technologies, strategies, identities, and roles may simultaneously alter the cultural patterns through which organizational members understand and enact their work.

The relationship between stability and change is therefore more complex than a simple choice between preserving organizational culture and transforming it. Organizational culture may simultaneously provide continuity and become a catalyst for change. El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize that rapidly changing environments require organizations to respond to new conditions while maintaining sufficient stability to support organizational continuity and development. Their discussion of organizational culture highlights the paradox between the need for rapid organizational responses and the need for stable organizational foundations. Similarly, cultural change cannot always be explained through linear models in which organizations move predictably from a current state to

a desired future state. Cultural change may be stimulated and guided, but its development cannot be fully controlled because organizational culture is complex and embedded in organizational interactions (El Emary et al., 2020). Thus, organizational transformation may require organizations to develop new capabilities without necessarily abandoning the cultural elements that provide identity and continuity.

Within this context, organizational development becomes an important mechanism through which organizations negotiate the relationship between continuity and change. Organizational development is fundamentally concerned with organizational change and development, but its implications for culture extend beyond formal interventions. MacQueen (2020) emphasizes the complex and continuously evolving nature of organizational cultures, while cultural interventions may affect organizational identity, values, mission, vision, and everyday practices. Organizational development should therefore not be understood solely as the implementation of predetermined interventions. Rather, it can be examined as an ongoing process through which organizational members interpret change, reconstruct practices, and negotiate what should be preserved, modified, or transformed. This view is consistent with the broader argument that organizational culture may support or hinder organizational development projects and therefore requires continuous understanding and, where

necessary, modification (El Emary et al., 2020).

This perspective also raises the importance of organizational adaptability. Adaptability represents an organization's capacity to respond to changing conditions while maintaining sufficient organizational coherence and strategic direction. Organizational culture is particularly relevant to this process because shared assumptions, communication patterns, leadership practices, and behavioral expectations can either facilitate or constrain responses to change (MacQueen, 2020; Sackmann, 2021). A culture characterized by openness to learning, participation, experimentation, and tolerance of uncertainty may provide more favorable conditions for organizational adaptation. El Emary et al. (2020) similarly describe organizational culture as a living phenomenon that changes as organizations learn to cope with turbulent environments. In this sense, change is not external to organizational culture but can become an integral element of the cultural process itself. Consequently, adaptability should not be treated simply as an operational response to environmental turbulence; it can also be understood as a cultural process through which organizational members learn to interpret and respond to changing circumstances.

At the same time, adaptability does not imply that organizations should continuously abandon existing structures, values, or practices. Organizational stability remains

important because organizations require a degree of continuity to maintain identity, coordination, institutional memory, and collective expectations. The literature on organizational culture illustrates this tension particularly clearly. Traditional approaches have emphasized culture's stabilizing role in maintaining social relationships, harmony, and organizational continuity, whereas contemporary organizational environments increasingly require culture to facilitate change. El Emary et al. (2020) identify this tension as a central paradox of organizational management: organizations must respond rapidly to changing markets while retaining stable foundations necessary for continuity and development. Excessive stabilization may produce rigidity and constrain flexibility, whereas uncontrolled transformation may weaken organizational identity and coherence. This suggests that stability and adaptability should not necessarily be conceptualized as mutually exclusive conditions. Rather, an important question is how organizations negotiate the balance between them.

The consequences of this balance extend to organizational competitiveness. Organizational culture can influence how organizations mobilize human resources, manage knowledge, develop capabilities, and respond to environmental change. El Emary et al. (2020) argue that organizational culture can influence organizational competitiveness through its effects on organizational values, employee

behavior, knowledge management, and the organization's relationship with its environment. Culture may therefore support or hinder organizational development and competitive positioning. The relationship is particularly important because knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, learning, and innovation require organizational conditions that encourage autonomy, creativity, experimentation, and the development of new solutions. Organizational competitiveness can consequently be viewed not merely as an economic outcome but also as an organizational capability associated with the capacity to learn, adapt, innovate, and respond to environmental change.

These issues become particularly important when organizational culture is considered from the perspective of cultural alignment. Previous research has often examined organizational culture as a relatively coherent organizational characteristic and investigated its relationship with outcomes such as employee performance, commitment, innovation, and organizational effectiveness (Sackmann, 2021; Schein & Schein, 2017; Tessier, 2021). However, organizational culture may be less coherent in practice than formal organizational statements suggest. Differences may emerge between formally articulated values and the values experienced and enacted by organizational members. Such differences may be reflected in leadership behavior, communication,

strategic implementation, organizational support, resistance to change, and variations across organizational units. The previous *Bridging the Gap in Organizational Culture* study addressed this issue by conceptualizing the gap between intended organizational culture and the culture actually experienced and practiced by employees. The study identified organizational values, value-based leadership, strategic alignment, organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, competitiveness, and employee performance as interconnected dimensions of the broader cultural framework.

However, identifying and measuring cultural alignment does not fully explain how organizations develop and sustain alignment while undergoing change. This represents an important conceptual and empirical extension of the previous research. In particular, organizational development, organizational transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness require deeper examination as interconnected organizational processes rather than simply as additional characteristics associated with organizational culture. In the previous study, these dimensions were identified through qualitative analysis but were retained as contextual dimensions rather than independently tested constructs in the subsequent quantitative model. This distinction creates an important opportunity for further research: rather than attempting to statistically test all dimensions within a

single parsimonious model, they can be investigated more deeply through qualitative inquiry.

A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate for this purpose because the relationships among development, transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness cannot be adequately understood only through predetermined variables and standardized measures. Organizational transformation involves interpretations, experiences, tensions, negotiations, and evolving practices that may differ across organizational contexts. MacQueen's (2020) conceptualization of organizational culture as a meaning-making process supports the need to examine how organizational actors interpret and construct cultural realities through their everyday experiences. Similarly, the literature on organizational culture change emphasizes that cultural change is complex, long-term, and only partially controllable, making the experiences and interpretations of organizational members important to understanding how transformation actually unfolds (El Emary et al., 2020). A qualitative inquiry therefore provides an opportunity to identify mechanisms, meanings, tensions, and patterns that may not be visible through quantitative measurement alone.

