

Introduction

People makes the place. Organizations are human systems that structurally, socially and technically aligned to improve engagement, experience and productivity (Ulrich, 2000). Capital mobility, advent of computers and information technology are transforming the world of work, labour markets, occupational structures and jobs. Organizations are increasingly becoming fluid and open as ever before. Organizations continue to struggle to stay competitive in today's disrupted business environment. If people make the place, then it the culture of the workplace that can help organizations achieve competitive advantage (Harrison, 1972; Gordon and Di Tomaso, 1992). In today's 24x7 society, creating the capacity for growth and continuous improvement requires an appropriate culture that supports for the development of a healthy work organization. This assertion is based on the powerful idea that when employees are highly motivated to perform, organizations perform well. The term 'culture' has acquired equal significance like strategy, structure and control (Barney, 1986; Hofstede et al., 1990).

Culture defines the strong sense of self of organizations (Jacques, 1952; Pettigrew, 1979). Culture represents social ideals and beliefs that members come to share. It may be demonstrated by symbols, language, stories, rituals, etc. that defines the unique characteristics of each organization. Success stories of Southwest Airlines, Google, Zappos, etc., substantiate the importance of culture for performance and excellence, and widely publicized in the business world today. The performance of workplaces with positive cultures has spurred leaders and organizations to further explore how positive cultures are created, managed and fostered. Developing positive culture is a perpetual process and authentic leaders and organizations adapt creative ways of work and foster culture of engagement, experience and performance. Leading organizations treat workplace culture as an invaluable business tool. When culture ideals of individual members and organizations are aligned, such an alignment unleash tremendous amounts of energy and experience for such organizations and its members.

Review of Literature

Scholarly work on culture draw heavily from anthropology and cognitive psychology (Smircich, 1983; Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985). Anthropological studies assert that culture serves for the biological and psycho-social needs of members (Malinowski's Functionalism) and aligns members into appropriate social structures (Radcliffe-Brown's Structural-Functionalism). Studies in this domain also observe culture as a system of shared cognitions, by means rules and

regulations (Goodenough's Ethnoscience), shared symbols and meanings that are interpreted and understood (Geertz's Symbolic Anthropology). From anthropological standpoint, culture is often regarded as the individual mind's universal unconscious infrastructure. Over the years, studies on corporate and organizational culture grew (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996). Works of Schein, Schwartz, Hofstede, etc., assert culture as implicit, enduring, pervasive and shared (Gorysberg et al 2018; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1996). According to Schein, culture is defined as "(a) pattern assumptions, (b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal (d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore taught to new members as the (f) correct way to perceive, think, relation to those problems" (1990, p.111). Schwartz and Davis define culture as "a pattern of beliefs and expectations shared by the organization's members. These beliefs and expectations produce norms that powerfully share the behaviour of individuals and groups" (Schwartz and Davis, 1981, p.31).

Culture, which is simply the employees' beliefs and interpretation of an organizational context, is important because of its effect of motivation, morale, satisfaction and overall behaviour of a work organization (Tuan, 2013). Culture is the defining personality and the core of any organizations (Odom et al., 1990; Sheridan, 1992; Marcoulides and Heck, 1993; Cheese and Cantrell, 2005; Walton, 1974). It is the context in which people come together and show work performance, the relationship that binds people together and achieves collective performance (Denison et al., 2004; Knudsen et al., 2011). While some organizations are characterized as sociable culture, other places are likely to foster solidarity among members as its culture (Goffee and Jones, 2015). Some managers may consider workplace culture as a fuzzy concept, but its impact on bottom-line cannot be discounted. Workplace culture enables and energizes employees and create conditions for higher engagement and performance. No organization's cultural practices and beliefs are all good or all bad. Culture in work organizations evolve over time to deal with the challenges or constraints of the past. Moreover, organizations typically expend massive resources to proactively measure and manage financial, marketing and operational assets/resources, such importance is not given to the "people metrics" of organizations—despite the importance of these metrics can have on organizational success. The impact of culture on organizations is a subject worthy of more exploration and research, delineating its elements and its consequences on employees and organizations.

