An assessment of the impact of organizational culture on performance from faculty perspective in non-faith based Private university colleges in Ghana

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of the study was to explore staff perceptions of organizational culture in their institutions and assess the impact of organizational culture on performance from faculty perspective. Data were collected from 80 faculty members from 3 non-faith based universities in Ghana. The study creates awareness and provides guidelines to non-faith based university colleges in formulating strategies to develop organizational culture types that empower faculty to work to achieve organizational goals. The findings showed that dominant existing achievement and support cultures impact positively on staff performance. The study contributes to the knowledge on organizational culture types and its practice especially in non-faith based private university colleges and their implications to performance. It also opens up the discussion on the place of organizational culture on performance in future research.

KEYWORDS: Power, Role, Achievement, Support, Non-faith Private Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture from the literature has numerous definitions. To Martins and Martins (2003), organizational culture is seen as "a system of shared meaning held by members, distinguishing the organization from other organizations". Organizational culture is the distinctive norms, beliefs, principles and ways of behaving that combine to give each organization its distinct character (Arnold (2005). It is the pervasive system of values, beliefs, and norms that exists and can encourage and discourage effectiveness (performance); it is important therefore, to note that, it is corporate/organizational culture that makes an organization tops among its competitors (Gibson et al., 2005). It is to an organization what personality is to an individual (Johnson 1990).

Organizational culture is becoming of major concern to administrators and researchers in higher education (Deal and kennedy, 1982; Masland, 1985). Higher educational institutions (universities) in many ways operate similar to other organizations and also function in environments that are characterized by government, market forces, internationalization, paradigm shift from teaching to learning , new technologies and globalization among others (Levine, 2000; Middlehurst & Woodfield, 2004).) Universities(higher educational institutions) are in the race of seeking to gain competitive advantage by changing norms and practices and again want to have competitive edge in order to attract many students and potential employees (Naris & Ukpere, 2010).

Three main reasons justifying the need for research in such universities are:

There has been a rise in number of private university colleges in Ghana recently with increased demand for higher education. Belfield and Levin (2003) define private universities as non-public independent universities which do not receive

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government support and are usually administered by denominations or secular boards. Private university colleges usually administered by denominations are faith based while those administered by secular boards/individuals are non faith based. Currently, Ghana has about 57 accredited universities (public and private university colleges). Twenty-four of these are non faith based private university colleges. The numbers have led to competition among universities (public and private) in Ghana. Some researchers including Locke (2007) have reasoned that ignoring organizational culture in the management of institutional change can lead to a negative consequence.

Secondly, researchers including Balan (1990) cited by Sharimllah et al (2011) observed that private higher educational institutions has been more prompt in responding to market demands by providing the type of education most in demand by the economy and society. Further, Wind and Main (1999) cited by Sharimllah et al (2011) argue that organizational culture has been identified as a primary component of functional decision making in universities but has been considered as a major challenge in change management initiatives at higher educational institutions.   Detert et al. (2000) earlier have reasoned that an organization's prevailing culture can disrupt management efforts before they can even begin. DeLong and Fahey (2000) cited by Sharimllah et al (2011) note that most managers instinctively acknowledge the importance of culture, streamlining the relationship of their existing culture to management objectives is found to be a colossal task.

Thirdly, research evidence has shown that different types of cultures exist in organizations and that culture has a long-term impact on the success and superior performance of the organization. Further literature has it that certain types of culture could enhance performance while yet still some researchers have found significant relationship between organizational culture and performance (Denison 1990; Kotter and Heskett 1992; Van der Post et al. 1998). The roles of these private university colleges in the development of the country are essential and form another motivation for the conduct of this study.

By the above reasons, it is vital to assess the impact of organizational culture of non faith based university colleges on performance from faculty perspective so as to allow administrators, faculty and management to efficiently coordinate in their environment for effectiveness.

The specific objectives of this paper are therefore:

- To identify the dominant culture type in non faith based private university colleges in Ghana.
- To explore the preferred culture type that enhances performance from faculty perspective at the non faith based private university colleges in Ghana.

