

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Typologies and Measurement

Cameron & Quinn · Denison · Hofstede · Trompenaars

PAPER 02 / 03

A Furtherance reference compendium on the intellectual traditions behind organisational design, leadership, execution, and culture.

IN THIS PAPER

If culture lives below the surface, can it be measured? This paper covers the attempts to turn culture into a diagnosable variable – at the level of the organisation (Cameron & Quinn, Denison) and the nation (Hofstede, Trompenaars). The question: what can an instrument actually capture, and what escapes it?

Measurement makes culture manageable, but at a cost: an instrument reliably captures the espoused surface and only imperfectly reaches the enacted depth the first paper identified. The four frameworks here are the most used in practice – two profiling organisations, two profiling the national settings organisations operate within.

Kim Cameron & Robert Quinn Competing Values Framework, 1999

Organisational culture · the OCAI instrument

CORE THESIS

Organisational cultures can be mapped on two dimensions – **internal versus external focus**, and **flexibility versus stability and control** – producing four culture types. Most organisations lean to one, and the profile can be measured and compared against a preferred future state.

FRAMEWORK

Type	Orientation	Dominant value
Clan	Internal + flexible	Collaboration, people, commitment
Adhocracy	External + flexible	Creation, innovation, agility
Market	External + control	Competition, results, market share
Hierarchy	Internal + control	Control, process, efficiency

METHODOLOGY

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) – a short survey that profiles an organisation's current and preferred culture across the four types.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

The most widely used practical culture diagnostic, valued for making culture visible and comparable in a single session. The critique: four quadrants is a heavy reduction, the instrument is self-report, and it captures espoused preferences more reliably than enacted behaviour.

Daniel Denison Corporate Culture and Effectiveness, 1990

Culture-performance research · survey modelling

CORE THESIS

Specific, measurable culture **traits** correlate with business performance – growth, profitability, satisfaction. Culture is not just describable but empirically linkable to outcomes, and the traits sit in productive tension with one another.

FRAMEWORK

Trait	Focus	Pulls toward
Mission	External + stable	Direction, purpose, long-term goals
Consistency	Internal + stable	Coordination, agreement, shared values
Involvement	Internal + flexible	Capability, ownership, teamwork
Adaptability	External + flexible	Change, customer focus, learning

The model sets stability (Mission + Consistency) against flexibility (Involvement + Adaptability), and external focus (Mission + Adaptability) against internal (Consistency + Involvement) – high performers manage the tension rather than resolving it.

METHODOLOGY

The Denison Organizational Culture Survey applied across large datasets, correlating trait scores with financial and operational performance measures.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

Provides the strongest empirical link between culture traits and performance, and is built for benchmarking. The critique: it is survey-based, the direction of causation is debated (does culture drive performance, or success shape culture?), and the relationships are correlational.

Geert Hofstede 1928–2020

Cross-cultural psychology · national culture dimensions

CORE THESIS

National cultures differ along a small number of **measurable dimensions** that shape workplace values and expectations. Drawn from a landmark multinational study, the dimensions let organisations reason about cultural difference across borders.

FRAMEWORK

Dimension	Contrast it measures
Power distance	Acceptance of unequal power distribution
Individualism–collectivism	Ties to self versus to the group
Masculinity–femininity	Achievement and assertiveness versus care and quality of life
Uncertainty avoidance	Tolerance for ambiguity and the unknown
Long-term orientation	Future reward versus tradition and the present
Indulgence–restraint	Free gratification of desires versus social restraint

METHODOLOGY

A very large employee-values survey conducted within IBM across more than fifty countries – one of the most extensive cross-national datasets of its kind.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

The most influential framework in cross-cultural management. The critique is equally well known: equating nation with culture risks the ecological fallacy, the original data are dated and drawn from a single firm, and the model can present culture as more static and homogeneous than it is.

Fons Trompenaars *Riding the Waves of Culture*, 1997

Cross-cultural management · dilemma reconciliation

CORE THESIS

Cultures differ in how they resolve a set of universal **dilemmas** about relationships, time and the environment. The manager's task in a global organisation is not to pick a side but to **reconcile** the opposing orientations.

FRAMEWORK

Dimension	The dilemma
Universalism – particularism	Rules versus relationships and circumstance
Individualism – communitarianism	The individual versus the group
Neutral – affective	Restrained versus openly expressed emotion
Specific – diffuse	Compartmentalised versus holistic involvement
Achievement – ascription	Status earned versus status conferred
Sequential – synchronous	Time as a line versus time as parallel flows
Internal – external control	Mastering nature versus living with it

METHODOLOGY

A dilemma-based survey of tens of thousands of managers across many countries, developed with Charles Hampden-Turner.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CRITIQUE

Adds richer relational and temporal dimensions than Hofstede, and the reconciliation emphasis is practical for global leaders. The critique: significant overlap with Hofstede, contested methodology, and the same nation-as-unit limitation.

A NOTE ON EVIDENCE

A caution on the national-culture instruments: treating a country as a single culture commits the ecological fallacy – within-nation variation typically exceeds between-nation variation – and both frameworks rest on ageing survey data. Use the dimensions as sensitising heuristics for cross-border work, not as predictive profiles of the individuals in front of you.

Synthesis

Framework	Level	Structure	Instrument
Cameron & Quinn	Organisation	Four types	OCAI survey
Denison	Organisation	Four traits	Denison survey
Hofstede	Nation	Six dimensions	IBM values survey
Trompenaars	Nation	Seven dimensions	Manager dilemma survey

FOR THE OPERATOR

Measurement turns culture into a variable you can profile, benchmark and track – quadrants and traits for the organisation, value dimensions for the nation it sits in. For the operator, the discipline is knowing the limit: instruments read the espoused surface well and the enacted depth poorly, so use them to open the conversation, not to close it. The final paper turns to the hardest question of all – changing culture once you have named and measured it.