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# Exploring organizational culture in college athletics: Comparing the athletic director and employee perceptions of present and preferred cultures

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EXPLORING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS:  
COMPARING THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR AND EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS  
OF PRESENT AND PREFERRED CULTURES

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Educational Leadership

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by  
Ryan Michael Heil  
May 2018

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## ABSTRACT

Using a mixed methods research design, this study compared the athletic director's perceptions of the present and preferred organizational cultures with the perceptions of the athletic department employees at Big State University. As the pace of change has accelerated in athletic departments, it has become more important for members of these organizations to develop a shared understanding of their present culture as well as the type of cultural attributes that they believe will help them become more successful in the future.

This study used the Competing Values Framework as a theoretical construct and the OCAI survey to gather quantitative data. To supplement the quantitative findings, a series of focus group interviews were conducted in order to develop a richer understanding of the athletic department culture. Although data showed statistically significant differences in the athletic director's perception of culture when compared to department employees, the differences were most pronounced in the present state, where they differed on both major scales of the CVF. Both the athletic director and employees agreed that inclusive people practices, as represented by the clan archetype, are important to their future success.

By identifying the perceptual differences that exist, this study provides a potential methodology that can be utilized to help organizations better understand the present cultural pressures that guide decision making and help align future

efforts. This unfreezing can be a critical first step in engaging the team in the management of the cultural forces that can inhibit needed future changes.

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## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my father, mentor, and role-model Gary M. Heil. For instilling the belief in me that “if I can dream it – I can do it.” For encouraging me to listen to my heart, follow my passions, and to relentlessly pursue my best. For showing me what hard work truly looks like. For telling me the tough truths when I needed to hear them, believing in me regardless the situation, and sacrificing along the way to help make my dreams become a reality. From sleeping in airports when we couldn’t afford a hotel to the countless hours on a baseball field showing me how to throw a curveball, to our discussions about leadership and sharing his life’s work, we’ve come a long way and had one hell of a fun adventure. I wouldn’t be the man I am today without his love, encouragement, guidance, and unwavering belief in me. This dissertation is dedicated to him.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In higher education, it is critical that every member of an athletic department understands the organizational culture of their department. Only when the department members share a common understanding of the organization's culture, can the athletic director engage their team to make the changes necessitated by the unprecedented changes in the landscape of intercollegiate athletics (Duderstadt, 2009). A shared understanding of culture is critical to ensure the coordination of efforts to manage change and innovation (Van den Steen, 2003; Schein, 2004).

The study of organizational culture is a derivative of research conducted in sociology and anthropology (Nguyen, 2010). Culture in organizations, however, tends to be more homogenous in terms of beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns than in society at large (Van den Steen, 2003). Organizations develop their own personalities, and similarly to the culture of larger sociological populations, those characteristics tend to remain fairly constant over time and resist change (Schein, 2004). New organizations often act similarly to the previous generation of employees. It is the consistency of these shared values and beliefs within an organization (e.g., athletic department) that not only facilitates coordinated decision making and action, but it can be a significant impediment to a leader's ability to innovate (Schein, 2004).

An organization's culture is the set of forces that determine values, behaviors, thought patterns, and ways of perceiving individuals and collective groups (Schein, 1999). Researchers describe organizational culture as a phenomenon that is shared

among members of an organization, impacts employees' attitudes and behaviors, and consists of shared values, beliefs, and assumptions (Glisson & James, 2002; Smirchich, 1983; Schein, 2010). Schein (2010) also points out that "the essence of a culture lies in the pattern of basic underlying assumptions" (p.32). Underlying shared assumptions are the "true basis from which to examine organizational behavior as they provide a subconscious, guide for members to react to the environment. Ultimately, these basic assumptions provide members of an organizational culture with the mental maps that guide their perceptions, feelings, and actions within the culture" (Schroeder, 2010, p. 100).