The next section presents the literature on organizational culture types, organizational culture and performance relationship followed by the description of methodology employed. The empirical results are reported and subsequently the findings and their implications are discussed. The paper is then concluded with suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

University culture has been explained as the collective personality of the university whereas others view university culture as the atmosphere that is created by the social and professional interactions of the individuals at the university. Organizational culture is one of the dimensions most studied in the context of organizations and has been associated with strategy and organizational behavior (Quinn 1991; Parker 2000; Major 2000 and Wilderom & Glunk ,2000). Culture of organizations should rather be seen as central to the success of organisations rather than factors such as structure, strategy and politics. (Deal and Kennedy 1992; and Wilson,1992). Literature has different approaches to assessing organizational culture and different views as to how researchers classified organizational culture.

But to Norton (1984) culture serves a crucial role in determining "what the institution is and what it might become". Theoretical developments of the concept of organizational culture studies are conducted within the field of organizational theory from literature and some of the classifications included:

- Harrison (1993), who classified organizational culture as power, role, achievement and support.
- Gibson et al (2003) identified two major aspects of culture, which are strong culture and weak culture.

The above-mentioned typologies of organizational culture provide broad overviews of the variations that exist between theorists in their description which has mainly evolved over time. Different approaches are used in the literature to assess organizational culture. One of these approaches most frequently used is the model of Competing Values developed by Quinn and McGrath. (1985) which defines four types of organizational culture as: Clan; Adhocracy; Hierarchy and Market orientation and assesses culture by using organizational culture assessment instrument (OCAI). However, this study assesses culture by using Organizational Culture Assessment Tool (OCAT) mostly used by Organizational Capacity Improvement

Consultants (OCIC) UK, adopted from Harrison's (1993) work. In his work, Harrison (1993) reasoned that typical beliefs, values, work styles and relationships distinguish one organization from the other; organizations contain qualities that give it a particular climate or feel and that these specific qualities of the organization may show through four dimensions as: power, role, achievement and support.

Brown (1998) is of the view that "a power culture has a single source of power from which rays of influence spread throughout the organization" whereas power is centralised and organizational members are connected to the centre by functional and specialist strings as cited by Harrison (1993). From literature, it can be regarded as being rule oriented in the sense that it focuses on respect of authority, rationality in procedures, division of work and normalization. Harrison and Stokes (1992) view role-oriented culture as "substituting a system of structures and procedures for the naked power of the leader". This type of culture according to the literature focuses mainly on job description and specialization. Thus, work is controlled by procedures and rules that spell out the job description, which is more important than the person who fills the position. Harrison and Stokes (1992) further argue that achievement-oriented culture is defined as "the aligned culture which lines people up behind a common vision or purpose". Achievement culture from literature is often referred to as task culture in which organizational members focus on realizing the set purpose and goals of the organization. Brown (1998) also writes that "a task/achievement culture is one in which power is somewhat diffuse, being based on expertise rather than position or charisma". Support-oriented culture resembles the people orientation characteristic of organizational culture. Martins and Martins (2003) describe people orientation culture as "the degree to which management decisions take into consideration the effect of outcomes on people". With this type of culture, the well being of employees is important to managers and from the literature, it is often referred to as a person-oriented culture.

Organizational and performance relationship

Researchers including (Kotter & Hesket, 1992; Wagner & Spencer, 1996) among others have argued that organizational culture has been determined to be predictor of performance. Evidence from the field of business indicates that organisations whose culture focuses largely on key managerial components, such as customers, stakeholders and employees, and leadership, outperform those that do not have these cultural characteristics. Denison (1990) in his research examined the relationship between corporate culture and performance. Corporate culture was based on the perceptions of organizational practices and conditions, to characterize the organizational culture in his research. He found out that organisations with participative culture performed better than those without participative culture. Sadri and Lees (2001) argued that a positive corporate culture could provide immense benefits to the organization, and gain a leading competitive edge over other firms in the industry. They contended that, a negative culture could have a negative impact on the organizational performance as it could deter firms from adopting the required strategic or tactical changes. A study by Agboola (undated) examines the impact of organizational culture on performances of universities in Nigeria. Samples of 300 academic and non-academic staffs from 4 universities in Nigeria were drawn. The analysis shows that culture of the various universities studied are very low, therefore having a negative impact on their performances. One could easily imply from these researchers and others that organizational culture has a relationship with performance of organizations and that specific cultures may significantly impact positively/negatively on the performance of the organization. To buttress the implication above, Denison et al (2004) are optimistic that though organizational culture contributes to the success of the organization, not all dimensions of culture contribute the same.

