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**PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS
ISLAMABAD**
2021

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ABSTRACT

This paper introduces the concept of "behaviour leverage" that could possibly explain the significance of bringing small changes in organisational culture. A step by step guideline is provided to leverage the organisational performance by implementing friendly interventions at individual and organisational levels.

INTRODUCTION

Bringing beneficial change is the biggest of the challenges that every organisation face. "We have to fix our culture" is probably the most celebrated one-liner diagnosis by many organisational participants whenever they come across a problem. Though, bringing change in organisational culture remains a topic of interest in many organisational conversations yet little is done about it in many cases. This may be due to the fact that managers believe it to be a highly complex subject and feel that they do not have the right competencies to execute such initiatives. These limitations subsequently lead to a trust deficit on the outcomes of such endeavours. These beliefs about cultural change are true to the extent when organisations anticipate major transformations in culture to bring beneficial changes in performance. Ironically, the concept of behaviour leverage emphasises very small changes that could trigger big performance outputs. For organisations that are willing to pursue small changes in culture, this paper provides a step by step guidelines and structured methods to undertake culture change initiatives using the behaviour leverage methodology.

The term "Behaviour Leverage (BL)" refers to the use of behaviour lever to nurture human capital that results in leveraged organisational performance. Behaviour leverage occurs when organisational culture is aligned with its strategic objectives. It sources from individual common values that are strongly held by the majority of the organisational members. At its basics, behaviour leverage sets the foundation for getting benefit from operating and financial leverage. According to Max Foster Global, 3-5 percent change in the behaviour of top management and a minor change in culture orientation would result in more than 33 percent change in overall organisational performance. This evidence is based on consulting experience of many large and small organisations in textile, telecommunication, pharmaceutical, aviation and education sectors. This fact is so intriguing that organisations having growth challenges could endeavour to change culture by using behaviour leverage methodology.

Based on many consulting interactions, the author had in the last 20 years with different type and size of organisations in public, private and social sectors of the economy and with many accomplished professionals, it was realised that bringing big changes in performance do not require reshaping or transforming behaviours altogether. Ironically, it is about identifying key winning values, nurturing them and focusing on obliterating some killing values. This effort is supplemented with mapping the organisational culture and making minor adjustments in culture orientations. Thus, small changes in behaviour and organisational culture could leverage the performance by exponential means.

By using Behaviour Leverage (BL) approach, organisations can benefit from behaviour leverage through engaging in structured behaviour modification initiatives. These initiatives target individual behaviours and organisational systems in a structured manner to get the desired results. The focus remains on changing the attributes that matter the most.
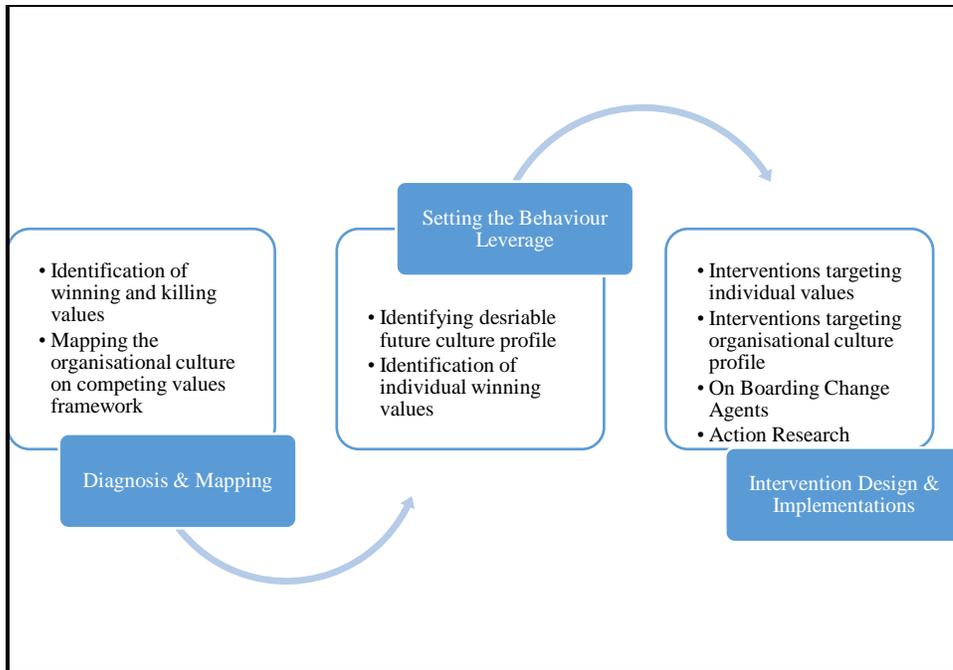
DIAGNOSIS AND MAPPING