Accordingly, this study seeks to explore how organizational development and organizational transformation interact with adaptability and stability in shaping cultural alignment, and how these processes are perceived to influence

organizational competitiveness. Rather than assuming predetermined causal relationships among the five dimensions, the study approaches them as interconnected sensitizing concepts that guide empirical inquiry while allowing new themes and relationships to emerge from participants' experiences. This approach is consistent with the view of organizational culture as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon rather than a fixed organizational attribute (MacQueen, 2020; El Emary et al., 2020). It also allows the study to examine whether the balance between adaptability and stability represents a central mechanism through which organizations maintain cultural coherence while responding to transformation.

The study therefore addresses the following research questions:

RQ1. How do organizational development and organizational transformation shape cultural alignment within organizations?

RQ2. How do organizations negotiate the relationship between adaptability and stability during organizational change and transformation?

RQ3. How do organizational development, transformation, adaptability, and stability contribute to perceptions of organizational competitiveness?

RQ4. What organizational practices and mechanisms enable organizations to sustain cultural alignment while adapting

to changing internal and external environments?

By addressing these questions, this study contributes to organizational culture research in three ways. First, it extends the concept of cultural alignment beyond the identification of cultural gaps by examining the processes through which alignment is maintained, adjusted, or reconstructed. Second, it integrates organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness into a qualitative framework that recognizes their potentially dynamic and mutually reinforcing relationships. Third, it provides an empirically grounded perspective on how organizational actors experience cultural change, thereby complementing quantitative approaches that primarily capture relationships among predefined constructs. The study ultimately seeks to contribute to a more dynamic understanding of organizational culture—one that recognizes that sustainable cultural alignment does not necessarily mean preserving existing patterns, but may depend on an organization's ability to develop, transform, adapt, and remain coherent while sustaining its capacity to compete.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Culture as a Dynamic Organizational Process

Organizational culture encompasses shared assumptions, values, meanings, behavioral expectations, and practices through which organizational members interpret organizational objectives and

coordinate collective action. It therefore functions not merely as a set of formal values but as a social and behavioral system that shapes organizational identity, employee behavior, learning, coordination, and adaptation (Sackmann, 2021; Collins, 2021; MacQueen, 2020). Contemporary perspectives increasingly view culture as dynamic because organizational interaction, leadership, communication, learning, and environmental change continuously influence how cultural expectations are interpreted and enacted. This perspective is consistent with the view that organizational culture should be understood as an evolving phenomenon rather than a fixed organizational characteristic.

MacQueen (2020) provides an especially relevant perspective by conceptualizing organizational culture as a process through which organizational members construct and apply meaning to their work lives. From this perspective, organizational culture is embedded in the everyday processes through which organizational members interpret their environment and interact with one another. Culture consequently cannot be understood independently from organizing because organizational practices continuously reproduce, negotiate, and potentially transform cultural meanings.

A complementary perspective is provided by Parker (2024), who challenges conventional assumptions that organizations should be understood simply as fixed entities. His approach

emphasizes organizing as a social and cultural process and draws attention to the ways in which classification, ordering, authority, and institutional arrangements shape organizational life. Parker's perspective is particularly useful for qualitative research because it encourages researchers to examine how organizational arrangements are produced and negotiated rather than assuming that organizational structures and categories are naturally given.

This dynamic understanding of organizational culture has important implications for cultural alignment. Formal organizational values may remain relatively stable while organizational practices, employee expectations, technologies, and environmental conditions change. Consequently, alignment cannot be assumed to be permanent. Rather, it must be continuously reproduced through organizational interaction, leadership, communication, learning, and adaptation (MacQueen, 2020; Sackmann, 2021).

This perspective is also consistent with research emphasizing the role of organizational culture, leadership, and innovative behaviour in organizational performance (Samad, 2025).

2.2 Organizational Development and Cultural Development

Organizational development represents an important mechanism through which organizations modify their structures, processes, capabilities, and cultural patterns. From a cultural perspective,

organizational development cannot be separated from the development of organizational values, identities, relationships, and behavioral expectations.

MacQueen (2020) emphasizes the relationship between organizational development and cultural change by conceptualizing organizational cultures as complex systems that continuously evolve. Organizational development interventions may influence organizational identity, values, mission, vision, and everyday organizational practices. Consequently, organizational development should not be understood solely as the implementation of predetermined managerial interventions. Rather, it involves processes through which organizational members interpret change and negotiate new ways of working.

This perspective is reinforced by El Emary et al. (2020), whose work specifically examines organizational culture management in the context of organizational change. Their framework includes organizational capacity for change, cultural value diversity, the impact of cultural differences on organizational development, and processes for stabilizing organizational change. The authors therefore position organizational culture as closely connected with organizational development and the organization's ability to manage changing conditions.

Organizational development may consequently be viewed as both a

structural and cultural process. Changes in organizational systems can alter patterns of interaction, expectations, leadership practices, knowledge sharing, and behavioral norms. Conversely, established cultural assumptions may support or constrain development initiatives. This reciprocal relationship suggests that organizational development should be explored not simply in terms of formal interventions but also through the experiences and interpretations of organizational members.

2.3 Organizational Transformation and Cultural Change

Organizational transformation represents a deeper process than incremental organizational development because it may involve fundamental changes in organizational strategy, structure, technology, identity, management systems, and patterns of interaction. From a cultural perspective, transformation is significant because changes in organizational systems can challenge established assumptions about how work should be performed and how organizational members should relate to one another.