In summary, the results regarding the organizational culture types adopted by non faith based private university colleges will serve as a reference for the body of knowledge regarding organizational culture in private universities in Ghana, which is negligible to date. More importantly, guidelines are provided to private university colleges in formulating strategies on how to deal properly with their organizational culture for effective performance of the university. The next section presents the methodology employed in this study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling & Population

Private university colleges in Ghana are grouped into two: faith based (religious bodies) and non faith based (non religious bodies & individuals) with many of these located in Accra, the capital city of Ghana and its environs'. Non faith based university colleges in Accra were chosen for the study. Of the total, the researchers purposively selected three university colleges: Jayee, Regent and Wisconsin University Colleges for the study. Jayee has teaching staff strength of about 70, Regent about 150 and Wisconsin about 80. The population for the study was 300.The sample size was 120. Forty questionnaires

were sent to each university college. However, a total of 80 questionnaires were received with the distribution as follows: Jayee- 35, Regent- 25 and Wisconsin-20.

Instrument-scale

In order to assess the culture of the organization, the OCAT and interview guide were used. The OCAT has two columns; existing and preferred containing 15 statements. Respondents were asked to assign only one "4" one "3" one "2" and one "1" for each phrase in the "existing" column and for each phrase in the "preferred" column by ranking. The 4 being the dominant view or the respondents most preferred alternative. Each statement outlines an example of a possible behavior of management, people and the entire organization among others. The 15 items in the questionnaire are designed to evaluate faculty's perspective of the four dimensions of culture in the organization and what faculty preferred. The four dimensions measured are power, role, achievement and support cultures. The analysis discussed are based on explaining faculty's perceptions on four composite measures that reflect the dimensions of organizational culture at the non faith based university colleges selected for the study.

Data for each non-faith based university college was separately analysed before analyzing all three non-faith based university colleges as one. Analysis was obtained by first recording the rankings (either 4, 3,2, and 1) under the sub headings 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d (representing power, role, achievement and support) for both existing and preferred culture types for each questionnaire. Afterwards, all scores under 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d were summed for both the existing and the preferred cultures differently. All summed rankings were then sent to a new excel sheet with the sub headings power, role, achievement and support for both the existing and preferred columns. The overall total for the subheadings power, role, achievement and support for both the existing and the preferred culture types were determined and further their averages/mean calculated. The culture indices for both the existing and the preferred culture types were then determined using a specific formula. This process was done for each university college and then all questionnaires received from the three non-faith based university colleges were analyesd as one.

In addition, five respondents from each institution totaling 15 were sampled randomly and interviewed. Responses obtained were analysed using percentages.

RESULTS

Tables I, 2 and 3 show the average scores for the four OC types at the non faith based university colleges and table 4 shows the mean scores for all 80 respondents. In Table 1, Power culture (44.34) is found to score the highest followed by role culture (31.57). This is followed by achievement and support cultures for the existing culture. On the other hand, academics in table 1 tend to rate achievement (42.17) and support (39.63) cultures as being more prevalent than the role and power cultures for the preferred cultures. The culture index for the existing culture is negative while the preferred culture has a positive culture index. Apparently, the other two university colleges from table 2 and 3 show the same trend; Power and role cultures being dominant followed by achievement and support cultures for the existing culture and with the preferred, achievement and support being more than power and role. Both do have negative culture indices for existing and positive culture indices for the preferred culture.

In table 4, data from all three non faith based private university colleges were combined and analysed. The results showed no difference with the individual analysis in tables 1, 2 and 3. Existing power culture (48.01) is the most dominant, followed by role culture (38.64). Achievement and support cultures then follow with 33.96 and 29.39 respectively as their average cultures. The culture index for the existing culture is -23.3 whereas the culture index for the preferred culture is 17.7. Achievement culture for the preferred is the most dominant (44.29) followed by support culture (39.56).