Once an organisation decides to avail 'structured behaviour modification initiatives', two sets diagnostic activities are undertaken:

(1) Diagnostic of organisational values inferred from definitions, myths and beliefs.

(2) A structured organisational diagnostic to map the current and desired cultural profile.

The diagnostic of organisational values, definitions, myths, stories, and conversations is undertaken by subject experts through engaging employees in a variety of ways. Usually, the executive initiates a discussion by asking a series of questions about the organisation. The reactions and responses to these questions are recorded and deliberated by a team of experts. These initiatives focus on identifying the winning and killing values of the organisation. The following is an output of such exercise in a manufacturing organisation where following[1] widely held values and beliefs were identified:

(1) I am only responsible for my job.
(2) I have shared it; it is no more my responsibility.
(3) Bypassing controls is the requirement of the situation and only option.
(4) I need to please the management.
(5) This is not possible, we cannot do it.
(6) We have done it before.

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[1]Data extracted from the records of "Project Turn Around" undertaken by a consulting firm based in Pakistan.

(7)   These problems cannot be solved.
(8)   Director's involvement is necessary to get the work done.
(9)   If something is not asked time and again it is not important.
(10) Uncertainty is source of problems.

Subsequently, a structured diagnostic is undertaken at different levels of the organisation to map the culture. Organisational culture defines how external environment influences are manifested internally (Schein, 1985). It is a source of competitive advantage and firms that have congruent cultures can obtain sustained superior performance (Barney, 1986; Joseph, & Kibera, 2019). Culture types varies in different conceptualisations but at the bottom line, it is established that culture types represent performance across industries (Calciolari, Prenestini & Lega, 2018). BL approach suggests the use of competing values framework (c.f. Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 2006) to map organisational culture could prove beneficial. Competing values framework has high congruence with established patterns of the way employees think, interpret and process information. This also seems congruent with the conceptualisation of different earlier researchers like Myers and Briggs (1962) and Mitroff and Kilmann (1978).

This framework evaluates the six competing dimensions of flexibility, discretion, and dynamism, versus stability, order, and control. That is, some organisations are viewed as effective if they are changing, adaptable, and organic and other organisations are viewed as effective if they are stable, predictable, and mechanistic. These six dimensions culminate into the formation of four broad culture types i.e. clan, adhocracy, market and hierarchy. Cameron & Quinn (2006, pp. 66) explain the key attributes of these culture types as follows:

Clan Culture

"A very friendly place to work where people share a lot of themselves. It is like an extended family. The leaders, or head of the organisations, are considered to be mentors and, maybe even, parent figures. The organisation is held together by loyalty or tradition. Commitment is high. The organisation emphasises the long-term benefit of human resource development and attaches great importance to cohesion and morale. Success is defined in terms of sensitivity to customers and concern for people. The organisation places a premium on teamwork, participation, and consensus".

Adhocracy Culture

"A dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative place to work. People stick their necks out and take risks. The leaders are considered to be innovators and risk takers. The glue that holds the organisation together is commitment to experimentation and innovation. The emphasis is on being on the leading edge. The organisation's long-term emphasis is on growth and acquiring new resources. Success means gaining unique and new products or services. Being a product or service leader is important. The organisation encourages individual initiative and freedom".

Market Culture

"A results-oriented organisation. The major concern is getting the job done. People are competitive and goal oriented. The leaders are hard drivers, producers, and competitors. They are tough and demanding. The glue that holds the organisation together is an emphasis on

winning. Reputation and success are common concerns. The long-term focus is on competitive actions and achievement of measurable goals and targets. Success is defined in terms of market share and penetration. Competitive pricing and market leadership are important. The organisational style is hard-driving competitiveness".

