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Does The Organisational Culture Play a Role in Choosing a Job in Tourism?

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Abstract

As the younger generation represents the future of the tourism labour market, it is important to understand what attracts them to a company. This is especially true for companies looking to hire top young talent for the tourism sector. It is widely recognised that young people place great importance on their well-being and how work fits into their lives and identity. The well-being of a person in a company can be seen through the lens of organisational culture. Therefore, a study was conducted with 101 students to find out what type of organisational culture (according to the Competing Values Framework model) is most interesting to younger people, if they are interested in a job in tourism and how much they value the presence of an organizational culture when making a job decision. The results indicate that most students view organisational culture as an important factor in their career choice. Additionally, students value a collaborative culture and students with previous work experience in tourism are more likely to be interested in a long-term career in tourism. They would also accept a job offer in the tourism sector if they had the opportunity. These results show that in general students are interested in working in tourism, especially in companies with an open and friendly cultural work environment.

Keywords: organisational culture, job attractiveness, job in tourism.

JEL Classification: M14, M54, Z32, O15.

1. Introduction

Everyone talks about culture, but probably not everyone knows what culture is. Of those who do know, even fewer understand what constitutes a culture or, more importantly, why business leaders should pay attention to it.

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In short, culture is the combination of a company's attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours and encompasses the way people think and act in the various situations they encounter in the organisation. These defined standards enter every facet of the organisations' existence and they can vary from elementary routines, for instance establishing the duration of a work break, to more intricate dilemmas concerning the manner in which the introduction of a new idea should be approached.

Culture is not a dimension of employee fulfilment or engagement, but the effect of culture and in addition, it does not represent a measure of emotions. Many companies still describe their "culture" with emotional adjectives such as "fun" or "a happy workplace". Some companies incorrectly describe their culture based on their operating strategy, such as "fast" or "customer-focused" None of these definitions or terms describe the behaviours or attitudes expected of members of the organisation.

The term "organisational culture" first appeared in the academic literature in an article by Pettigrew in Administrative Science Quarterly (Pettigrew, 1979; Hofstede et al., 1990), although Jacques spoke of the culture of a factory as early as 1952 (Scott et al., 2003).

Over time, the culture of an organisation has been defined in various ways, and there is still no unanimously accepted definition. Thus, culture refers to a wide range of social phenomena, including the agreed dress code of organisational members, language, behaviour, beliefs, values, assumptions, symbols of status and authority, myths, ceremonies, and rituals, and forms of deference and subversion, all of which help to define the character and norms of an organisation. As a result of this diversity of phenomena, it becomes understandable why is a moderate agreement on a specific definition of organisational culture, on how it should be observed or measured, or on how different methods can be used to manage change.

Taking into account all these aspects, the aim of this paper is not to find out what respondents understand by organisational culture, but whether they value the presence of an organizational culture when they want to be employed in a company.

2. Problem Statement

Culture is a varied topic which includes all the common values, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, artefacts, and behaviours of a group. Culture goes beyond various aspects of internal and external relationships, and holds a meaningful impact by determining people's conduct with such magnitude that they may not be conscious of its effect. Academics consent that the culture of an organisation relies on a basis of hypotheses regarding the essence of the world and human interactions. These beliefs are deeply rooted and frequently stand invisible, unspoken, and unknown to the members of the organisation. Due to these matters, there is one question that appears: is it possible to understand in a complete manner the culture of an organisation? Even if the full assessment of all the elements of the organisational culture could appear a disheartening process (some individuals considering that is unrealisable), the overarching features can be identified to a general extent. By analysing "effective organisations," researchers revealed multiple meaningful and critical dimensions.

2.1 Competing Values Framework

There are many models that explain organisational culture, some of which include many variables. While this theoretical richness may offer certain benefits, organisations may face challenges in practically integrating and addressing such a wide array of dimensions. Robert Quinn and John Rohrbaugh (1983) examined the results of numerous studies on this topic and found that two main dimensions can explain such a wide range. Their competing values framework combines these two dimensions into a 2x2 matrix with four clusters (Tharp, 2009).

The first dimension places the values of flexibility, discretion, and dynamism at one end of the scale, whereas stability, order, and control are at the other end. This means that some organisations emphasize adaptation, change, and organic processes, while others, in fact emphasize stable, predictable, and mechanistic processes.

The second dimension is characterised by internal orientation, integration, and unity at one end of the scale and external orientation, differentiation, and rivalry at the other end. Some companies are efficient when they focus on themselves and their internal processes. Others excel by concentrating on the market or their competitors.

Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn (1999) further explored how each of the four quadrants (resulting from the combination of the two dimensions) relates to company characteristics. Each quadrant represents the characteristics that a company considers to be the best and most appropriate for its operations. In other words, these quadrants represent the core assumptions, beliefs, and values, components of culture. None of the quadrants - Collaborate (clan), Create (adhocracy), Control (hierarchy), and Compete (market) - is inherently better than another, just as no culture is necessarily better than another. However, some cultures may be more appropriate than others in certain contexts. The key to using culture to improve performance is to align the culture or its features with business objectives.

The „Collaboration (Clan)" culture describes an open and friendly workplace where people expose a lot about themselves, similar to an extended family. Managers are seen as mentors or even parental figures. Loyalty to the group and a sense of tradition are strong, and group cohesion is highly valued. The emphasis is put on the long-term benefits of staff development, a strong concern for people being and an important characteristic. The organisation places a high value on participation, teamwork, and consensus.

"Creation (Adhocracy)" culture describes a dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative workplace. Innovation and risktaking are embraced by employees and managers. A commitment to experimentation and thinking differently is what creates unity within the organisation. Both employees and managers strive to be at the top. The long-term focus is on evolution and the acquisition of new resources. Success is measured by the development of unique and new products or services since it is important for the company to play a leading role in the industry. Individual freedom and initiative is encouraged.

"Control (Hierarchy)" culture means a highly structured and formalised workplace. Rules and procedures govern behaviour. Managers try to be good coordinators and organisers, concentrating on efficiency. Therefore, it is very

important to maintain a flat organisation. Formal policies are what hold the group together. Stability, performance, and efficient operations are the long-term goals of organizations. Success means hassle-free programming, reliability, and low costs. Management wants certainty and predictability.

The „Competition (Market)" culture describes a results-orientated organisation focused on getting things done. Employees are competitive and goal-orientated. Managers are demanding, directive, and productive. The focus on profit unites the organisation. Reputation and success are common concerns. Long-term focus is on being competitive and achieving measurable goals and objectives. Success is measured by market share. Competitive pricing policy and market leadership are important.

2.2 What do employees want from a workplace?

Today, employees no longer make decisions based solely on salary and benefits when choosing a job. In general, people choose jobs that they enjoy and help them satisfy certain psychological needs (Burlea-Schiopoiu et al., 2022).

However, in an effort to attract and retain valuable employees, many managers continue to place a high value on salary because it is something they can easily control in the short term. High salaries may attract or retain some employees, but companies that do not have a culture that employees can match will not be able to keep those employees satisfied and engaged for the long term. Therefore, the investment in cultivating a corporate culture represents a genuine long-term approach aimed at both attracting and retaining staff members (Zemke, 2022).

Another dimension that is gaining more recognition among employees is continuous initiatives. Numerous employees feel that their organizations fail to provide a satisfactory orientation process. Consequently, they experience a lack of connection with the organisation and inadequacy in being ready for their designated responsibilities within the organization. Experts believe that an organisation of this nature is probable to encounter escalated staff turnover rates and increased costs related to employment in the foreseeable future (ClearCompany, n.d.).

Several studies examined the expectations of Generation Z (individuals born between 1995 and 2009, according to Goh and Lee, 2018) regarding the characteristics of a workplace. According to Ozkan and Solmaz (2015), Generation Z wishes team spirit, expects flexibility in the workplace, assurances for their future career, work-life balance, faster career development, and seeks independence and happiness at work.

It is important that employees do not leave their jobs or seek other employment exclusively for financial reasons. They are considering the meaning of work and the relationship of their work with their life and purposes. For this reason, they seek employers with good management, transparent communication, flexible working arrangements, and a robust organisational culture that prioritises the well-being of all employees.

2.3 How attractive is a job in tourism?

The tourism industry includes many activities that together create a complete tourism experience. The tourism value chain links together many sectors such as transportation, accommodation, hospitality, entertainment, and others. Each sector plays an important role in a tourist's trip and contributes to the success of the industry. All of these activities create many jobs and provide income for millions of employees and their families worldwide.

Young people represent an important part of hospitality employees in many countries, but some researchers have shown that they are not fairly remunerated (Mooney, 2016). As a result, young people employed in the hospitality industry perceive their jobs as temporary and insecure, rather than as opportunities for career development (Alacovska et al., 2021). A survey of four-year tourism management students revealed that they perceive various aspects of working in the hospitality industry as unfavourable (Sigala, 2021), and a study of tourism students found that they believe that aspects such as a friendly work environment, job security, good opportunities for advancement and an attractive starting salary are not important to hospitality employers (Hoque and Ashif, 2020). Other students indicated that a job in tourism is interesting and rewarding, requires reasonable skills, you can use your skills, and the work is fun over time, but some negative perceptions of the industry have emerged (Tuzunkan, 2018).