Culture and Engagement

The term engagement continues to attract continuous attention among business leaders and mainstream literature. Despite some debate regarding its conceptualization, there is strong consensus about its measure-ability, its impact on employee performance and differences in individual engagement levels. Engagement implies the degree of attachment, commitment and loyalty employees have towards their organization and the kind of behavioural performance they provide on a consistent basis to help their organization achieve its goals (Harter et al., 2002). Engaged employees tend to put discretionary effort in all the spheres of their work, which is a critical competitive advantage for organizations (Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Harter et al., 2016; Lowe, 2010; Sanford, 2002; Truss et al., 2013). Moreover, engaged employees trust their leaders and are more adaptable in work situations (Van Allen, 2013). Disengaged workforces are a global problem; and the costs are high (Harter et al., 2010). Consider that the average person spends more than 90,000 of their lifetime hours on the job (Pryce-Jones, 2010).

The value of a positive work environment and culture cannot be understated (Luthans et al, 2008). The formal and informal values, behaviours, and beliefs practiced in an organization (Cheese and Cantrell, 2005; Huhtala et al., 2014; Schein, 1992; Schneider, 1987). *How do leaders connect employees to their workplace culture?* To foster connection, organizations must connect employees to their strategy and purpose (Huhtala and Feldt, 2016). When workplace culture and leadership is committed to foster connection, communication and collaboration through appropriate management practices, engagement of employees and productivity increases thereby affecting organizational bottom-line positively (Taneja et al., 2015; Tomlinson, 2010; Zak, 2017). Despite the importance and power of culture on employees, the factor that truly drive employee engagement, studies examining the relationship between these variables have remained elusive. Hence the hypothesis:

H1: *Positive culture determines the level of engagement of employees in work organizations.*

Culture and Well-Being

Employee well-being agenda is gaining a lot of traction in mainstream business literature (Diener and Seligman, 2004; Guest, 2017; Luthans et al., 2013; Schulte and Vainio, 2010). Well-being is arguable the new engagement and performance equation. Demonstrating organizations support and commitment to employee well-being is observed to directly impact employee attitude and

healthy behaviours as well as improvements in workplace engagement and productivity (Robertson and Cooper, 2010). While most managers think employee well-being is, well, none of their business, this may be due to its ill-defined, private, and ultimately unmanageable nature. Well-being is commonly referred to as the global evaluation of satisfaction and feelings about one-self (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). It is a subjective state that accounts for physical, developmental, emotional, environmental, social and occupational considerations within the context of the workplace (Dickson-Swift et al., 2014; Sivapragasam and Raya, 2018). Well-being represents the quality of employee experiences and performance in work organizations (Warr, 1987).

Studies exploring the antecedents of well-being provides a strong case for promoting well-being at work through policies, process, practices, healthy job and work environment that matters (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Grote and Guest 2017; Lowe, 2010, Ryff, 1989; Walton, 1974); Warr, 2007). Promotion of healthy work environment and positive practices are likely to shape and influence employees' attitude towards job, peers and organizations, which in turn, contribute to their well-being and organizational success (Smith et al., 2012). When employees are in a state of higher well-being and engaged, they tend to cope with the issues and situations at work more positively. They are likely to see changes and challenges as opportunities and not as problems (Saksvik et al., 2007). Studies increase to influence employee well-being, especially in COVID scenario; however, questions on the antecedents and its effect continue to remain a question for further exploration and examination. Hence the hypothesis:

H2: Positive culture supports for the well-being of employees in the knowledge work environment.