Hierarchy Culture

"A very formalised and structured place to work. Procedures govern what people do. The leaders pride themselves on being good coordinators and organisers, who are efficiency minded. Maintaining a smooth running organisation is most critical. Formal rules and policies hold the organisation together. The long-term concern is on stability and performance with efficient, smooth operations. Success is defined in terms of dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low cost. The management of employees is concerned with secure employment and predictability".

A structured instrument called OCAI (Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument[2]) is used to map the current culture using competing values framework. This instrument uses parameters of Organisational Characteristics, Leadership, Management of Employees, Organisational Glue, Strategic Emphasis and Criteria for Success to build the culture profile of the organisation.

Administering this instrument is done in a group meeting session of one-day whereby representative of all functions and levels of the organisation are invited for evaluation. Using Delphi technique in such evaluations is found far more effective than any other competing method. The session needs to be moderated by an expert who has previous experience of administrating the OCAI instrument.

The data collected from the exercise is put into a predefined utility to produce culture profile of the organisation. Sample output for a retail and government organisation can be seen in the Figures (1 & 2).[3]
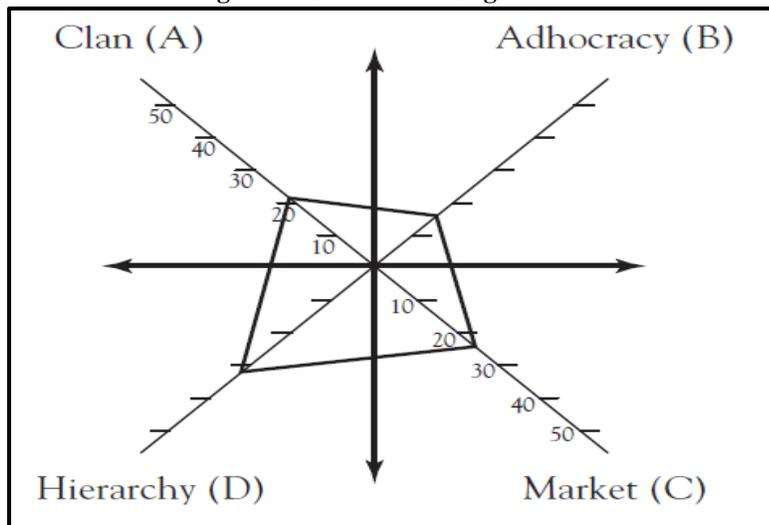
Fig. 1. A Retail Organisation

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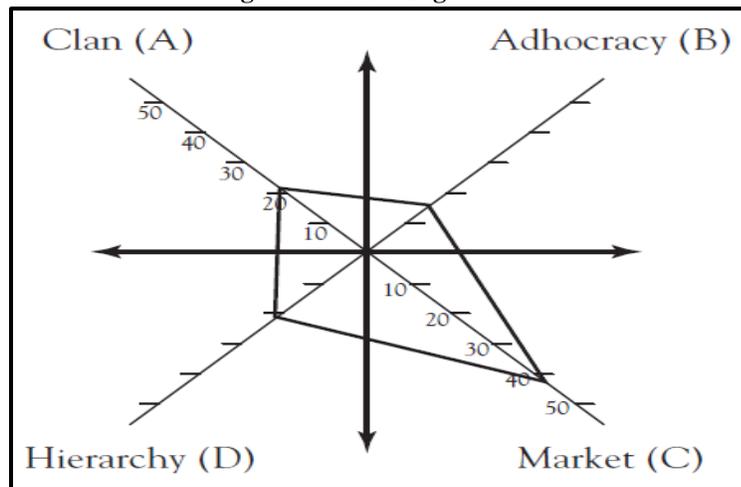
[2]See Appendix for the instrument.
[3]Cameron & Quinn (2006, pp. 78).