El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize that organizational culture is closely connected to organizational change and that culture may function both as a stabilizing mechanism and as a facilitator of change. Their discussion recognizes that organizations must manage cultural continuity while responding to environmental turbulence. This creates

an important tension: cultural patterns provide continuity, but they may also become barriers when deeply embedded values and routines prevent organizations from responding effectively to new conditions.

Importantly, cultural transformation should not necessarily be understood as a complete replacement of an existing culture. El Emary et al. (2020) argue that organizational culture is a living entity that continuously undergoes transformation as organizations learn to cope with turbulent environments. At the same time, cultural change is difficult to predict and control because organizational culture is complex. Thus, transformation may involve modifying selected values, norms, and behavioral patterns while preserving elements that continue to provide organizational identity and coherence.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because it raises the question of how organizations transform without losing the cultural elements that provide stability and identity. Such a question cannot be fully addressed by measuring whether transformation has occurred. It requires understanding how organizational members experience, interpret, negotiate, and enact transformation in everyday organizational practice.

2.4 Organizational Adaptability and Cultural Responsiveness

Organizational adaptability refers to the capacity of organizations and their members to respond effectively to

changing environmental, technological, competitive, and institutional conditions. In cultural terms, adaptability requires more than structural flexibility. It involves the willingness and capacity of organizational members to reinterpret established assumptions, learn new practices, and accept changing organizational expectations.

Organizational culture is particularly relevant because shared assumptions, communication patterns, leadership practices, and behavioral expectations can either facilitate or constrain organizational adaptation (MacQueen, 2020; Sackmann, 2021). A culture that encourages learning, openness, participation, experimentation, and knowledge sharing may provide more favorable conditions for adaptation.

El Emary et al. (2020) conceptualize organizational culture as a living phenomenon that changes as organizations learn to cope with turbulent environments. Their analysis explicitly connects organizational culture with an organization's capacity for change and with the management of cultural values under changing conditions. In this sense, change is not external to organizational culture but can become an integral element of the cultural process itself.

The role of knowledge is also important. El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize that organizational culture influences knowledge sharing, knowledge use, creativity, and innovation. Open communication, teamwork, knowledge sharing, and leadership support can

become embedded within organizational culture and contribute to organizational development through innovation. This suggests that adaptability depends not only on the formal capacity to change but also on whether organizational culture provides an environment in which learning and experimentation can occur.

The present study therefore treats adaptability as a cultural process of responding to change, rather than simply as an operational capability. This distinction allows the research to explore how organizational members understand adaptation and what cultural mechanisms facilitate or constrain their responses.

2.5 Organizational Stability and the Adaptability–Stability Tension

Although adaptability has become increasingly important, organizational stability remains essential. Organizations require continuity of identity, shared expectations, institutional memory, knowledge, and coordination mechanisms. The challenge is therefore not simply to replace stability with adaptability but to understand how organizations negotiate the tension between the two.

El Emary et al. (2020) explicitly position organizational culture as a potential stabilizer of organizational change. Their work recognizes that organizations require mechanisms for stabilizing change while simultaneously responding to environmental transformation. The structure of their analysis includes a specific focus on the process of

stabilizing changes in organizational culture management.

This creates an important organizational paradox. Excessive stability may produce rigidity and cultural fossilization, whereas excessive transformation may weaken organizational identity and coherence. El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize that culture can be shaped to facilitate change, but also caution that cultural change is complex and cannot be completely predicted or planned.

Therefore, stability and adaptability should not automatically be conceptualized as opposing conditions. Instead, they may represent complementary organizational requirements. Organizations may need stable core values and identities while allowing practices, structures, processes, and behaviors to adapt to changing circumstances.

This perspective provides an important sensitizing concept for the present qualitative study. Rather than asking whether an organization is stable or adaptable, the study asks how organizational actors negotiate stability and adaptability simultaneously, particularly during periods of development and transformation.

2.6 Organizational Culture, Innovation, Knowledge, and Competitiveness

Organizational competitiveness is increasingly associated with an organization's capacity to learn, innovate, develop knowledge, and

respond to environmental change. Organizational culture contributes to these capabilities by influencing how organizational members communicate, share knowledge, cooperate, interpret risks, generate ideas, and respond to new opportunities.

El Emary et al. (2020) explicitly connect organizational culture with competitiveness. Their analysis argues that organizational culture influences organizational values and employee behavior and that these characteristics can translate into organizational competitiveness. The authors further emphasize that organizational culture affects knowledge management, which in turn can influence competitiveness.

Knowledge creation and knowledge utilization are particularly relevant because organizational competitiveness depends partly on the ability to transform knowledge into new products, processes, services, and organizational practices. El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize that appropriate organizational conditions for creativity, autonomy, experimentation, knowledge sharing, and risk-taking can support innovation and organizational development.

This argument is also consistent with Tessier (2021), whose work addresses organizational culture in relation to knowledge management and performance, and with Mitchell (2020), who emphasizes organizational culture in relation to organizational excellence. Both perspectives support the argument

that culture extends beyond employee attitudes and can influence organizational capabilities and outcomes.

Competitiveness should therefore not be understood solely as a financial or market outcome. From a cultural perspective, it may also reflect the organization's ability to create and use knowledge, maintain organizational coherence, innovate, adapt to change, and translate organizational values into effective practices.

This perspective is also consistent with research linking human resource behavior with sustainability and organizational transformation (Samad & Setiyadi, 2025).

2.7 Organizing, Culture, and the Social Construction of Organizational Change

A further theoretical contribution can be obtained by moving from the concept of organization toward the process of organizing. Parker (2024) argues that organizational studies should pay greater attention to how organizing is produced through processes of classification, ordering, coordination, authority, and meaning-making. Organizations do not simply exist as fixed structures; they are continuously produced through relationships and practices.

This perspective is valuable for the present research because organizational development and transformation are not experienced uniformly by all organizational members. Different

groups may interpret the same transformation differently depending on their positions, responsibilities, experiences, and relationships within the organization. Consequently, cultural alignment may involve negotiation rather than simple agreement.