CULTURE INDEX=   A+S-P-R

Table 1 - (Jayee University College)

OCAT AVERAGES

CULTURE	POWER	ROLE	ACHIEVEMENT	SUPPORT	INDEX
EXISTING	44.34	37.6	36.49	31.57	-13.88
PREFERED	30.43	37.78	42.17	39.63	13.59

Source: field data 2014

Table 2 - (Regent University College of Science and Technology)

OCAT AVERAGES

CULTURE	POWER	ROLE	ACHIEVEMENT	SUPPORT	INDEX
EXISTING	53.56	40.72	31.16	24.56	-38.56
PREFERED	23.72	38.76	47.48	40.04	25.04

Source: field data 2014

Table 3 - (Wisconsin International University College)

OCAT AVERAGES

CULTURE	POWER	ROLE	ACHIEVEMENT	SUPPORT	INDEX
EXISTING	47.5	37.85	33.06	31.6	-20.7
PREFERED	29.65	37.5	44	38.85	15.7

Source: field data 2014

Table 4 - All three non-faith based university colleges

OCAT AVERAGES

CULTURE	POWER	ROLE	ACHIEVEMENT	SUPPORT	INDEX
EXISTING	48.01	38.64	33.96	29.39	-23.3
PREFERED	28.14	38.01	44.29	39.56	17.7

Source: field data 2014

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This research has achieved all two objectives set forward. The OCAT which was originally developed to assess organizational culture in business organizations (corporate sector) is validated in this study. The findings confirm that the OCAT is also applicable to university settings.

From table 4, the existing dominant culture is power. Harrison (1993) writes that this type of culture has a head that sits in the centre surrounded by inmates and subordinates who are dependants. This implies that a personal, informal and power management style becomes valued. Power oriented culture from the literature tends towards a rule by fear, with abuse of power for personal advantage on the part of the leaders. The tendency to instill fear and to abuse power in staff is high leading to nepotism and favouritism from leaders. Supporting this fact, it is interesting to note that 14 (93%) lecturers perceived a high level of nepotism from management when 15 staffs (5 from each of the university college) were randomly selected and asked how they perceive the relationship between management and the rest of lecturers. In a follow up

question as to whether this relationship encourages their goal attainment as lecturers, 14 (93%) were of the view that it does not.

The existing role of faculty (38.64) does not differ significantly from the preferred (38.01) from table 4. This type of culture from the literature focuses mainly on job description. Work as reasoned by Harrison (1993) is controlled by procedures and rules that spell out the job description which is more important than the person who fills the position. These roles or job descriptions are coordinated at the top by a narrow band of senior management. Authorities here are delegated within a highly defined structure. Organizations with role dominant culture form hierarchical bureaucracies, where power is derived from the personal position and rarely from an expert power. Control is made by procedures, strict roles descriptions and authority definitions.

Jobs are so tightly defined that there is little room to contribute one's unique talents and abilities. Faculty supported the fact that their job descriptions do not allow them to be more innovative in their lecturing when 12(80%) from 15 lecturers sampled confirmed that their job descriptions do not allow distinctive talents to be exhibited.

In reference to table 4, achievement culture is more prevalent in the preferred culture (44.29) than existing culture (33.96). The differences are highly significant. This type of culture entails that organizational member's focus on realizing the set purpose and goals of the organization which is performance. However, faculty perceive that the existing achievement culture of the organizations do not allow them to perform to their best of abilities. To Brown (1998), achievement culture has as its objective to bringing the right people together, in order to achieve the organizational goals. Achievement-oriented culture from the literature is similar to team orientation as a characteristic of organizational culture. Martins and Martins (2003) describe team orientation as "the degree to which work activities are organised around teams rather than the individuals". The findings on achievement culture from all three non faith based university colleges explain that academics do not collaborate with each other for the completion of tasks such as consultation, administration, and research which hinders performance of the university. This is because faculty members sampled in all three universities had their OCAT averages on existing culture lower than the preferred culture that faculty would have wanted. Supporting this finding, works from Sharimmah et al (2011) have it that collaboration between academics of public higher education institutions in terms of research and other scholarly activities is more common than their colleagues in the private higher education institutions. Further, from the literature, an organization with dominant achievement culture is characterized with high internal motivation and maximum utilization of members' talents which no doubt affects performance of the organization positively. Asked what lecturers would do differently if they were part of management for lecturers to perform, 9 sampled (60%) suggested that peer review of work will be paramount while 5(33.3%) others agreed that committees should be seen working. Thus, 14(93.3%) of the 15 respondents sampled and interviewed will support the fact that team work at the university enhances effectiveness/performance and that dominant existing achievement culture type impacts positively on performance.