Cameron and Quinn (2011) identified strong distinctive organizational cultures, which were described by employees as the single most powerful factor in driving success for virtually all industry leading companies. Many leaders viewed an organization's culture as a tool for "managing operating efficiencies, enhancing the bottom line, or creating satisfied customers" (Keyton, 2010, p.93). As competition on a global scale continues to drive up performance requirements, leaders have focused on developing a culture that will motivate their employees to work productively (Keyton, 2010,). Because the culture of an organization is never static and is constantly evolving (Genetzky-Haugen, 2010), Schein (1985) wrote that "the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture" (p. 20).

Research has shown that organizational culture "impacts all aspects of organizations including quality of the environment, future capabilities, human resources, planning change initiatives, and governance" (Adkinson, 2005, p. 1-2). In the realm of

higher education, organizational culture can be used to examine cultural components of different divisions and departments within an institution, including university athletic departments. Intercollegiate athletics and higher education have been interrelated throughout the existence of American higher education. Although athletics were initially considered outside the purview of higher education, college presidents promptly noticed that successful sports teams “attracted enrollments, offered a unifying vehicle for very diverse student bodies, and engaged support from surrounding communities, who used the teams as the basis for egoistic rivalries” (Beyer & Hannah, 2000, p. 107). Over time athletics became such an integral aspect of higher education that many schools felt that they could not survive or flourish as academic institutions if they quashed or downgraded intercollegiate athletic programs, which strengthened the relationship between higher education and intercollegiate athletics dramatically (Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

Commercialization also exists as an influencing factor in shaping organizational culture. The commercialization of collegiate athletics has turned athletic departments, which were grounded in a philosophy of amateurism, into the biggest marketing arm for many institutions across the country (Hill, Birch, & Yates, 2001). Intercollegiate athletics is now big business, many schools have athletics operating budgets of well over one hundred million dollars (Berkowitz, 2017), and it is integral to the success of many academic institutions (Pope & Pope, 2014). College athletics generates billions of dollars a year in revenue and financial profit and has become a dominant factor in higher education organizational structure.

## **Background of the Problem**

Research of organizational culture is derived from anthropological and sociological fields of study. Early researchers were interested in studying individual and group behaviors in organizations (Nguyen, 2010), and the study of organizational culture became more mainstream after Pettigrew published *On Studying Organizational Culture* and effectively defined organizational culture as patterns of beliefs, symbols, rituals, values, and assumptions that evolve and are shared by the members of an organization (Pettigrew, 1979).

Pettigrew's publication became popular in the United States because it coincided with an unprecedented increase in the competitiveness of its business environment, especially in manufacturing (Himmer, 2013). Japanese manufacturers with strong and very different organizational cultures entered the United States market with higher quality products that had been developed at lower costs (Ochi, 1981). This resulted in an increased pressure to innovate and understand the effects of organizational culture. The publication of several best-selling business books, including *Theory Z* (Ochi, 1981), *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982), and *Corporate Cultures* (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), further accelerated the interest in organizational culture and helped popularize the idea that culture was an important factor in organizational success. As a result of the increased awareness of the impact of organizational culture and the cross-disciplinary nature of Pettigrew's research, interest in the phenomenon of organizational culture also increased across academic disciplines.



Today there is little debate about the importance of organizational culture. In 2014, companies in the United States spent over 70 billion dollars on corporate training (Carroll, Singaraju, & Park, 2015) with the goal of building an organizational culture that sustained superior business performance. Barney (1986) noted that initiatives related to creating a successful culture are “not only a way of improving employee morale or quality of work life, but also are vital for improving a firm’s financial performance” (p. 656).

Given the significant investment involved in developing successful cultures, and the impact that leaders have on building, shaping, or changing the organization’s culture, it is imperative that leaders have a rich understanding of the culture within their own organization (Bogdanowicz, 2014; Meehan, Rigby, & Rogers, 2008). Schein (2010) warned that if leaders “do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them” (p. 22).