Culture and Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a measure of individual proficiency to complete a task effectively. While employee performance can be measured through several variables such as productivity, control over which employees have little or no control, yet valued by employers. Most research has focused on variables or dimensions relevant to specific occupations rather than other useful dimensions such as self-efficacy beliefs, which would allow for better generalization of results and for better cross-level inferences (Luszczynska et al., 2005). Efficacy beliefs of individuals at work have become a key indicator of employee performance. People not only believe what they see, they tend to see also what they believe (Salanova et al., 2011). Studies on general and

perceived efficacy have evolved over the last 30 years (Stajkovic and Luthans, 1998). As a concept, studies on perceived efficacy have grown as an offshoot social cognitive theory proposed by Albert Bandura. According to social cognitive theory, a person's belief about their ability to navigate and manage situations or work tasks is necessary for them to achieve the desired behaviour or outcomes, which implies beliefs about certain behaviours in specific situations (Bandura, 1977). However, there is little understanding of what composes this confidence. At workplace, employees' efficacy beliefs define not only their sense of personal and professional mastery, but also their confidence to make a significant contribution and impact in specific situations. When the workplace is perceived as supportive and joyful, employee tends to believe that they can use their capabilities and achieve desirable outcomes. Efficacy beliefs are likely to enhance individual performance in countless ways. The choices employee makes and the kind of efforts they pursue to achieve their goals are all influenced by their efficacy beliefs. Employees with high work efficacy beliefs and working in a supportive work environment are likely to perform well in their jobs. Hence the hypothesis:

H3: Positive culture determines efficacy beliefs of knowledge professionals.

Methods

The purpose of this study is to combine organization theory (both micro and macro) with the empirical rigours of psychometrics in order to develop a valid and reliable instrument of culture and situate it as an important variable in engagement research for both descriptive and predictive purposes. This study adopted the three-step approach suggested by Nunnally (1967) to define and validate constructs. First, it is essential to identify indicators for constructs explored. Second, it is necessary to check whether the observed indicators are related to each other statistically. Finally, it is necessary to determine whether the given construct correlate to other constructs or dependent variables, in expected ways. For the purposes of this study, positive culture refers to a set of positive practices that not only educate values but also support set norms, standards and beliefs that drive performance and productivity.

Measures

A well-structured questionnaire has been developed through multiple stages take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is divided into four sections – demographic characteristics, company characteristics, positive culture measure, measures of dependent variables such as perceived efficacy, engaged employee and organizational

performance. The questionnaire was administered to about 1500 knowledge professionals working in IT companies in Chennai City and 626 responses in complete forms were received, with a response rate of 41.73 percent.

WHO Well-being Scale

The WHO 5-item Well-Being Index (WHO-5) seek employee response to indicate how close have they been feeling in response to the items in the immediate past (last two weeks) (Bonsignore et al., 2001).

Engaged Employee Scale

Engaged Employee Scale developed by Lowe (2012) is a five-item scale to assess the degree of employee engagement at work.

Perceived Efficacy Scale

Perceived Efficacy Scale, a five-item scale adapted from the personal self-efficacy scale of Schwarzer and Born (1997) seeking employees' response to indicate their ability to navigate challenging job situations using a five-point scale.

Data Analysis Strategy

All analyses were performed using SPSS and AMOS. Several techniques were employed to determine that model developed has adequate psychometric properties with appropriate model fit indices. As this study is based on self-report measure, it is essential to check whether data obtained through self-report measures and cross-sectional study design suffers from systematic response bias, the common method bias (CMB), which may either inflate or deflate responses (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To check whether the data suffer from CMB, Harman's single factor test was conducted and the test resulted with a variance of 33.299%. As the variance explained is less than the threshold of 50%, indicating that the data does not suffer from CMB.

