

Organizational culture : Evidence from selected organizations in Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The study assesses the employees' perception of Organizational Culture (OC) of employees in Arunachal Pradesh, considering various demographic characteristics. Review of literature revealed a scarcity of studies carried out in this geographical area and keeping in mind the concept of regional influence, this study was conducted to work towards filling this gap. The organizations were chosen using convenient sampling and the questionnaires were distributed. Perceptions of observable culture vary by organizational type, and both dimensions of OC differs significantly across education levels. Monthly income is negatively correlated with observable culture. While age influences inferable culture in the public sector and work experience affects observable culture in the private sector, only the age-related difference between sectors is statistically significant.

Subject Classification: 62H10, 62J10, 62H20, M14, J10, J16.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Demographic variable, Observable culture, Inferable culture.

Introduction

Organizational culture (OC) is the shared beliefs, values, norms and behaviours that structure the unique identity and character of an organization. Culture is a "shared network of common understanding",

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some of which are overt, however not all [1]. There are two types of culture: the first type pertains to how work is structured, the extent to which tasks are integrated and interchangeable. The outcome of the interactions stemming from these arrangements is known as *observable culture*. The second type encompasses non-material factors within the organization, which may not be readily visible or physical, such as the social structure, attitudes, value system and behavioural norms, collectively referred to as *inferable culture*. These two combined comprise the cultural system of the organization [1]. OC plays a crucial role in determining the attitudes, behaviours and overall performance of employees [2]. Consequently, influences aspects such as innovation [3], employees' overall development [4] performance [5], presenteeism and productivity [6] among others. Hence, understanding culture allows leaders to align it with strategic goals, foster employee engagement and create an environment that supports adaptability in a rapidly changing business landscape. Additionally, by understanding OC and its dynamics, seemingly unusual and inexplicable human behaviours encountered within the organization can be interpreted and made meaningful [7].

Rationale of the study

Studies in both developed and developing nations frequently operate on the premise that OC is heavily shaped by the societal or national culture it exists within [8]. This highlights the importance of understanding OC within the specific context. Since it is shaped by individuals' diverse characteristics, along with their behavioural norms, expectations, practices and OC is distinct and uniquely its own [9]. One of the earliest studies was conducted in 1990 [10] demonstrating that OC is not uniform and that employees' perception can be influenced by demographic factors. Therefore, this study has been undertaken to examine the impact of various demographic characteristics on employees' perceptions of OC in Arunachal Pradesh, where diverse socio-cultural dynamics make such research essential for organizational development and regional growth. Moreover, the absence of prior research on this topic within the region further underscores the relevance and contribution of the present study.

Literature Review

Employees' perceptions of the OC in an organization are inherently diverse, as each individual interprets and responds to it through the lens

of their unique characteristics, preferences and personality [11][12][13]. These varied perspectives reflect personal experiences and internal framework, contributing to a multi-faceted understanding of the OC. Past studies indicate that the perceptions of OC differ based on demographic factors such as age, gender, educational level, experience/tenure, living areas, designation, salary, marital status, among others [14][15][16][17][18][19].

A study in Indian organizations showed that men and women may often perceive OC differently, influenced by gendered socialization and role expectation [20]. However, few past researches shows insignificant differences between male and female employees in their perceptions of OC, suggesting that in certain contexts, gender may not play a defining role [21][22][18]. Furthermore, educational qualification was found to influence employees' cognitive approaches to culture. Highly educated employees are often more inclined towards adaptive, learning-oriented cultures and demonstrate a stronger preference for participative environments [23]. Other demographic variables like inhabitancy status have also shown to impact OC. For instance, inhabitancy status such as being local versus non-local, can affect how readily individuals adapt to the organizational norms, especially in culturally distinct or close-knit regions [24]. Furthermore, the type of organization also plays a substantial role. Private sector firms are generally perceived to promote cultures of innovation and flexibility, whereas public sector organizations are more aligned with formalized, procedural and stability-oriented culture [25]. Recent studies also emphasizes that different age groups interpret workplace values and norms differently, influencing organizational dynamics. For example, a study found that younger employees may pay more importance to innovation, feedback and flexibility while the older ones may value stability, hierarchy and tradition [26]. These generational differences can lead to distinct interpretations of organizational norms and practices. Work experience is another critical variable- more experienced employees are often more acculturated, having internalized the organizational values over time, while newcomers may struggle to align [27]. Additionally, monthly income often correlated with organizational hierarchy, can shape access to cultural participation- higher-earning employees often report stronger alignment with strategic values and autonomy, whereas lower-income employees may perceive the culture as more distant or restrictive [28]. However, there are contrasting findings as well. For example, a study among service and manufacturing sectors in Egypt and Mexico found that demographic characteristics like

age, experience, gender and education qualification do not really impact the perception towards OC [29]. This finding was further corroborated by other studies regarding gender [22] [18] and age [18].