For leaders in Division I intercollegiate athletics, the pressure to win and the financial windfalls associated with success have never been greater (McAllister, 2010; Duderstadt, 2009). The transformational nature of collegiate athletics requires leaders to constantly manage change, while simultaneously working to build dynamic, creative, and innovative teams (Staurowsky, 2003). Success in the future will require new and different solutions to the existing and evolving challenges of higher education and college athletics (Schein, 2010). To maximize the power of human potential within their departments and build cultures that will act as a sustained competitive advantage for their teams, leaders must work to align their organization’s present attitudes, beliefs, and

behaviors with a shared aspirational vision (Chatman & Cha, 2003; Schein, 2010). This requires a rich understanding of the present and future state of an athletic department's culture from both a leader and follower's perspective (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), because culture is a socially constructed phenomenon (Berger & Luckmann, 1966),

Prior research of organizational culture in college athletics has explored the correlational or causational relationships among a department's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to external outcomes. Aforementioned investigations have studied the impact of enhanced commercialization on the academic and athletic stature of institutions, the effect that transformational leadership practices have on managing an athletic department's culture, and how competition and increased spending on coaches' salaries impact the culture of athletics and higher education (Smith, 2012; Scott, 1997; Tsitsos & Nixon, 2012). Although researchers have explored many correlational and causational aspects of organizational culture within collegiate athletics, no studies have explored the nature of an athletic director's understanding of the present athletic department culture with respect to their followers. Additionally, no research has explored how congruent an athletic director's perception of how well current athletic practices align with aspirational department goals is with that of department employees.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Within higher education, the pressure on athletic departments to maintain sport success has increased, but the impact of organizational culture within these programs is not well understood. The relationship between the athletic director and their departmental employees understanding of the athletic departmental culture is unknown

and has not been researched. This is problematic for the athletic director, departmental employees, and the president of the university (Duderstadt, 2009). For an athletic director, identifying and understanding any differences in perception of departmental culture becomes imperative for assessing current practices and building more innovative teams. For employees, a gap in understanding of the present and future departmental cultures from leadership could perpetuate a work environment that stifles creativity and underutilizes the power of human potential (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The persistence of this problem can become an issue for a university president, as an underperforming athletic department will sub-optimize the student-athlete experience and potential fundraising opportunities, as well as the marketing potential for the institution on a national stage (Duderstadt, 2009; Anderson, 2016; Pope & Pope, 2009; Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods embedded study was to explore how the Big State University athletic director's understanding of the present and future athletic department culture compares to that of the rest of the athletic department employees at Big State University, a medium sized, land-grant, research institution located in the south-eastern United States. This study utilized the Competing Values Framework (CVF) to compare both the athletic director's and employee's understanding of the current and future cultures of the athletic department (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The CVF was originally developed to organize and interpret organizational culture with respect to the relationship between organizational effectiveness and performance (Quinn

& Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 2006). An organization's culture is complicated, abstract, a socially constructed phenomena consisting of artifacts, espoused values, and often unconscious shared basic assumptions. Cultures can be impacted by a myriad of different factors like organizational design, theories of effectiveness, leadership roles, and management skills; therefore, this study requires researchers to utilize a theory that helps organize a wide variety of phenomena. The CVF has been used in numerous studies to analyze organizational cultures specific to colleges and universities, and it has become the most frequently applied framework in the world for assessing culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The researcher collected the quantitative data from all participants using an online form of the Organizational Culture Assessment Inventory (OCAI). Developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011), the OCAI was designed to assess organizational culture using the CVF as the theoretical foundation. Presently, the OCAI is the most extensively used, tested, and validated instrument for assessing organizational culture (Bogdanowicz, 2014).

After the quantitative data were analyzed, the researcher conducted focus group interviews with employees to explore the OCAI results and develop a deeper understanding of the shared values and assumptions within the Big State University athletic department. Vitale, Armenakis, and Field (2008) noted the importance of utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assessing an organization's culture when they wrote, "using multiple methodologies to collect data is recognized as an essential component to any organizational diagnosis" (p.88).

## **Nature of the Study**

The study, exploring how an athletic director's understanding of an athletic department's current and future or aspirational culture compared to those of the rest of the employees within the department, was conducted utilizing an interpretivist paradigm. The researcher's goal was to understand how the participants perceive their organization (Glendon & Stanton, 2000). This research was carried out utilizing a mixed-methods embedded research design. This is an appropriate research design because utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches provides a level of depth and breadth of organizational awareness necessary to ascertain a better understanding of the phenomenon of organizational culture from the perspectives of both the athletic department employees and the athletic director (Creswell, 2008).