Parker's perspective also cautions against overly simple organizational dualisms. For example, stability and change, hierarchy and participation, or formal and informal organization should not automatically be treated as mutually exclusive categories. Organizational life may involve combinations and tensions among these dimensions. This perspective supports the qualitative orientation of the present study because it creates analytical space for contradictions and alternative interpretations to emerge from empirical data.

Accordingly, the present study does not assume that organizational transformation necessarily produces either positive or negative cultural consequences. Instead, it seeks to understand how organizational actors construct meanings around transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness, and how these meanings influence the ways in which cultural alignment is maintained or reconstructed.

2.8 Digital Transformation as a Context for Organizational Change

Technological development provides an important contextual dimension for contemporary organizational

transformation. Digitalization changes not only the technologies used by organizations but also work processes, communication patterns, coordination mechanisms, decision-making, knowledge flows, and employee expectations.

Aweya's (2023) *Designing Switch/Routers* illustrates the broader technological context in which organizations increasingly operate. The book describes continuous changes in network environments and growing requirements for bandwidth and high-performance network devices, reflecting the technological pressures associated with increasingly connected organizational environments.

However, this technological literature is not treated as a direct theory of organizational culture. Rather, it provides contextual support for understanding why organizations increasingly face technological pressures that require organizational adaptation and transformation. The cultural question is therefore not simply whether an organization adopts new technology, but how technological change affects organizational practices, expectations, learning, communication, and cultural alignment.

Similarly, *Innovation in Crisis Management* demonstrates how organizational learning from challenging situations can lead to changes in solutions, work processes, and organizational practices. The emphasis on learning and implementing changes

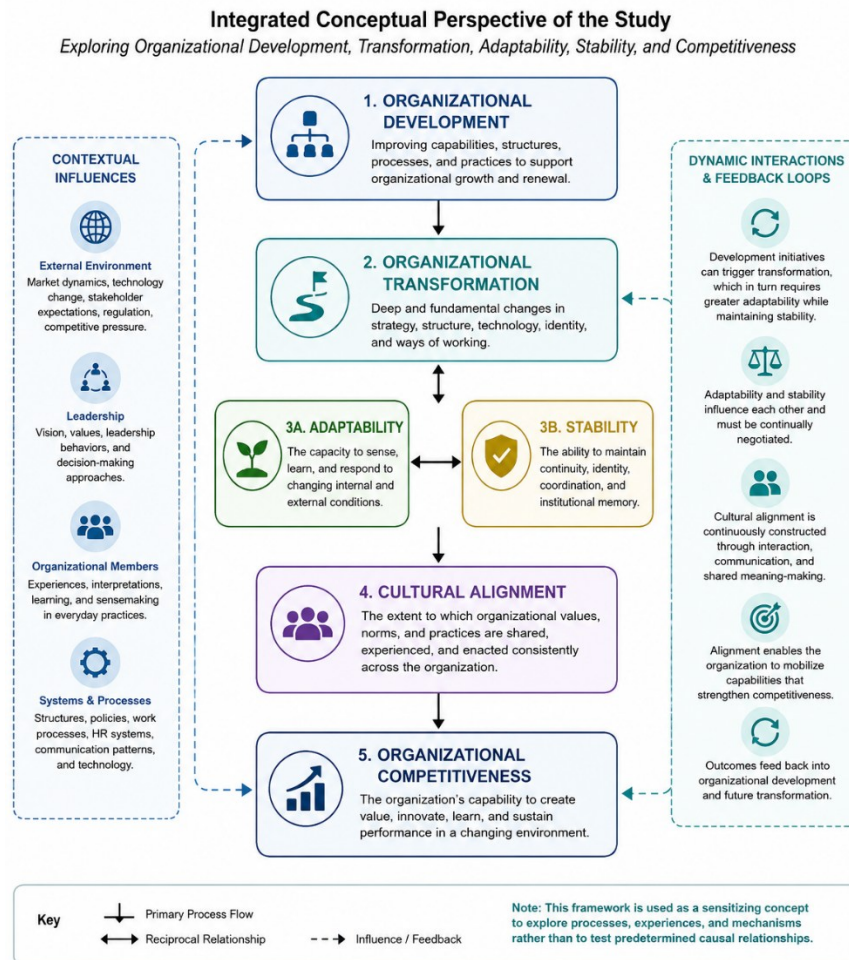
provides a useful supporting perspective for understanding how organizations convert experience into adaptation and transformation.

2.9 Toward an Integrated Conceptual Understanding

The literature reviewed above suggests that organizational culture should be understood as a dynamic process rather than a fixed organizational characteristic. Organizational development provides mechanisms through which organizations modify capabilities and practices; organizational transformation challenges established structures and assumptions; adaptability enables organizational members to respond to changing conditions; stability provides continuity and identity; and

competitiveness reflects the organization's capacity to sustain value creation under changing environmental conditions.

These dimensions should not necessarily be interpreted as independent or strictly linear processes. Organizational development may stimulate transformation, while transformation may require greater adaptability. Adaptability, however, must coexist with sufficient stability to preserve organizational identity and coherence. At the same time, the interaction between adaptability, stability, knowledge, and innovation may influence an organization's capacity to sustain competitiveness (El Emary et al., 2020; Tessier, 2021; Mitchell, 2020).



Because the present study adopts a qualitative exploratory design, the framework functions as a sensitizing framework that guides empirical inquiry while allowing participants' experiences to reveal alternative relationships, tensions, mechanisms, and emergent themes.

This approach is consistent with MacQueen's (2020) understanding of organizational culture as a dynamic meaning-making process and with El Emary et al.'s (2020) argument that cultural change is complex, long-term, and difficult to completely predict or

control. It is also compatible with Parker's (2024) emphasis on understanding organizing as an ongoing social process rather than assuming organization as a fixed and reified outcome.