Goh and Lee (2018) point out that Gen Z employees in the hospitality industry are motivated by job satisfaction, so to attract talent, employers should develop the ability to offer their employees dynamic, enjoyable, interesting and stable international careers. In the same vein, Self et al. (2019) show that Generation Z seeks opportunities to travel and work in different countries and receives constant feedback during annual reviews.

Based on the hypothesis that young people are a distinct group of the labour force, Golubovskaya et al. (2017) point out that jobs in the hospitality industry provide a central developmental context for young people because the hospitality industry is dominated by young, often inexperienced workers. As a result, there is a strong need for greater attention to the talent development and a more employee-centric approach that creates jobs that offer career opportunities. Recent conclusions state that talent recruitment and retention is a recurrent challenge for hospitality employers (Financial Times, 2021; Goh and Okumus, 2020). According to Sakdiyakorn et al. (2021), Generation Z is characterised by a set of values: harmony, justice, fairness, truthfulness and helpfulness, honest relationships and personal connections, autonomy, recognition, appreciation, evolution, and security. These studies offer valuable insight into Generation Z and underline the need to pay more attention to their expectations in order to provide them with jobs that meet those expectations (Kapuciski et al., 2023). Numerous studies have examined what Generation Z wants from a workplace, but there is still room for research on the type of organisational culture that young people desire. Therefore, this study seeks to establish a link between the expectations and aspects that young people value on the job and

the culture of the organization that provides the framework for the manifestation of these values.

3. Aims of the Research

The purpose of the paper is to explore whether young people value the presence of an organisational culture when considering employment within the tourism sector and which (out of the four) organizational culture types would be most attractive to them. Therefore, the following four research questions are considered: *(R1)* To what extent are business students interested in a job in tourism? *(R2)* How much do business students value the presence of organisational culture when choosing a job? *(R3)* What type of organisational culture is most attractive to business students?

4. Research Methods

Based on the literature, a questionnaire was developed to identify aspects such as the interest of young people in employment in tourism and what type of organisational culture is most attractive to business students if they value the organisational culture. The survey was conducted online between 28 September 2023 and 4 April 2024. The 101 respondents were mainly students from the Faculty of Business and Tourism, within the age category of 18-26 years.

Regarding the questionnaire content, for this study, the organisational culture type model (Tharp, 2009) was used to find out which culture is the most valued by students; each variable had its own scale, consisting of 6 items per culture type (Clan = C; Adhocracy = A; Hierarchy = H; Market = M). The reliability test showed internal consistency, as Cronbach's α coefficients were positive and greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019) in each case (C=0.92; A=0.92; H=0.89; M=0.91). Additionally, participants were asked to rate if they would be interested in *(1) a long-term career* or *(2) a short-term career* in tourism and *(3) accepting a job in tourism if offered*, for which a Mann-Whtiney test was performed in relation with previous experience; to see if students with previous work experience in tourism are more or likely to be interested in a job in tourism

All elements were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all or strongly disagree) to 5 (very much or strongly agree).

In terms of the profile of the people respondents, the majority of the surveyed were females, accounting for 71.3%. It is also important to note that, with regard to employment status, most of the respondents fell into two categories, with 32.7% of them being employed and 31.7% being unemployed and never worked before. In terms of location, almost half (47.5%) were from Bucharest.

5. Findings

5.1 Job Interest within the Tourism Sector

Students were asked if they would consider a long-term or short-term job in tourism. The results show that the majority (58,5%) of the students responded in a positive

way (agree and highly agree) when asked if they would be interested in working in tourism for a short period of time. Regarding working in tourism for a long period of time, 53,5% of the respondents said that they are willing to have a career in tourism even for a long period of time. This finding contradicts previous research (Alacovska et al., 2021) stating that young people are looking for a career in tourism only for a short period of time, due to job insecurity and low wage. For the scenario in which students would be given the opportunity of working in the tourism industry, only 1% of them said they would definitely decline the offer and 70.3% leaned toward agreement (agree and strongly disagree).