Based on the preceding review of relevant literature, the study proceeds with the following aim, objective and hypothesis. The aim of the study is to examine the impact between several demographic factors on OC. Hence the question "Does the perception of OC (Observable and Inferable) gets impacted based on the demographic characteristics of the employees in Arunachal Pradesh?".

H1: Demographic variables (gender, education qualification, inhabitancy status, age, work experience and income) influence the perception of OC.

H2: The influence of demographic variables on OC depends on the type of organization.

Method

The study was done among the employees of Arunachal Pradesh using convenient sampling and structured questionnaires. State-owned departments represented the public organizations, while private organizations were selected from the automobile service sector for the study due to its accessibility, aligning with the use of a convenient sampling method. Data collection was conducted on a voluntary basis, with respondents assured of confidentiality. In the study, Parida, Mathur, and Khurana [30] OC scale was used for data collection. The questionnaire contains 53 items (40 positive and 13 negative) in a 5-point Likert scale (1=very low to 5=very high). The entire item is based on the characteristics of OC forming under two groups- Observable culture with items such as "*Emphasis on rules and regulation is*" and Inferable culture with items such as "*The time taken by my superior to listen to my ideas is*". Scoring is reversed for negative items. The Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.871 which is an acceptable range. Out of 250 questionnaires that were distributed, 179 were returned out of which public organization employees comprised of 64.8%, while those from private organizations accounted for 35.2%. The data collected were analysed using IBM-SPSS Vs 27. For analysis, statistical techniques like t-test, ANOVA and correlation were used. Before performing the statistical analysis, preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate matrices and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted.

Data analysis and findings.

Demographic profile of the respondents

Gender: Respondents were predominantly female, comprising 67.2% of the sample while males accounted for 32.8% for public organization employees. The private organization employees comprised of majority male with 50.8% and 49.2% female.

Education Qualification: Majority of the respondents holds a Graduate degree (59.5%), followed by 12th (22%), Post graduate (15.5%) and matriculation (10th, 2.6%) for public organization employees. Similar to the public organization, majority of the respondent comprised of Graduate individuals (60.3%), followed by 12th pass (22.2%), Post graduate (11.1%) and 10th pass (6.3%) in private organization

Inhabitancy status: Majority of respondents were native to the area where the organization is based, accounting for 95.7% while non-native employees made up 4.3% for public organization employees. Similarly, the majority of the respondents in private sector were native comprising of 63.5% and non-native 36.5%.

Age: The mean age of the respondents was 43.5 for public organization employees and 29.84.

Work experience: The mean score of work experience was 15.7 for public organization employees and 3.6 for private organization employees.

Income (Monthly): The mean score of monthly income of the respondents is 52759 for public organization employees and 12587 for private organization respondents.

Descriptive statistics of organizational culture

Table 1 shows the total *Mean Score* and *SD* of both observable culture and inferable culture. The results revealed an average mean score of the observable culture and inferable culture value of 3.35 and 3.19 respectively

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of OC

	Public				Private			
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Observable Culture	1.69	4.31	3.35	.423	2.72	4.31	3.57	.414
Inferable culture	2.39	4.22	3.19	.376	2.67	3.67	3.21	.247

for the public sector and 3.57 and 3.21 respectively for private sector. This implies that the respondents for have an average perspective towards how work is structured, coordinated and mutually substitutable and the resulting interactions (observable culture), as well as the attitudes, value system and behavioural norms (Inferable culture). Furthermore, private sector employees reported higher levels of OC across both dimensions.

OC and Demographic Variables

Table 2
Multivariate and univariate Tests (Gender, type of organization, educational qualification)

Effect	Wilks' Λ	F	DF	Sig.	η^2p	Observable Culture F (p, η^2p)	Inferable culture F (p, η^2p)
Gender	.980	1.551	(2, 154)	.215	.020		
TO	.952	3.882	(2, 154)	.023	.048	6.748 (0.01, .042)	
EQ	.902	2.717	(6, 308)	.014	.050	3 (0.032, 0.055)	4.97(0.003, 0.088)
IS	.971	2.281	(2, 154)	.106	.029		
Gender * TO	.984	1.273	(2, 154)	.283	.016		
EQ * TO	.936	1.727	(6, 308)	.114	.033		
IS* TO	.985	1.196	(2, 154)	.305	.015		
<i>Note:</i> TO-Type of organization; EQ-Education Qualification; IS- Inhabitancy Status.							