All athletic department employees were given an online Organizational Culture Assessment Inventory (OCAI) survey. The OCAI was developed around the theoretical framework of the CVF (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Upon completion, participants submitted their surveys to a secure online database where they were scored and organized for the researcher to assess and analyze. Then, the results were shared with focus groups of Big State University full-time employees. Employees were asked to help provide some context and insight into what they believe the results of the OCAI communicated. Transcriptions of the focus groups were thematically analyzed and used to better understand the dominant elements within the present culture as well as a more vivid sense of the changes that need to be made in the departmental culture in the future.

The culture within an organization is demonstrated by what is valued, the dominant leadership styles, the language and symbols, the procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that make organizations unique. Too often people are “unaware of their culture until it is challenged, until they experience a new culture, or until it is made overt and explicit through a new framework or model” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p.15). This study compared how athletic directors and the people they lead perceive the current and future cultures within Big State University’s athletic department.

### **Research Questions**

Since organizational culture has not been examined by looking at athletic director and employee perceptions of culture, the researcher examined these perceptions using the CVF as a guide. The researcher conducted online surveys with a Division I athletic director and all full-time athletic department employees. By using this model as a guide, the researcher sought to answer the question of how do these constituents understand and perceive the culture of their department.

The following research questions guided this study:

#### Central Research Question

1. How does Big State University athletic director’s perception of the current and future departmental culture compare to that of the rest of the athletic department employees?

#### Research Sub-questions

2. What is the athletic director’s understanding of the current organizational culture of the athletic department?

3. What is the athletic director's understanding of the future (aspirational) culture of the athletic department?
4. What are the departmental employee's understanding of the current organizational culture of the athletic department?
5. What are the departmental employees' understanding of the future (aspirational) culture of the athletic department?

### **Definition of Terms**

*Athletic Department:* An intercollegiate athletic department of an institution in the 5 major NCAA conferences that make up the Football Bowl Subdivision (Fulks, 2015).

*Athletic Department Employees:* All full-time employees that work in the various divisions of the athletic department (Scott, 1997).

*Athletic Director:* The athletic director is the leader of the athletic department and is responsible for all aspects of an athletic program, including hiring coaches, scheduling, budget preparation, athletic department promotion, NCAA compliance, and facility management. Equivalent to an academic dean, they report to the university president and are typically considered part of the president's executive cabinet (Fort, 2016).

*Commercialization:* the combination of expanded press coverage, public interest, alumni involvement, and recruiting abuses that are composed into one interlocking network (Smith, 2012). Examples of this in college athletics include advertising plastered over

sports venues' institutional images, the licensing and logo deals that universities sign with apparel companies and producers of various sports trinkets, the predatory behavior of sports agents, the hype and sensationalism generated by sports agents, the bestowal of celebrity status upon select college athletes and coaches, and the pressure to schedule events every night of the week to fill the schedules for the increasing number of sports networks (Benford, 2007).

*Competing Values Framework:* A conceptual framework derived from the Competing Values Model by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) which examines the dimensions and values of an organization that strengthen performance (Landekić, Šporčić, Martinić, & Bakarić, 2015).

*Arms Race of College Athletics:* The situation in which increased spending at one school are associated with increases at other schools. This occurs when an increase in spending in School A triggers an increase in spending at School B, which then feeds back into pressure on School A to further raise its own spending (Orszag & Orszag, 2005).

*Organizational Culture:* Culture is defined as a pattern of basic assumptions that are invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that have worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2004).



*Organizational Culture Assessment Inventory:* OCAI is a survey instrument that asks respondents to allocate a set number of points to a series of statements based on their perception of the degree of similarity to the current organizational culture and a preferred future culture that each statement represents. The statements reflect dimensions of organizational culture identified by the CVF. (Flanigan, 2016; Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

*University President:* The president of a large university has a significant role as its chief executive officer and is responsible for the management of a diverse collection of activities such as education, health care, and intercollegiate athletics (Duderstadt, 2009, p. 99).

*University Leaders:* Board of trustee or regent members and the university president's executive vice president cabinet, which includes the athletic director. (Duderstadt, 2009).