Fig. 2. A Government Organisation

SETTING THE BEHAVIOUR LEVERAGE

Step 1: A list of values populated in the diagnostic phase are put on table for discussions. In a focus group session, top tier team identifies what values need to be cherished and what needs to obliterated. Afterwards, an organisational consensus is built on values that matter most. Thus, organisation-wide promotion of highly desirable individual values is emphasised.


Box. 1. Case Study: How Deep the Values Could Impact?

In a textile exporting organisation, in diagnostic phase, winning and killing values were populated based on BL approach. One of the highly desirable value was "truthfulness". Digging deeper revealed following incidents where this value could directly impact the bottom line profits and organisational communication.

It was identified that shipments usually get delayed. And to meet the customer deadlines, option of air shipment was being utilised. The cost of air shipments is five to six times higher than sea freight. This led to more than $1 million cut in organisational profits in the given year. Business process analysis revealed a "value" as a source of this problem. Each functional manager used cushions against time in interdepartmental communications. That means not revealing the truthful information about timelines. For example, a merchandiser who needs to deliver the shipment in 90 days, informs procurement department that shipment would be due in 75 days, thus allowing them to make purchases in less than three weeks. This information is internally communicated as to finish the job in two weeks. And this practice moves on and on to the terminal stitching department to complete a virtually impossible job of completing the shipment in two days. When such a practice is used it creates a mistrust on the part of the executors and justifies them to believe that timelines not matter. Such mistrust and beliefs lead to the delayed shipments quite often.

Another incident reflective of concealing information was when the COO asked the manager "did the shipment is off on time, he said "Yes". Later this "yes" prove to be a half-truth as 80 percent of shipment went through sea vessel the rest shall be made part of air shipment. Similarly, organisational participants tend to keeping listening to heated debates of the problem and do not offer their solution to it until it is evident that the problem cannot be solved. The intention here is to project oneself as capable of solving the problem when no one else can do it. This is another form of information concealment leading to marginalised truthful behaviours.

Fig. 3. Current and Preferred Culture Profile[4]
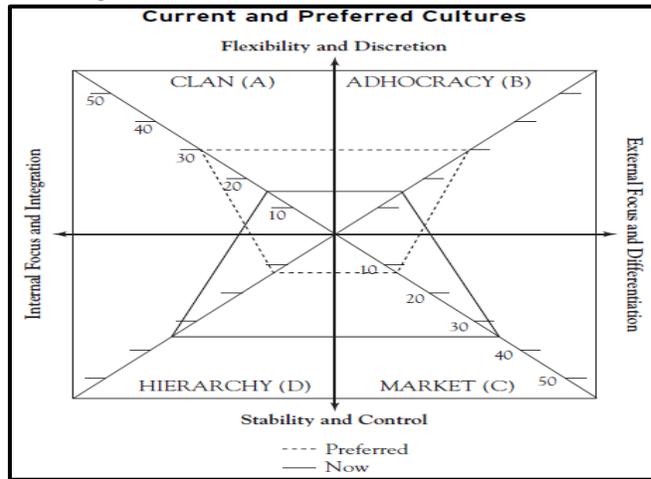
Step 2: OCAI is used again to identify the preferred future culture of the organisation keeping in view the current position. The same process of onboarding representative members of the organisation is followed. Thus the changes from current to future culture profile are explicitly identified. The next step in the process is to identify what this change would mean and do not mean. Thus, a set of clear targets have been identified that requires change in cultural profile.

An individual level version of the same instrument called MSAI (Managerial skill assessment inventory) can be used. This instrument profiles the individual's skills against the organisational culture. Self-rating by employees would provide them with a unique opportunity to see their congruence with the current and future profile of the organisation. In the following target graph, the individual employee is mapped against the desirable culture profile of the organisation.