Table 3
Scheffe Multiple Comparisons for Education Qualification

Dependent Variable		Mean Dif	Std. Error Lower	Sig. Upper	95% CI	
Observable Culture						
10th	12th	.4283	.1643	.083	-.036	0.892
	Bachelors	.6093	.1564	.002	.167	1.051
	PG	.6942	.1715	.001	.209	1.179
12th	10th	-.4283	.1643	.083	-.892	0.036
	Bachelors	.1810	.0743	.120	-.029	0.391
	PG	.2660	.1022	.084	-.023	0.555

Contd...

Bachelors	10 th	-.6093	.1564	.002	-1.051	-0.167
	12th	-.1810	.0743	.120	-.391	0.029
	PG	.0850	.0891	.823	-.166	0.336
PG	10th	-.6942	.1715	.001	-1.179	-0.209
	12th	-.2660	.1022	.084	-.555	0.023
	Bachelors	-.0850	.0891	.823	-.336	0.166
Inferable Culture						
10th	12th	.3791	.1284	.037	.016	0.742
	Bachelors	.5055	.1223	.001	.159	0.851
	PG	.6096	.1340	.000	.230	0.988
12th	10th	-.3791	.1284	.037	-0.742	-0.016
	Bachelors	.1264	.0581	.197	-0.037	0.290
	PG	.2304	.0799	.044	0.004	0.456
Bachelors	10th	-.5055	.1223	.001	-0.851	-0.159
	12th	-.1264	.0581	.197	-0.290	0.037
	PG	.1040	.0696	.528	-0.092	0.300
PG	10th	-.6096	.1340	.000	-0.988	-0.230
	12th	-.2304	.0799	.044	-0.456	-0.004
	Bachelors	-.1040	.0696	.528	-0.300	0.092

As shown in the above table 2, the result showed no significant difference on the perception of OC based on gender, Wilk' $\Lambda = .980$, $F(2, 154) = 1.551$, $p = 0.215$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.020$, indicating no multivariate difference. Furthermore, the effect of the type of organization was significant, Wilk' $\Lambda = .952$, $F(2, 154) = 3.882$, $p = 0.023$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.048$. An insignificant interaction effect was observable between gender and type of organization, Wilk' $\Lambda = .984$, $F(2, 154) = 1.273$, $p = 0.003$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.016$. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs revealed a significant difference in the perception of Inferable culture based on the type of organization, $F = .50$, $p = 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.508$. These findings suggest that type of organization influences the perception of OC more specifically the inferable culture however gender had no influence on both the dimensions of OC. Furthermore, the effect of gender on perception of OC does not depend on the type of organization.

Table 2 also shows that educational qualification does have an influence on the DV, Wilk' $\Lambda = .902$, $F(6, 308) = 2.717$, $p = 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = .050$, indicating multivariate difference. Furthermore, univariate test revealed a significant difference in perception of both OC dimensions-

Observable culture ($F=3$, $p=0.03$, partial $\eta^2=0.055$) and inferable culture ($F=4.970$, $p<0.01$, partial $\eta^2=0.088$). Further table 3 shows the Scheffe *post hoc* comparison which indicated that participants with 10th (or matriculation degree) differs significantly in their perception of observable culture with those with bachelor's degree ($F= 0.609$, $P<0.001$) and post graduate degree ($F= 0.694$, $P<0.001$). The *post hoc* comparison also revealed a significant difference in perception of inferable culture between those with 10th degree and 12th ($F=0.379$, $P=0.03$), bachelor's degree ($F= 0.505$, $P<0.001$), also post graduate ($F=0.609$, $P<0.001$). An insignificant interaction effect was observable between education qualification and type of organization, Wilk' $\Lambda= .936$, $F(6, 308) = 1.727$, $p= 0.114$, partial $\eta^2= 0.033$. These findings suggest that educational qualification can influence both the dimensions of OC. However, this influence does not depend on whether it's a public or private organization.

As shown in the above table 2, the result showed no significant difference on the perception of OC based on the inhabitancy status, Wilk' $\Lambda= .971$, $F(2, 154) = 2.281$, $p= 0.106$, partial $\eta^2= 0.020$, indicating no multivariate difference. Furthermore, an insignificant interaction effect was observable between inhabitancy status and type of organization, Wilk' $\Lambda= .985$, $F(2, 154) = 1.196$, $p= 0.305$, partial $\eta^2= 0.015$. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs revealed a significant difference in the perception of Inferable culture based on the type of organization, $F=.50$, $p=0.01$, partial $\eta^2=0.508$. These findings suggest that the effect of inhabitancy status on perception of OC does not depend on the type of organization.

Table 4
Correlations and Fisher's Z-test comparing groups

Variable Pair	r	r (Public sector)	r (Private Sector)	z (Fisher)	p-value
Age- observable culture	-.086	.084	.096	-.073	.942
Age-Inferable culture	.066	.202*	-.125	2.069	.039
WE-Observable culture	-.080	.047	.254*	-1.33	.184
WE-Inferable culture	.084	.164	.063	.643	.52
MI-Observable culture	-.254**	-.147	-.046	-.636	-.64
MI-Inferable culture	-.100	-.072	-.101	.183	.854
Note: WE-Work Experience; MI- Monthly Income **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.					