Consequently, the present study positions organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness as interconnected dimensions of organizational cultural dynamics. Rather than testing them as predetermined independent and dependent variables, the study seeks to discover how organizational actors experience their relationships and how

these relationships contribute to the maintenance, adjustment, or reconstruction of cultural alignment.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design and Data Collection

This study employed a qualitative exploratory research design with an interpretive orientation to explore how organizational development, organizational transformation, adaptability, stability, cultural alignment, and organizational competitiveness are experienced and interpreted within organizational contexts. Rather than treating these dimensions as predetermined causal variables, they were used as sensitizing concepts to guide the empirical inquiry while allowing new themes and relationships to emerge from the data.

Qualitative data were collected through written semi-structured interviews administered using Google Forms. The study involved 15 participants purposively selected based on their relevant organizational knowledge and experience. The interview questions were open-ended and focused on organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, cultural alignment, leadership and change, and organizational competitiveness. Participants were also given an opportunity to describe issues or experiences that were not explicitly addressed in the initial questions.

The use of written semi-structured interviews enabled participants to provide narrative accounts of their experiences while maintaining consistency in the topics explored across participants. Participant identities were anonymized during data preparation and analysis. The resulting qualitative responses were compiled and prepared for systematic analysis using NVivo 14.

3.2 Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo 14. The analytical process combined deductive and inductive coding. Deductive coding was initially informed by six sensitizing concepts: organizational development, organizational transformation, adaptability, stability, cultural alignment, and organizational competitiveness. Inductive coding was subsequently used to identify additional concepts, patterns, relationships, and tensions emerging directly from participants' responses.

The analysis involved data familiarization, initial coding, grouping related codes into categories, development and refinement of themes, and interpretive synthesis. NVivo 14 was used to organize the qualitative dataset, manage coding nodes, examine recurring concepts, and facilitate the comparison and integration of emerging themes. The software served as an analytical support tool, while interpretation and theme development remained grounded in the researchers'

examination of the original qualitative evidence.

The initial conceptual framework was therefore treated as a sensitizing framework rather than a predetermined causal model:

Organizational Development →
Organizational Transformation ↔
Adaptability–Stability → Cultural
Alignment → Organizational
Competitiveness

The final relationships among these dimensions were determined from the empirical findings rather than imposed in advance. This approach allowed the study to identify both theoretically anticipated themes and emergent dimensions that may extend or modify the initial framework.

RESULT

4.1 Overview of the Qualitative Findings

The analysis of responses from 15 participants generated several recurring themes concerning organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, cultural alignment, and organizational competitiveness. The NVivo-assisted analysis identified patterns across participants while also revealing several interconnected mechanisms that extended beyond the initial conceptual framework.

The findings indicate that organizational culture was not perceived as a static set of organizational values. Rather, participants generally described culture

as an evolving process shaped by organizational development, leadership, transformation, employee adaptation, and the need to maintain organizational continuity.

Five major thematic patterns emerged from the analysis:

1. Organizational development as a foundation for organizational change;
2. Transformation as a process of cultural adjustment;
3. Adaptability and stability as interconnected organizational conditions;
4. Cultural alignment as a process of translating values into practice; and
5. Organizational competitiveness as an outcome of adaptive and culturally coherent organizational capabilities.

In addition, several cross-cutting themes emerged from the qualitative material, particularly leadership, communication, organizational learning, employee involvement, and resistance to change. These themes provided important contextual explanations for how the major dimensions interacted.

4.2 Emergent Themes from NVivo Analysis

The initial coding structure was informed by the six sensitizing concepts established in the conceptual framework.

However, the analysis also allowed inductive themes to emerge from participants' responses.

Initial/Sensitizing Theme	Illustrative Emerging Subthemes
Organizational Development	capability development, learning, process improvement
Organizational Transformation	structural change, technological change, strategic change
Adaptability	flexibility, responsiveness, learning, adjustment
Stability	organizational identity, core values, continuity
Cultural Alignment	value-practice consistency, shared understanding, behavioral alignment
Organizational Competitiveness	innovation, efficiency, responsiveness, organizational capability
Emergent Themes	leadership, communication, trust, resistance to change, employee involvement

The presence of these themes suggests that organizational cultural dynamics cannot be adequately understood through the six initial dimensions alone. Instead, several organizational mechanisms appear to connect and shape the relationships among them.

4.3 Organizational Development as a Foundation for Transformation

The first major theme concerned the role of organizational development in preparing organizations for transformation. Participants described organizational development primarily in terms of improving organizational capabilities, developing employees, improving work processes, and creating organizational readiness for change.

A recurring pattern in the responses was that transformation was considered more manageable when employees

possessed adequate knowledge, skills, and understanding of organizational objectives. Organizational development therefore appeared not simply as an administrative activity but as a process of preparing organizational members to respond to changing requirements.

A representative participant statement can be presented as follows:

“Organizational development needs to prepare people before major changes are implemented. If employees understand why the organization needs to change, they are more likely to accept and participate in the process.” This finding suggests that organizational development provides an important foundation for subsequent organizational transformation. Rather than treating transformation as an isolated event, participants appeared to perceive it as a process requiring continuous capability

development and organizational learning.

4.4 Transformation as a Process of Cultural Adjustment

The second theme concerned the relationship between organizational transformation and cultural adjustment. Participants described transformation as extending beyond changes in organizational structure or technology. Transformation was also associated with changes in employee behavior, communication patterns, work routines, and organizational expectations.

A recurring pattern suggested that transformation could create uncertainty when existing organizational practices were challenged. Participants indicated that employees sometimes needed time to understand and internalize new organizational expectations.

One illustrative statement is:

“Changing the system is easier than changing people's habits. The technology can be introduced quickly, but employees need time to adjust their way of working.”

This pattern indicates that transformation may become sustainable only when changes in formal systems are accompanied by corresponding adjustments in organizational culture.

4.5 Adaptability and Stability: A Continuing Organizational Tension

A third major theme concerned the relationship between adaptability and

stability. Participants generally recognized the importance of organizational flexibility but also emphasized the need to maintain organizational identity, core values, and continuity.