Harrison and Stokes (1992) viewed support-oriented culture as an "organizational climate that is based on mutual trust between the individual and the organisation". Literature has it that support –oriented culture is characterized by individuals influencing each other through example and helpfulness, good internal communication and integration, high levels of commitment to decisions, sophisticated process skills, manage people issues well and high levels of cooperative, effective group work among others. This according to Harrison (1993) creates conducive work environment that enhance innovativeness, proactiveness and openness to change. This, no doubt is fundamental to the functioning of the university since universities are more dependent on the intellectual and creative abilities and commitment of faculty and also suggests that the organization values the talents of individual employees who also value their own work. However, from the three non- faith based university colleges; the preferred role culture (39.56) by faculty is higher than the existing culture (29.39); implying that management of the university colleges do not value the talents of staff and staff are not allowed to make decisions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has highly developed knowledge as far as assessment of the impact of organizational culture on performance from faculty perspectives in non-faith based private university colleges in Ghana is concerned. It is hoped that the findings will help university colleges' management to undertake a self-check of the various organizational culture types so that action can be taken to minimize any gaps. The results show that all four types of culture exist in the university colleges. Further non faith based private university colleges need to reduce their power culture and enhance achievement and support cultures while maintaining their role culture since the study showed that dominant existing achievement and support culture impacts positively on faculty's performance. The culture index for all three non-faith based private university colleges being

negative imply that power is vested more in management than faculty and these findings are suggestive of limits to manager's capacity to manage cultural change.

Culture change from the literature is not easy in that usually, introducing new elements and replacing old ones come with its own challenges and faculty may not be open to this. For it to be successful, management needs to convince faculty of the prospects/gains of the change in culture rather than the losses. Trice and Beyer (1993) as cited by Sharimllah et al (2011) reasoned that when higher educational institutions are ready for culture change, the following should be considered: higher education institutions must capitalize on poor financial/non financial performance of the university such as university rankings to introduce change; management of higher education must comprehend resistance to change by faculty; management of higher education should not introduce change drastically but should rather be a gradual process and remove some detrimental features while others are maintained little by little. This no doubt may allow gradual adjustment to change by faculty. Leaders and management must model the desired behavior to steer culture change if the change will be successful and in their words, Sharimllah et al (2011), are optimistic that "the first execution of change should be among organizational leaders and from this group to the general workforce so as to reinforce their commitment to the workforce that there will be no negative repercussions to change". Further, jobs assigned to faculty should be such that faculty can contribute their unique talents and be more innovative in their teaching. In addition, the work environment must equally enhance innovativeness and proactiveness with the main goal of providing university education to Ghanaian and other international citizens. Research by faculty can be done in teams and funding must be made available as a way of motivating faculty to research since it's a needed requirement in teaching at universities.

It is hoped that the recommendations provide insights to universities in general on how to cultivate their organizational culture types in the precise stability in order to be more competitive in facing global challenges and meeting the expectations of stakeholders. Even though this study makes a substantive contribution to knowledge on organizational culture and its impact on performance from faculty perspective, it has some limitations and these issues need to be explored in future research. It is worth highlighting that the research is limited to only 80 faculty members from three private university colleges (non -faith based) of the many outlined non faith based university colleges in Ghana. As such, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to other universities in the country, a promising area that future research should address. Secondly, this study is aimed as one of its objectives exploring the preferred culture type that enhances performance from faculty perspective, it attempted to create a snapshot of a best possible organizational culture so that a baseline description of organizational types at universities can be established. The study did not imply to develop a comprehensive picture of organizational culture types at non faith based private university colleges in Ghana. Future studies should not establish a baseline for organizational culture. Further, future studies can compare how organizational culture affects performance in public and private universities, faith-based and non-faith based private universities among others. Finally, future studies that build upon these limitations and simulated in different cultural settings may yield interesting discoveries.

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