Reliability Statistics

Table 1: Reliability Statistics of the Measures Used

Measure	Inter-item Correlation	Alpha	Sample Item
Positive Culture	0.439 - 0.750	0.915	<i>Working relationship is based on mutual trust and respect</i>
Employee Well-being	0.543 – 0.821	0.832	<i>I woke up feeling fresh and rested</i>
Perceived Efficacy	0.487 – 0.675	0.843	<i>When I face work related problems, I usually find multiple solutions</i>
Engaged Employee	0.541 – 0.772	0.858	<i>I do my work with enthusiasm and vigor</i>

Table 1 shows the inter-item correlation and reliability statistics of the various measures used in this study. As evidenced, all the measures were found with significantly inter-item correlation above the acceptable levels (>0.3). As with reliability statistics, all measures have significantly high Cronbach alpha score >0.7 , which indicates the internal consistencies of the measures used in this study.

Table 2: Positive Culture: Inter-Item Correlation

Positive Culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Working atmosphere is flexible, relaxed and enjoyable	1.000	.750	.489	.582	.480	.439	.684
A noticeable sense of teamwork in planning and performance prevails	.750	1.000	.609	.559	.530	.512	.672
Communication is open and transparent to solicit honest feedback	.489	.609	1.000	.719	.597	.635	.681
Working relationships are based on trust and mutual respect	.582	.559	.719	1.000	.618	.698	.683
Employees share stories on successes, failures, and what they have learned	.480	.530	.597	.618	1.000	.644	.608
Managers coach employees on work priorities and career pursuits	.439	.512	.635	.698	.644	1.000	.629
Managers give direct feedback on how well employees are performing	.684	.672	.681	.683	.608	.629	1.000

Table 2 shows the inter-item correlation of positive culture. It is observed that the correlation coefficient score is as high as 0.750 and as low as 0.439. All the inter-item correlation coefficient is significantly high thereby demonstrating the content validity of positive culture variable examined in the study.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is an appropriate test to analyze structural models of multiple-item constructs. While in EFA we report the factor by checking how the variables, in CFA, the factor structured are *confirmed* for its validity. AMOS statistical software was used on all the measuring items retained after EFA.

Table 3: Measurement Model

Table	Results of First Order Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)				Results of Reliability Test	
	Items	Factor estimate	t - value	Error variance	R ²	AVE
Positive Culture						
Flexible and Enjoyable work atmosphere	0.75	21.42	0.35	0.56	0.612	0.937
Sense of Teamwork	0.77	22.51	0.25	0.60		
Open communication	0.79	23.12	0.26	0.62		
Environment of Trust & Mutual Respect	0.82	24.43	0.28	0.67		
Share Success Stories	0.73	20.64	0.38	0.53		
Coaching for Employees on Work Priorities	0.75	21.41	0.31	0.56		
Direct Feedback on Performance	0.86	26.65	0.16	0.75		
Employee Well-being						
I have felt calm and relaxed	0.83	24.24	0.27	0.68	0.560	0.872
I have felt active and vigorous	0.87	26.17	0.15	0.76		
I woke up feeling fresh and rested	0.61	16.12	0.48	0.37		
Life is filled with things that interest me	0.65	17.23	0.38	0.42		
Personal Efficacy						
Confident to deal efficiently with uncertainties	0.78	22.13	0.21	0.61	0.575	0.907
Can solve most work-related problems	0.69	18.54	0.27	0.47		
Remain calm during work difficulties	0.80	22.85	0.21	0.64		
Find Several Solutions for Problems	0.76	21.25	0.25	0.58		
Engaged Employee						
Work with Enthusiasm and Vigor	0.68	18.22	0.33	0.46	0.557	0.908
Personal Stake in my Organization	0.66	17.76	0.40	0.44		
Seek Opportunities to Contribute	0.81	23.68	0.21	0.66		
Passionate about Meeting Customer Needs	0.77	21.69	0.23	0.59		
Collaborate in the interests of customers	0.80	23.07	0.23	0.62		

Convergent validity is generally assessed by examining the factor loadings (Anderson and Gerbing, 1998) and it should be noted that the factor loadings of all the research items should be higher, i.e., greater than 0.5 and significance of t-values. Items which have a t-value greater than 1.96 are generally considered significant at 0.05. In the measurement model, it is important to note the factor loadings, t-value, error variance, R2, AVE and composite reliability of all the items used in the research instrument are shown in **Table 3**.