The results of the Mann-Whitney test, with respect to previous work experience in tourism and interest in pursuing a job in tourism, are shown in Table 1. Students who had previous tourism work are more likely to be interested in pursuing a long-term career in tourism (MR = 66.87) than those without experience (MR =45.5), and the difference between the two groups was statistically significant ($z = -3.32$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, the results indicate that those with previous experience had significantly greater interest (MR =60.31) in accepting a job in the tourism sector compared to those without it ($z = -1.98$, $p < 0.05$). Concerning the interest in a short-term job in tourism, the student without previous experience had a higher mean rank (MR = 53.35), which means they showed more interest in a short-term job opportunity. However, the difference was not statistically significant ($z = 1.42$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 1. Influence of previous experience on job interest

Item	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney		
	1	2	U	Z-score	Sig.
To what extent would you be interested in working in tourism for a relatively short period?	44.21	53.35	1151.5	1.42	0.155
To what extent would you be interested in pursuing a long-term career in tourism?	66.87	45.5	562.5	-3.32	<.001*
If an employer offered you a job in tourism, to what extent would you accept it?	60.31	47.77	733	-1.98	0.048*

Note: "1" = with previous experience in tourism; "2" = no previous experience in tourism.
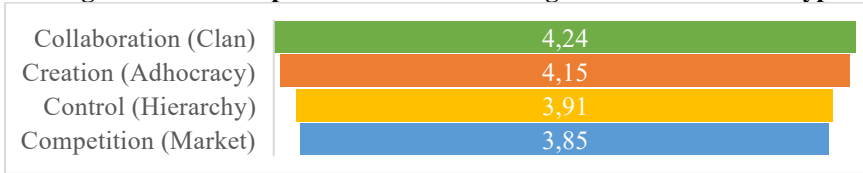
Source: authors' own work.

5.2 Expectations and Importance of the Organisational Culture

In Figure 1, the average index of the four types of organisational culture rated by the respondents. Collaboration has the highest index of 4.24. Indicating that, on average, students value a workplace in which people are a central part of the company, where openness and teamwork are highly encouraged. On the other hand, a competitive environment, where managers are demanding and orientated toward profit maximization, is the least preferred organisational culture – the competition culture

scoring a 3.85 mean. In addition, the index ranking reveals that the more rigid and less people-centred the culture is, the less preferred it is by students.
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Figure 1. Index Importance of the Four Organisational Culture Types

Collaboration (Clan)	4,24
Creation (Adhocracy)	4,15
Control (Hierarchy)	3,91
Competition (Market)	3,85

Source: the author's own work.

Table 2 shows the extent to which participants are in the organisational culture when choosing a job within the tourism sector. Results show that most respondents (38.6%) strongly consider that culture would be a factor of interest when choosing a job and only 6.9% disagree with that statement. Overall, this indicates that students place great importance on the organizational culture. As previous literature suggests, younger generations value relationships, recognition and security Sakdiyakorn et al. (2021), therefore it could explain why students place importance on learning about the organisational culture before planning – to see if the company is also a good fit for them.

Table 2. Value of organisational culture (%)

Item	1	2	3	4	5
If you were to attend a job interview for a company in the tourism industry, to what extent would you be interested in learning details about organizational culture?	1	6.9	20.8	32.7	38.6

Note: '1' – highly disagree; "5" – highly agree.
Source: authors' own work.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of organisational culture for the younger people when considering employment in the tourism sector. To answer the three research questions proposed in this paper, a questionnaire was conducted in the students (N=101). It was found that, in relation to *R1* (ie, interest of business students in tourism job), students are interested in both short- and long-term job opportunities in tourism. This is particularly true for those with prior experience. Our findings suggest that students with previous work experience in tourism are more likely, if offered, to accept a job position in this sector and pursue a long-term career in tourism. For *R2* (that is, the value of organisational culture in job decision), the results confirmed the importance of organizational culture when considering a job in tourism. More than 70% of the students considered it important (highly agree and agree) to enquire and learn about the organizational culture of the company in which they interview. Lastly, the most preferred type of organisational culture would be

collaboration or clan, followed by *creation (adhocracy)*, *control (hierarchy), and competition (market).* The *collaborative (clan)* type is considered a highly supportive and open work environment, where people matter more than profit, and students seem to appreciate it more than a dynamic and demanding one such as the *competition (market)* culture.

Taken together, this shows that the young generation or generation Z is eager and interested in working in tourism, for both short- and long-term, despite the obstacles they may encounter (low pay, job insecurity, not enough opportunities for advancement). Furthermore, since young people take a great interest in their well-being and work-life balance, they tend to lean towards workplaces that have an open and cultural organization.

One limitation of this paper was that only people over 26 years old were included in the research and the sample small. Future research, however, could extend it to wider and more diverse participants; where the difference between age groups could be analysed in terms of their preference of the four organisational culture types.

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