### **Limitations**

There are several factors outside the control of the researcher that might have caused limitations to this study. The first limitation relates to the method that was used to assess culture. Much debate still exists among academicians about how to best measure culture. Since the inception of the Critical Incident Technique, many qualitative and quantitative methods have been developed and used to measure culture. Although a mixed-methods approach aims to add depth and personalize the generalized questionnaire (Yauch & Steudel, 2003), Schein (2010) noted that the approach has not been accepted

by scholars from both positivist and interpretivist paradigms. He explained that the predetermined elements of the quantitative questionnaire fail to allow some researchers to uncover shared assumptions specific to a particular unit, and conversely the qualitative interviews make the whole assessment process significantly more time consuming.

The second potential limitation of this mixed-methods study is that the researcher was only studying a single athletic department; therefore, the results cannot be generalized. A final limitation of this study was the truthfulness and honesty of the participants. Because athletic department employees may fear that responding honestly on both the survey and/or focus group interviews may have negative workplace implications, all measures were taken to ensure that all identifying information was stripped from their responses.

### **Delimitations**

This mixed-methods embedded study was limited to the Big State University athletic department. Big State University is a medium sized, land grant institution located in the south-eastern region of the United States. Participants in this study were all full-time employees that had occupational roles that classified as either administrators, coaches, sport supports, or administrative assistants. Part time employees and full-time employees that had little interaction with the athletic department were not included. Data were collected during the spring semester of 2018, which represents a snapshot of the time.

## **Summary of Study**

This dissertation is presented in five chapters. The first chapter includes an introduction to leadership, culture, and college athletics, the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, nature of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter Two is the review of relevant literature regarding the CVF, organizational culture, and college athletics. Chapter three presents the methodology used in this study which includes research design, selection of participants, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter four presents both the qualitative and quantitative data, as well as the analysis of each. Chapter five summarizes the research findings, reviews the implication of those findings, and provides direction for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The changing nature of the college sports environment and the effects of commercialization on institutions of higher education and their athletic departments has been discussed for more than a century (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). However, the accelerated pace of change present within college athletics has forced leaders in athletic departments to innovate faster, operate more efficiently, and respond more quickly to the unforeseen challenges of the future (Duderstadt, 2009). Innovations critical to a prosperous future will require that leaders engage with their followers to continually question the habits that were the foundation of yesterday's successes, cultivating a more nimble organizational culture to meet the ever-changing demands (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

In this chapter, the theoretical lens selected for this study, organizational culture, organizational theory, the importance of aligning leadership with organizational culture, college athletics, the role that college athletics plays in higher education, and the impact of organizational culture in college athletic programs are discussed.

A result of the competitive, hypercommercialized college sports environment (McAllister, 2010), head coaches and athletic directors have the continual challenge of maintaining the organizational culture of athletic departments and athletic programs. Cultivating a complete understanding of the culture within an organization and the role it plays in determining the effectiveness of that organization is fundamental in the organizational development process. As athletic directors and head coaches

become better equipped at identifying and managing culture, the stability and overall success of their organizations and programs will improve (Scott, 1997).

To complete this literature review, the author used several different research databases provided by Big State University Library. These databases included Google Scholar, Ebsco, Academic Search Complete, Academic OneFile, and JSTOR. To better understand issues and public discourse surrounding both organizational culture and college athletics, the search engine Google was also utilized in the research process. An exhaustive list of keywords was used (in appendix) to fully inform the author about all aspects of the issues being researched.

### **Setting**

This research project took place at Big State University, a medium sized, land grant institution located in the south-eastern region of the United States. With an enrollment of more than 22,000 students, the U.S. News and World Report ranks Big State University as one of the top 30 public institutions in the United States. Big State University's athletic programs compete in a twelve-team conference recognized as a 'power five' Bowl Championship Series (BCS) conference within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Big State University is traditionally thought of as a football school, in football it has won two national championships and more than 13 conference championships.