Fig. 4. Management Skills Assessment Questionnaire
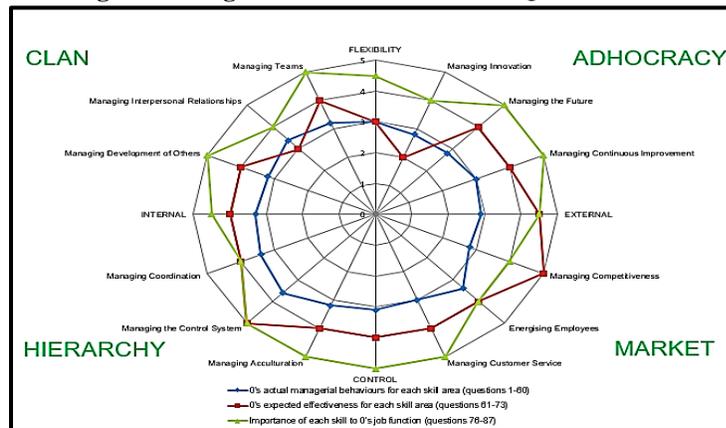
Courtesy Max Foster Global.

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[4]Cameron & Quinn (2006, pp. 86).

Such profiling not only identifies the current position of employees with regard to desirable culture but also identifies the specific needs of employee development.

INTERVENTION DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

A team of experts deliberate with the top management to design plausible interventions that target individual values and desirable organisational culture profile. First, a team of change agents is carefully identified that work with consultants to design and implement individual and organisation-wide interventions. Methods of action research are adopted to gauge the effectiveness of these interventions.

For example, to design the intervention at individual level, desirable values are translated into a set of observable behaviours that need to be exhibited by each employee. A self-assessment evaluating the current behaviour is used to set the baseline. See the sample of self-assessment used below to target truthfulness value in an organisation.

Instructions: Write the number in each Dos and Don'ts that best describe your performance:

1 = I was unable to do it.
2= I was rarely able to do it.
3= I was somewhat able to do it.
4= I was able to do it.
5= I did it greatly.

	Don'ts	Ratings	Dos	Ratings
1	Do not commit or accept what you believe you cannot deliver		Clearly inform your head what you cannot deliver by sharing your reasons.	
2	Don't involve in any matter for 15 minutes except thinking about your beliefs on Monday morning.		On every Monday at work start, give 15 minutes and rethink about your beliefs of work; think about what is possible and what is not possible. Make a list and share with MFG Representative.	
3	Do not ignore small problems that occur time and again.		Identify and implement solution to a small problem and celebrate it.	
4	Do not focus on seeking facts that may save your skin or please the management.		Focus on areas that are putting you in questionable position time and again.	

Courtesy: Max Foster Global.

Employees are then informed about ways through which a target behaviour can be modified. Desirable behaviours are then reinforced using tangible displays, subliminal recalls and few other cost-effective psychological means worked out by the team of change agents and consultants. The post intervention results are evaluated after predefined timelines to measure the effectiveness.

Similarly, based on the OCAI diagnostics and change needs, a broader set of interventions are identified. These interventions require increase or decrease in profiles of clan, adhocracy, market or hierarchy. Following is an example of an organisation that needs to decrease hierarchy and market culture. This is how what this decrease "means" and "does not mean" can be identified.

Fig. 5. Cameron & Quinn (2006, pp. 89)

Hierarchy Culture	**Market Culture**
☐ Increase ☑ Decrease ☐ Remain Same	☐ Increase ☑ Decrease ☐ Remain Same
Means…	*Means…*
Eliminate useless rules and procedures Eliminate unneeded reports and paperwork Reduce corporate directives Eliminate micromanagement Remove unnecessary constraints Push decision making down	Slightly less centrality of measures and financial indicators Stop driving for numbers at all costs Focus on key goals Constantly motivate our people Adapt to human as well as market needs Remember that we still need to make money
Does Not Mean…	*Does Not Mean…*
Loss of logical structure Letting the inmates run the asylum with no guidance	Ignoring the competition

Similarly, if some organisation identifies that it needs to reduce the clan culture. For doing so, it first needs to identify what this decrease would mean and what it would not mean.

The organisation might mean that some important rules and regulations are jeopardised due to the fact that organisation is more like a family place and people tend to favour each other even in matters that are not aligned with organisational rules. At the same time, this cultural change would not mean that organisation mistrusts its employees that is opposed to a clan culture. Keeping in view these considerations, interventions need to be designed and implemented.

Box 2. How Interventions should be Designed: Key Considerations[5]

Designing OD interventions requires paying careful attention to the needs and dynamics of the change situation and crafting a change program that will be consistent with the previously described criteria of effective interventions.