Structural Model

The mediation effect is demonstrated by establishing indirect path between independent and the dependents via the mediator as suggested by Preacher & Hayes (2008). This is done by first establishing a direct relationship between the mediator variable and the independents followed by establishing direct relationships between the mediating variable and other dependent variables.

Figure 1: Structural Model – Culture and Engagement Relationships

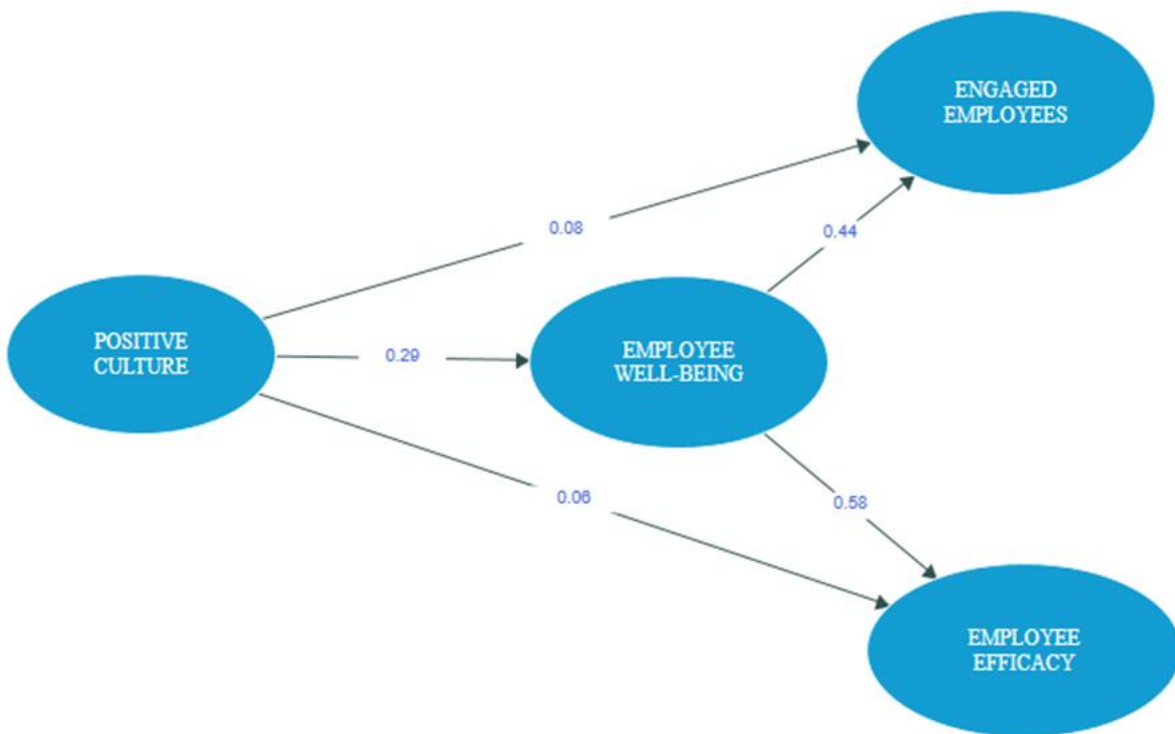


Figure 1 shows the convergence of single factor model using positive culture as independent variable. The model fit indices indicates statistics within the acceptable thresholds ($X^2/df=7.29$; $RMSEA=0.09$; $RSMR=0.037$; $GFI=0.94$; $NNFI=0.90$; $CFI=0.93$). The empirical findings of this study show that the *positive culture* is positively related to *employee well-being* (path = 0.19, $p<0.01$), which in turn is positively and significantly related to (*work-related perceived efficacy* path = 0.58, $p<0.01$) and *engaged employee* (path = 0.44, $p<0.01$). In other words, the study finds that employee well-being plays as intervening variable in the culture-engagement relationship.