### **Organizational Culture**

## **History of Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture remains an incredibly complex, socially constructed phenomenon (Fancher, 2007). The study of organizational culture evolved from the fields of Anthropology and Sociology (Nguyen, 2010) and has been central to the study of organizations for the last three-quarters of a century. Although the term organizational culture has been used in many studies, a widely-shared definition of the term took decades to evolve. As early as 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn had already published 164 definitions of organizational culture (Nguyen, 2010). Organizational culture has been referred to as “a learned system of meaning and behavior that is passed from one generation to the next” (Carter & Qureshi, 1995, p. 241), as well as “all the customs, values, and traditions that are learned from one’s environment” (Sodowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995, p. 132). In 1995, Sodowsky et. al. added that every culture has a “set of people who have common and shared values; customs, habits, and rituals; systems of labeling, explanations, and evaluations; social rules of behavior; perceptions regarding human nature, natural phenomena, interpersonal relationships, time, and activity; symbols, art, and artifacts; and historical developments” (p.132).

Although studies of organizational culture were conducted as early as 1952, it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that the study of organizational culture became more prevalent. Pettigrew’s (1979) paper “On Studying Organizational Culture” is often viewed as a seminal study in this field. The impact of this article resonated more than prior works because its publication coincided with changes in the business environment that aimed to help American companies become more competitive globally by enhancing

the quality of output as well as operate more efficiently (Barney, 1986). Additionally, Pettigrew (1979) demonstrated that organizational culture is integral to the understanding of organizational behavior (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013).

Drawing on insights from both Anthropology and Sociology, Pettigrew (1979) sparked a curiosity in practitioners and researchers and led to an increase in the number of studies of individual and group behavior using cultural concepts like symbols, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and language (O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Divan, 2012). Interest and the amount of research continued to grow throughout the 1980s as business and management schools began to explore the impact of inter-organizational relationships and corporate cultures on performance (Himmer, 2013).

Two influential works, Ouchi's (1981) "*Theory Z*" and Peters' and Waterman's (1982) "*In Search of Excellence*", showcased the positive impact a culture can have on the workplace environment, employee commitment, productivity, and business success. Both studies highlighted the importance of management practices that are supported by common cultural values which promote a strong set of shared attitudes and beliefs. These works helped popularize the idea that strong cultures can have a significant, positive impact on the economic performance of an organization (Alvesson, 2003, Nguyen, 2010).

In academia, an interest in researching organizational culture grew out of a rejection of the dominant positivist paradigm in organizational research that emphasized the structural aspects of organizational life, which was usually studied using quantitative methods (Schneider et al., 2013). It provided an opportunity for researchers to explore

the expressive and emotional side of daily life in organizations using qualitative methods. (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Meyerson (1991) wrote that “culture was the code word for the subjective side of organizational life” (p. 256). As interest in organizational culture continued to grow, much of the research shifted to more quantitative methods that were faster, required less personal involvement in an organization, and resulted in data that made it easier to compare organizations.

Much of the development in cultural research and debate from the mid-1980s through the present has centered on how organizational culture could be most effectively studied and measured from the theoretical and methodological perspectives (Martin, Frost, & O’Neill, 2006). Although determining the best method to effectively measure organizational culture remains highly contentious, there is little debate about the importance and impact that culture has on organizational performance (Schneider et al., 2013).

## **What Is Organizational Culture**

### **Definitions**

Since the early 1990s interest in organizational culture has grown dramatically. To date, a search of the term organizational culture generates 6,800 studies in the Harvard Business Review alone. Organizational culture is widely considered to be one of the most important factors in a leader’s attempt to manage organizational change. However, “despite its intuitive appeal and widespread use by researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, there is little agreement as to how culture should be



conceptualized” (Jung, Scott, Davies, Bower, Whalley, McNally & Mannion, 2009, p. 1087).

Tharp (2009) noted that there are nearly as many definitions of organizational culture as there are texts to explain it, expounding that “a 1988 study identified 54 different definitions within academic literature between 1960 and 1993” (p. 3). Table 2.1 highlights various definitions of organizational culture.