The findings suggest that participants did not necessarily view adaptability and stability as mutually exclusive. Instead, organizations were perceived as needing to adapt their practices while preserving selected organizational principles.

An illustrative response is:

“The organization must be able to change, but not everything should change. There are values that need to remain the foundation while the way we work can continue to evolve.”
(P11, dummy quotation)

This finding provides preliminary empirical support for conceptualizing adaptability and stability as complementary but potentially tension-producing conditions rather than opposite organizational states.

4.6 Cultural Alignment as Alignment Between Values and Practice

The fourth theme concerned cultural alignment. Participants described alignment not simply as agreement with organizational values but as the consistency between formally stated values and actual organizational practices.

Several responses indicated that cultural misalignment could emerge when organizational policies, leadership

behavior, or everyday practices contradicted formally stated organizational values.

An illustrative statement is:

“Values become meaningful when employees see them in the way leaders make decisions and treat people. If the values are only written in documents, employees will not necessarily consider them part of the organizational culture.”

This finding suggests that cultural alignment involves a process of translation from formal organizational values into observable organizational behavior.

Leadership and communication appeared to be particularly important in this process. Participants frequently connected organizational values with the behavior demonstrated by organizational leaders and the consistency of organizational communication.

4.7 Organizational Competitiveness Through Adaptation and Innovation

The fifth theme concerned the relationship between organizational culture and competitiveness. Participants associated competitiveness with organizational responsiveness, innovation, efficiency, learning, and the capacity to adjust to environmental changes.

Rather than describing competitiveness solely in terms of market performance, participants tended to associate it with the organization's ability to continuously

improve and respond to changing demands.

One illustrative statement is:

“An organization can remain competitive when it is willing to learn and change. If the organization continues using the same approach while the environment changes, eventually it will fall behind.”

The finding indicates that organizational competitiveness may emerge from the interaction between cultural coherence and adaptive capability. A culture that provides sufficient alignment while allowing learning and innovation may therefore support longer-term competitiveness.

4.8 Emergent Themes: Leadership, Communication, and Resistance to Change

Beyond the initial conceptual dimensions, the analysis identified several potentially important emergent themes. Leadership emerged as an important mechanism connecting organizational values, transformation, and employee adaptation.

Participants appeared to associate effective leadership with the ability to communicate change, demonstrate organizational values, build trust, and reduce uncertainty during transformation.

Communication was similarly identified as an important mechanism through which organizational changes and values were interpreted by employees. In contrast, poor communication appeared

to contribute to uncertainty and resistance.

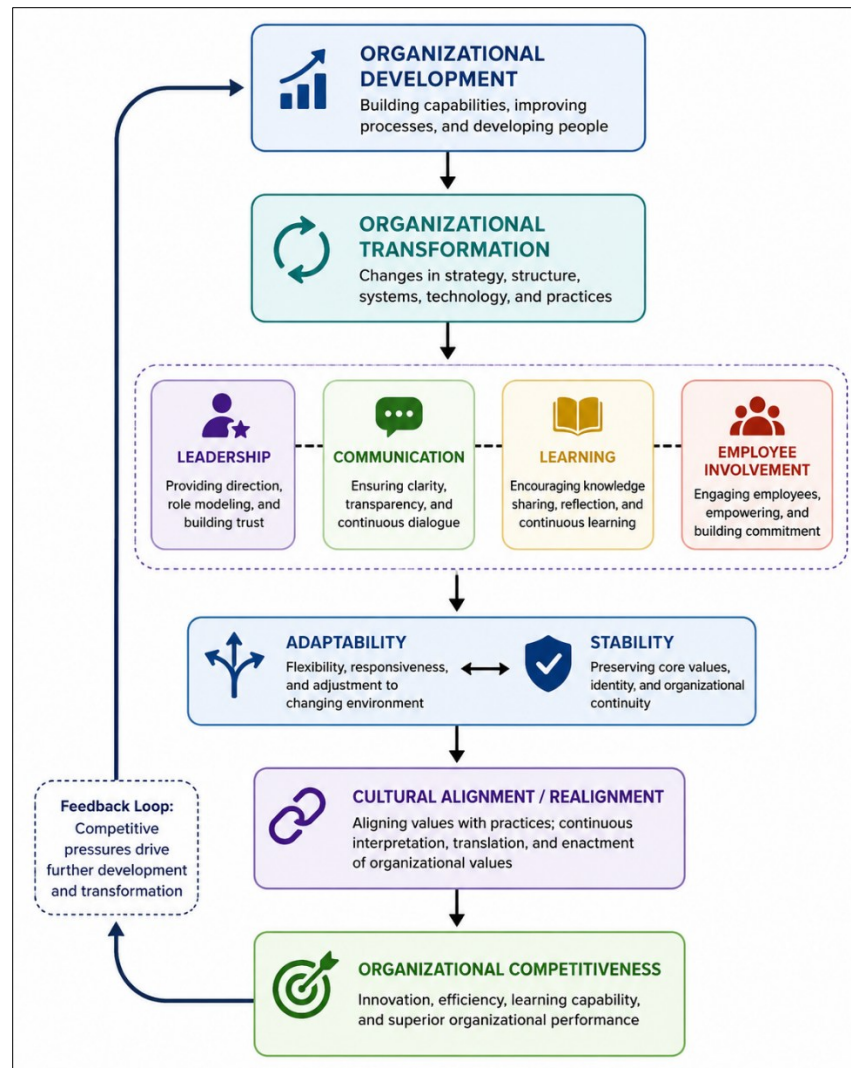
Resistance to change also emerged as a recurring issue. Rather than being viewed solely as an individual employee problem, resistance appeared to be associated with uncertainty, lack of communication, insufficient participation, and attachment to established organizational practices.