Discussion

The workplace is constantly evolving. Companies are moving beyond attempts to “drive” engagement. Managers are putting more effort into becoming workplaces people want to engage with. Corporate boards and CEOs are taking a greater interest in culture strategy, the essence of which is providing more opportunities, purpose, accomplishment, and celebration at work. Culture matters! Workplace culture determines how members behave when no one is around and observing. Culture drives everything that happens in your organizations, for better or worse. Although organizational culture is a frequent topic in the business world, what exactly makes for a great culture can be hard to pin down (Walker and Soule, 2017; Wallach 1983).

First, this study finds there are about seven elements of positive culture. A sense of connection, conversation, collaboration, coaching, community and trust are critical for the development of positive culture in work organizations in the knowledge economy. Connection, conversation, collaboration, coaching and community are key tenets of a positive culture. Positive culture is driven by direct communication and a team-based approach to innovation. Culture is also positive when it supports employees to share ideas and give employees a voice, they feel appreciated and are more likely to stay. When employees work together, they grow together. Authentic leaders create and foster cultures of connections, communication, collaboration, coaching and community, all contribute to the competitive advantage for organizations. When people work in a positive culture which is characterized as emphasizing team work, value individual contributions, open communication, opportunities for learning and risk taking within limits, encourages learning from mistakes and knowledge sharing, it benefits from the combined positive energies of its members, let ideas grow and flourish.

How does a company's culture affect its performance? This study finds that positive culture enhances employee well-being at work which mediates the culture-engagement relationships. Positive culture is about creating conditions where people feel that they can bring more themselves to the table and contribute in a meaningful way. Positive culture drives positive recruitment, retention, employee relations and productivity. This in turn helps individuals to cope well with the rigors of the work and equip themselves to remain healthy and productive at work. Conversely, when the culture is highly performance and short-term oriented, it manifests a work environment where well-being will be at its very low, which is quite harmful for the performance and image of those organizations. This study contends that business leaders align organizational values, traditions, beliefs, and attitudes with policies and procedures. The difference between the command and control approach to managing people, the signature of the industrial era to an empower and engage approach, marks the difference between success and failure today. Positive workplace culture minimizes psychological trauma, provide rich dose of optimism and good cheer, happiness and joy, all critical provisions for mitigating stress, uncertainty and rigors of a day's work thereby promoting psychology safety at workplaces (Seligman, 2018). Next big question is; is there one right culture for all organizations? Not really. No one culture is best for all organizations. What works for one organization may not necessarily work for another (Goffee and Jones, 2015).

Conclusion

Culture is a leadership mandate. Culture is all-encompassing. When culture is positive and strong, it becomes part of the company's brand identity. From hiring top talent to leading transformation efforts, a company's shared values and behavioural norms play a key role in executing objectives. Positive workplace culture enhances opportunities and experiences for talent, improving retention and therefore creates a great employer brand for organizations. Developing positive culture is a perpetual process and authentic leaders and organizations adopt creative ways of work and foster culture of well-being, engagement, experience and performance. Also, developing and maintaining a positive culture is not a destination, but a continuous journey.

Implications

The impact of culture on organizations success and excellence is undeniable. Culture is the way how things are done or happen in workplaces. It lives in the collective habits of people and shared belief of how things are done. Culture must start with the CEO and be reflected across the leadership spectrum. The most effective people-first CEOs work on culture and are working alongside with HR professionals to create and champion positive employee experiences. Culture transforms attitudes and actions in work organizations. Business leaders and managers looking to win the war for talent and make a meaningful impact on performance must create and foster positive culture to deliver performance in humanly sustainable ways.

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