Table 2.1 Definitions of organizational culture

<b>DEFINITION</b>	
Pettigrew (1979)	“Culture is the system of such publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time. This system of terms, forms, categories, and images interprets a people’s own situation to themselves” (Pettigrew, 1979, p.574).
Deal and Kennedy (1982)	“A system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time” (Deal and Kennedy, 1982, p.15).
Trice and Beyer (1993)	“Cultures are collective phenomena that embody people’s responses to the uncertainties and chaos that are inevitable in human experience. These responses fall into two major categories. The first is the substance of a culture. -- Shared, emotionally charged belief systems that we call ideologies. The second is cultural forms-- observable entities, including actions, through which members of a culture express, affirm, and communicate the substance of their culture to one another” (Trice & Beyer, 1993, p.2, cited by Tschögl, 2008).

Hofstede (2001)	“The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede & Minkov, 2010, p.344--346).
Martin (2002)	“When organizations are examined from a cultural viewpoint, attention is drawn to aspects of organizational life that historically have often been ignored or understudied, such as the stories people tell to newcomers to explain how things are done around here, the ways in which offices are arranged and personal items are or are not displayed, jokes people tell, the working atmosphere (hushed and luxurious or dirty and noisy), the relations among people (affectionate in some areas of an office and obviously angry and perhaps competitive in another place), and so on” (Martin, 2002, p.3).
Schein (2004)	“Organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2010, p.17).

Despite the number of definitions of organizational culture, most shared the notion that people within organizations developed a shared a set of values and beliefs that determined how they did their work, solved their problems, and, over time, gave the group an identity (Deshpande & Webster, 1989). Presently, the concept of organizational culture refers to the shared values, underlying assumptions, and behavioral expectations that govern decision-making (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Since the 1980s, the most quoted definition of organizational culture, and the one that is used in this study, is from Schein's (2004),

*“Organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 447).*

This definition is important because Schein identifies culture as a phenomenon, which is socially constructed by members of a group. He theorizes that culture can be best identified and characterized by the basic assumptions shared by a group. Schein's (2004) definition has been one that many scholars have used as a foundation for further research on organizational culture.

### **Characteristics of Organizational Culture**

In an effort to better explain the concept of organizational culture, some researchers have made the comparison that culture is to a group what personality and character are to individuals. They note that just as personality and character shape individual behavior, culture similarly shapes the actions of a group through commonly shared norms (Schein, 2010). In a similar way to it being difficult to fully appreciate how our character affects us, culture evolves from the interconnections of multiple relationships and because the shared assumptions are often tacit and unstated, it is also difficult to understand (Martin, 1992). In order to gain an understanding of an

organization's culture, it is critical to understand the characteristics that render culture a powerful force that often provides a sense of stability and predictability in an organization (O'Reilly et al., 1991).

### **Shared Meaning**

All organizations develop a system of shared meanings among group members as they seek to make sense of the complexity inherent in an organization and attempt to make the unpredictable more predictable. It is often people's need for stability that leads them to develop shared meanings that can come in the form of mutual understandings, patterns of beliefs, and behavioral expectations (Giberson, Resick, Dickson, Mitchelson, Randall, & Clark, 2009). These shared meanings are often referred to as the norms and values held by an organization. "Values are conceptions of the preferred or the desirable, together, with the construction of standards to which existing structures or behavior can be compared. Norms specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends" (Giberson et al., 2009, p. 55). The norms and values of a group are socially constructed by the members of that group.

Social constructionism is a sociological theory that originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality (Andrews, 2012). This theory postulates that knowledge is constructed rather than created (Andrews, 2012), and the world can only be known in relation to people's experience of it and not independently of that experience (Schwandt, 2003).

Organizational culture is a socially constructed phenomenon. The culture of any group is developed through a set of shared assumptions or common understandings about

how to think, feel, behave, and respond to external stimuli (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Shared assumptions are learned over time (actively or passively) and passed on to new members as they join the group (Tharp, 2009).

Among organizational culture researchers, there is broad consensus that culture manifests itself at different levels within an organization. Some layers are more symbolic and easily observed, whereas others are cognitive and much more difficult to identify. Schein (2004) further elaborates that, “between the layers are various espoused beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behavior that members of the culture use as a way of depicting the culture to themselves and others” (p. 23). Because the organizational culture of an organization is socially constructed, each organization is differently unique unto itself.