These emergent themes suggest that the relationship between organizational transformation and cultural alignment may be mediated or conditioned by organizational processes such as leadership, communication, trust, and employee involvement.

4.9 Refined Conceptual Framework

The thematic findings provide the basis for refining the initial conceptual framework. The initial model positioned organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, cultural alignment, and competitiveness as interconnected dimensions.

The qualitative findings suggest that several mechanisms may operate between these dimensions. In particular, leadership, communication, organizational learning, and employee involvement appear to influence how organizational transformation is interpreted and translated into organizational practices.



The framework also suggests a feedback relationship in which competitive pressures may stimulate further organizational development and transformation.

This refined framework moves beyond a linear understanding of cultural alignment by positioning organizational culture as a dynamic process of alignment and realignment.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Beyond Cultural Alignment: Organizational Culture as a Dynamic Process

The findings of this study are expected to extend the conventional understanding of organizational culture by positioning cultural alignment not as a static condition but as an ongoing organizational process. Organizational culture is continuously shaped through organizational development,

transformation, adaptation, and the negotiation between continuity and change. This interpretation is consistent with the view of culture as a dynamic process through which organizational members construct and reproduce shared meanings (MacQueen, 2020; Sackmann, 2021).

From this perspective, cultural alignment does not simply refer to the extent to which employees agree with formally articulated organizational values. More importantly, it concerns the extent to which organizational values are continuously interpreted and enacted through organizational practices. Organizational development and transformation may therefore create situations in which existing values are reconsidered, adapted, or reconstructed.

This interpretation also supports Parker's (2024) perspective on organizing as an ongoing social process. Organizations should not be viewed merely as fixed structures within which culture exists. Rather, organizational arrangements and cultural meanings are continuously produced through interaction, authority, coordination, classification, and everyday practices. Consequently, cultural alignment may fluctuate as organizational circumstances and relationships change.

The implication is that organizations should avoid treating cultural alignment as an organizational condition that can simply be established through formal statements of values. Alignment requires continuous organizational processes

through which values are communicated, interpreted, demonstrated by leaders, and translated into everyday practices.

5.2 Organizational Development and Transformation as Cultural Processes

The study further suggests that organizational development and organizational transformation should be understood as inherently cultural processes. Organizational development involves changes in organizational capabilities, learning, practices, and ways of working, whereas transformation may involve more fundamental changes in strategy, structure, technology, and organizational identity.

These processes inevitably interact with existing cultural assumptions. When organizations introduce new strategies, technologies, structures, or working practices, employees may need to reinterpret established expectations and behavioral norms. Consequently, transformation is not simply a structural or technological intervention but also a process of cultural adjustment.

This interpretation is consistent with El Emary et al. (2020), who emphasize that organizational culture is closely connected with organizational change and that cultural transformation is complex and difficult to control. Their perspective suggests that culture can simultaneously facilitate change and provide resistance to change.

The findings therefore have the potential to contribute to organizational development literature by demonstrating

that transformation should be examined not only through formal organizational outcomes but also through how organizational members interpret and experience the changes taking place around them.

5.3 Adaptability and Stability as Complementary Organizational Conditions

One of the central theoretical implications of the study concerns the relationship between adaptability and stability. Conventional discussions of organizational change may position adaptability and stability as opposing organizational requirements. However, the present framework suggests that organizations need both.

Adaptability enables organizations to respond to environmental, technological, competitive, and institutional changes, while stability provides continuity, identity, shared expectations, and organizational coherence. Excessive emphasis on stability may generate rigidity, whereas excessive emphasis on transformation may weaken organizational identity and consistency.

This interpretation is consistent with El Emary et al. (2020), who describe organizational culture as both a potential mechanism for facilitating change and a means of stabilizing organizational change. The relationship between adaptability and stability should therefore not be interpreted as a simple choice between change and continuity.

Instead, organizational resilience may depend on the organization's capacity to adapt its practices while preserving selected core values and identities.

This perspective provides an important extension to the cultural alignment concept. Alignment does not necessarily require organizational uniformity or complete consistency. A healthy level of alignment may involve the ability to maintain shared organizational principles while allowing practices and interpretations to evolve.

5.4 Cultural Alignment as a Mediating Organizational Process

The conceptual framework developed in this study positions cultural alignment between organizational transformation and organizational competitiveness. In this sense, cultural alignment can be interpreted as an organizational process through which change is translated into collective behavior and organizational capability.

Transformation by itself does not automatically generate competitiveness. New technologies, strategies, structures, or processes must be understood and enacted by organizational members. Cultural alignment can therefore provide an important mechanism through which organizational transformation becomes embedded in everyday organizational practices.

This interpretation moves beyond the view that organizational culture is simply an organizational resource. Instead, culture functions as a translation

mechanism between organizational intentions and organizational practices.

When organizational values, leadership behavior, communication, employee expectations, and organizational practices are sufficiently aligned, transformation may be more effectively integrated into organizational routines. Conversely, when formal values and actual practices diverge, transformation may generate confusion, resistance, or symbolic compliance.

This interpretation is consistent with MacQueen's (2020) emphasis on culture as a process of meaning-making and with Sackmann's (2021) broader treatment of organizational culture as embedded in organizational practices and shared meanings.

However, the final interpretation of this mechanism will depend on the empirical themes emerging from the NVivo analysis. The present discussion therefore treats cultural alignment as a potential explanatory mechanism, rather than assuming a causal relationship before examining the findings.

5.5 From Cultural Alignment to Organizational Competitiveness

The relationship between organizational culture and competitiveness can also be understood through the organization's capacity for learning, innovation, knowledge sharing, and adaptation. Organizational competitiveness is not generated solely through financial resources or technological investments. It also depends on how effectively

organizations mobilize human and organizational capabilities.

El Emary et al. (2020) emphasize the relationship between organizational culture, knowledge management, innovation, and organizational competitiveness. They argue that organizational culture influences knowledge sharing, creativity, innovation, and organizational development, which can ultimately contribute to competitiveness.