To examine the relationships between IV variables (age, work experience and monthly income) on both the dimensions of OC, correlation coefficients were computed for the whole sample and further, separately for public and private sector. The goal was to assess whether the strength of these associations differed between groups. The result in table 4 shows that there is significant negative correlation between monthly income and observable culture ($r = -0.254$, $p < 0.01$). However, there was no significant correlation between the other variables with both dimensions of OC. To determine whether correlations significantly differed between the two groups, Fisher's r -to- z transformation was used. Results indicated a significant difference in the correlation between age and inferable culture between public and private sector. In public sector, this relationship was weak and positive ($r = 0.202$), whereas in private sector, the association was weak and negative ($r = -0.125$), with significant difference ($z = 2.069$, $p = 0.039$). no significant differences were observable for the other correlations.

Discussion

The findings reflect the complex interplay between organizational structure, individual background and cultural perception within the unique socio-economic context of the state. As a state marked by strong public sector employment and deeply-rooted tribal traditions, OC is not just a product of formal structures but also shaped by underlying social dynamics and historical influences. Overall, employees viewed the structural aspects of their work relatively strong compared to the perception of the social dimensions, including the organization's value system, attitudes and behavioural norms. The result of the present study provides partial support for both the hypothesis. Differences in observable cultural perception across organizational type (public vs. private) likely stems from structural and operational differences. Public institutions in the state tend to emphasize formal hierarchies and visible protocol, while the private sector- being more adaptive and growth oriented- fosters flexible and evolving practices. Recent studies support this distinction, highlighting the influence of sector-specific norms on workplace culture across India [31]. Despite gender being a salient social category, no systematic differences were found in how men and women perceived both dimensions of OC, nor did gender interaction with organizational type. This mirror recent findings in Indian organizational studies where gender was not significant predictor of cultural perception – similar study reports

no gender-based differences in climate assessments across public and private firms [32]. Furthermore, global meta-analyses suggest gender differences in organizational behaviour are context-dependent and often minimal in settings where norms apply uniformly across employees. Education qualification emerged as a notable factor in shaping how individuals interpret both surface-level and underlying cultural elements. Differences may reflect varied cognitive frameworks and workplace exposure, aligning with research that identifies education as a key factor in shaping responses to organizations norms [33]. In this state or any other developing states, where access to higher education varies sharply between urban and rural regions, this may reflect disparities not just in knowledge but also in exposure to diverse organizational paradigms. Education likely facilitates greater exposure to diverse organizational environments, thus shaping perceptions of norms and values within the workplace. Economic factor further nuances this understanding. The inverse relationship between income and emphasis on observable culture may be due to higher-earning employees placing reduced emphasis on surface-level cultural attributes, possibly because their expectations shift towards deeper organizational values such as autonomy, decision-making power or strategic alignment [34]. This trend could also suggest generational and aspirational changes among emerging professionals in urban centres. The sector-specific influences of age and work-experience point to complex cultural dynamics at play. Older employees in public institutions may internalize or align with organizational values more deeply, possibly due to greater institutional stability or stronger traditions [35]. Meanwhile, in the private sector, experience appears more closely linked to shaping or adapting observable norms- suggesting a more dynamic, evolving cultural environment driven by practice rather than tradition.

Importantly, while these patterns suggest differing cultural sensitivities across demographic and organizational lines, most of these differences are context-dependent rather than structurally divergent. The exception-the distinct role of age in influencing inferable culture between sectors- may reflect deeper value systems shaped by organizational legacy, exposure to modernization or generational expectations.

Conclusion

This study highlights how organizational type, education, income and sector-specific factors subtly shape employees' perception of OC in Arunachal Pradesh. The findings underscore the influence of socio-

demographic diversity on workplace dynamics in a region balancing tradition and modernity. This understanding could, inform the development of more effective HR policies tailored to the regions' needs and help management practices to improve employee engagement, create effective diversity management and promote the development of a more inclusive and supportive cultural setting which also further enhances the Organizational Citizenship behaviour of employees[36].

Research implications: These insights point toward the need for culturally responsive organizational practices that acknowledge the diverse socio-educational and generational shifts and sectorial differences. As the state continues to grow and diversify economically, a more inclusive understanding of OC- one that bridges traditional values within the contemporary workplace dynamics- will be essential in fostering cohesion, adaptability and employee engagement.

Limitations: Future studies can use qualitative approach for a fresh perspective into these relations. Also, service-wise study can be investigated in the region. This study was carried out on employees working in Arunachal Pradesh, hence implies the presence of a unique socio-cultural backdrop that may limit the potential level of generalization.

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