Using behaviour leverage philosophy, the process of designing OD interventions incorporates careful attention in two major areas (1) crafting a change program that is consistent with the diagnosis outcome (2) understanding the needs and dynamics of the organisation.

Moreover, because the ability to implement most OD interventions is highly dependent on the skills and knowledge of the change agent, the design of an intervention will depend to some extent on the expertise of the practitioner.

Two major sets of contingencies that can affect intervention success have been discussed in the OD literature: those having to do with the change situation (including the practitioner) and those related to the target of change. Both kinds of contingencies need to be considered in designing interventions.

When designing an intervention certain contingencies must be taken into consideration in order to fulfill the criteria of effective intervention described above. These include organisation's readiness for change, organisations change capability, cultural context of the organisation, and the change agent's capabilities.

Readiness for Change

Success of any intervention depends on the organisation being ready for a planned change. Readiness for change can be gauged by how the extent of each employee being sensitive to the need for change, dissatisfaction with the present situation, availability of required resources and willingness to spend those resource for the intervention, and commitment of top management for their time and involvement. When readiness for change is low, the practitioner needs to incorporate interventions that focus first on increasing the organisation's willingness to change.

Capability to Change

An organisation's change capability includes knowledge and skills present in the organisation that organisation is familiar with, the infrastructure available for the intervention and the organisation's prior experience of OD interventions of any kind.

Absence of these indicators will require a component in the design phase of OD intervention a preliminary training to members of the organisation so that they are meaningfully engaged in intervention design.

Cultural Context

It is pertinent for OD practitioner to account for cultural values and assumptions held by organisation members when designing any intervention. In case the practitioner is applying predesigned systems, it is necessary to have it modified to fit the local culture.

Change Agent's Capabilities

Often the reason for numerous failures in OD interventions is because change agents role in the intervention is beyond their competence. In designing interventions, it is necessary for practitioners' to analyse the change agent's experience and expertise against the requirements needed to implement the intervention.

Organisational progress regarding cultural change is measured through mapping the same cultural profile over a predefined timeline to identify the effectiveness of interventions.

Developing a behaviour lever is a strategic initiative that requires commitment from the top in first place. Practically, behaviour leverage is manifested when employees hold strong values that are aligned with the business model. All in all, behaviour leverage approach emphasises the fact that instead of identifying many interventions and big changes, organisations need to focus on few ones if not the one that matters most both at individual and organisation level. Action research is the surest way to identify those few values that matters most.

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[5]Rasool & Kidwai (2021) Organisational development and change: A practitioner guide. Unpublished Book Draft.

APPENDIX

A- The Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument[6]

Dominant Characteristics	Now	Preferred
(a) The organisation is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of them.		
(b) The organisation is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.		
(c) The organisation is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
(d) The organisation is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total	100	100
Organisational Leadership	**Now**	**Preferred**
(a) The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
(b) The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
(c) The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
(d) The leadership in the organisation is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organising, or smooth-running efficiency.		
Total	100	100
Management of Employees	**Now**	**Preferred**
(a) The management style in the organisation is characterised by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
(b) The management style in the organisation is characterised by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
(c) The management style in the organisation is characterised by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
(d) The management style in the organisation is characterised by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		
Total	100	100
Organisation Glue	**Now**	**Preferred**
(a) The glue that holds the organisation together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organisation runs high.		
(b) The glue that holds the organisation together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.		
(c) The glue that holds the organisation together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.		
(d) The glue that holds the organisation together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organisation is important.		
Total	100	100
Strategic Emphases	**Now**	**Preferred**
(a) The organisation emphasises human development.		
(b) High trust, openness, and participation persist.		
(c) The organisation emphasises acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.		
(d) The organisation emphasises competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.		
(e) The organisation emphasises permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.		
Total	100	100
Criteria of Success	**Now**	**Preferred**
(a) The organisation defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.		
(b) The organisation defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
(c) The organisation defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is a key.		
(d) The organisation defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical.		
Total	100	100

[6]Extracted from Cameron & Quinn (2006).

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