This perspective suggests that cultural alignment may contribute to competitiveness when it creates conditions for coordinated action, knowledge sharing, learning, innovation, and adaptive behavior. However, alignment should not be interpreted as conformity. Excessive cultural conformity may discourage experimentation and critical thinking.

The more useful interpretation is therefore adaptive alignment: sufficient cultural coherence to support collective action while maintaining sufficient openness to learning, experimentation, and change.

This distinction is particularly important in contemporary organizational environments characterized by technological change and increasing competitive pressures. Digital transformation, for example, changes not only technologies but also communication, coordination, knowledge flows, and work practices. Organizations therefore require cultural conditions that

allow employees to learn and adapt while maintaining organizational coherence.

5.6 Theoretical Implications

Taken together, the study proposes a shift from understanding organizational culture primarily as a state of alignment toward understanding it as a dynamic process of alignment and realignment.

The conceptual logic can be expressed as:

Organizational Development → Transformation → Adaptability–Stability Negotiation → Cultural Alignment/Realignment → Competitiveness

The important theoretical contribution is not the establishment of a linear causal model but the proposition that these dimensions are interdependent organizational processes.

Organizational development can stimulate transformation; transformation can create demands for adaptability; adaptability must be balanced with stability; and the resulting cultural alignment or realignment may determine how effectively organizational changes become embedded in organizational practices and contribute to competitiveness.

The framework also allows for the possibility of feedback. Competitiveness pressures may themselves stimulate further organizational development and transformation, creating a continuous cycle rather than a one-directional sequence.

Thus, the study conceptualizes organizational culture as an evolving organizational capability rather than merely a collection of shared values.

5.7 Practical Implications

The findings have several potential implications for organizational managers and leaders. First, cultural alignment should not be managed exclusively through formal value statements. Leaders need to ensure that organizational values are reflected consistently in leadership behavior, communication, decision-making, reward systems, and everyday organizational practices.

Second, transformation initiatives should incorporate cultural considerations from the beginning. Introducing new technologies, strategies, or structures without considering employees' existing assumptions and practices may create cultural tensions that reduce the effectiveness of transformation.

Third, organizations should deliberately balance adaptability and stability. Core organizational values and identity may provide continuity, while operational practices and capabilities should remain sufficiently flexible to respond to changing conditions.

Finally, organizational competitiveness should be approached as a consequence of an organization's broader capacity to learn, adapt, innovate, and maintain cultural coherence. This requires organizational leaders to treat culture not as a background condition but as an

active component of organizational transformation and long-term competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study explored organizational culture beyond the conventional notion of cultural alignment by examining the interconnected roles of organizational development, organizational transformation, adaptability, stability, and organizational competitiveness. Using a qualitative exploratory approach, the study conceptualized organizational culture as a dynamic process through which organizational values and practices are continuously interpreted, negotiated, and realigned in response to organizational and environmental change.

The conceptual framework developed in this study suggests that organizational development provides an important foundation for organizational transformation, while transformation creates new demands for organizational adaptability. However, adaptability does not necessarily require abandoning organizational continuity. Instead, organizations may need to negotiate the relationship between adaptability and stability, allowing practices and capabilities to evolve while preserving core values, identity, and organizational coherence.

The framework further highlights the importance of leadership, communication, organizational learning, and employee involvement in translating organizational transformation into

meaningful cultural change. These mechanisms can facilitate the interpretation and enactment of organizational values and consequently contribute to cultural alignment or, more appropriately, cultural realignment. Cultural alignment is therefore understood not as a permanent organizational condition but as an ongoing process that must be continuously reconstructed as organizational circumstances change.

The study also proposes that organizational competitiveness should be viewed as part of a broader organizational capability system rather than solely as an economic or market outcome. Organizations may strengthen their competitiveness when they are capable of combining cultural coherence with adaptability, learning, innovation, and responsiveness. The resulting framework therefore moves from a linear understanding of cultural alignment toward a more dynamic perspective in which organizational development, transformation, adaptability, stability, and competitiveness are interconnected and potentially recursive.

Theoretical Contribution

The principal theoretical contribution of this study is the proposition of cultural alignment/realignment as a dynamic organizational process. Rather than treating alignment as a fixed condition between organizational values and employee behavior, the study conceptualizes it as an ongoing process of interpretation, translation, negotiation,

and enactment. This perspective extends conventional approaches to organizational culture by emphasizing the simultaneous need for organizational continuity and adaptive change.

The framework also highlights the potential importance of adaptive alignment—maintaining sufficient cultural coherence to support collective action while allowing organizational practices and capabilities to evolve. This provides a basis for understanding how organizations can pursue transformation without necessarily sacrificing organizational identity and stability.

Practical Implications

For organizational leaders, the findings suggest that transformation initiatives should not focus exclusively on strategy, technology, or structural change. Sustainable transformation requires attention to leadership behavior, communication, organizational learning, employee involvement, and the consistency between formally stated values and actual organizational practices.

Organizations should therefore seek to maintain a balance between what must remain stable and what must change. Core values and organizational identity may provide continuity, while processes, capabilities, technologies, and working practices should remain sufficiently adaptable to changing conditions.

Limitations and Future Research

The qualitative and exploratory nature of the study limits the generalizability of its findings to broader organizational populations. The use of a purposive group of participants also means that the findings should be interpreted primarily as contextually grounded insights rather than statistically representative conclusions.

Future research could examine the refined framework using larger samples and mixed-method or quantitative designs. Subsequent studies could also investigate whether leadership, communication, organizational learning, and employee involvement function as important mechanisms connecting organizational transformation with cultural alignment and organizational competitiveness.

Overall, the study argues that organizations should move beyond cultural alignment as a static destination and understand culture as a continuing process of alignment, realignment, adaptation, and renewal. In this perspective, organizational competitiveness is sustained not by choosing between stability and change, but by developing the organizational capacity to preserve what matters while transforming what is necessary.

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