### **Organizational Culture Formation**

Culture formation is the natural consequence of collective human activity. Other than survival, the need for safety is the most basic need for human beings (Maslow, Stephens, Heil, & Bennis, 1998). In organizations, people find safety when they feel a sense of predictability and control over their environment. In striving to create a sense of safety and predictability, shared beliefs and patterns of behavior are developed (Schein, 2002). The formation of these shared meanings and behavioral patterns is the beginning of culture creation. A group’s culture is constantly evolving as the group members learn and adapt.

Even though culture evolves naturally from the relationships and the interactions of a group, leaders often attempt to influence creation of, or changes in, certain aspects of

an organization's culture (Collins & Porras, 2005). Notwithstanding the influence that a leader may have in an organization, most find it difficult to predictably shape culture development. Because organizational culture usually works to preserve present habits, culture is more often a stabilizing force that works to increase organizational rigidity. Schein (2004) has recently posed the question as to whether a culture can create sufficient comfort and predictability while still supporting an organization's ability to innovate and adapt.

Cultivating a culture that is prepared to handle the new and unforeseen challenges that lie ahead can be a huge competitive advantage for an athletic department. Leaders that develop strong cultures allow members the power and autonomy to deal with situations that are difficult to predict and nearly impossible to anticipate in ways that align with the aspirational vision of the organization (Chatman & Cha, 2003). Smart and St. John (1996) further elaborated that the "alignment between espoused beliefs and actual practices is the central distinguishing feature of strong cultures and enhances organizational performance because it facilitates the development of consensus, the exchange of information, and the ability to carry out coordinated actions" (p.220).

An organization's culture creates a way of life for all of the people within that organization. "It is never static; it is always in the process of becoming" (Genetzky-Haugen, 2010; Schoenberger, 1997, p.14). The fluid nature of organizational culture means that it is imperative for leaders and leadership teams to lead in ways that are congruent with their aspirational visions. Argyris (1995) stated that organizations that have congruency between what they value and their daily practices, will accomplish more

and be more effective. Additionally, Chatman and Cha (2003) further elaborated that cultures closely aligned with their espoused visions have been shown to energize employees and boost performance.

The impact of aligning an organization's culture with their aspirational vision is very powerful, so, for leaders, it is essential that they begin to develop an understanding of how and why their current culture might be different from one they aspire to have. Further, Argyris (1995) points out that few people are aware that the theories they espouse are not the theories that they practice, and the author added that there are often fundamental systematic mismatches between a leader's and organization's espoused and in-use practices. The incongruence between a culture and the espoused practices within an organization can be detrimental for leaders and the people they lead. Schein (2010) points out, that if "leaders are unaware of the forces created within their organization deriving from their culture, they will become victims to them" (p.7).

### **Measuring Culture**

The history of culture measuring methodologies date back as far as 1954 with the development of the Critical Incident Technique (Mannion, 2007). Over the last 75 years, a multitude of new methods have been developed to define, conceptualize, and measure culture. Still, no best measurement practice has yet evolved (Jung et al., 2009). A wide range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been effectively used to measure culture. However, since the early 1990s, the vast majority of researchers have gravitated toward quantitative methodologies to understand an organization's culture. Quantitative assessments allow researchers to quickly collect and analyze data as well as

compare those data to other organizations as well as other external factors. Given that, quantitative methodologies fail to provide researchers with a deep understanding of the unique culture of an organization, and therefore, these methods do not provide enough detail to accurately understand the elements of culture that advance the status quo (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). To address the shortcomings in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in assessing organizational culture many researchers are using a mixed methods approach. Mixed-methods studies combine quantitative and qualitative methodologies, each contributing to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Because of the research questions guiding this study, a mixed-methods methodology will be used.

### **College Athletics**

Intercollegiate athletics are a department within American colleges and universities that allow student-athletes to test and develop their own ability in competitions with each other. Leaders in higher education tout that intercollegiate athletics support the academic mission of their university by “teaching people about character, motivation, endurance, loyalty, and the attainment of one’s personal best” (Duderstadt, 2009, p. 70). Intercollegiate athletic departments are a division of higher education institutions and are governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) a member-led, non-profit organization that presides over athletes at more than 1,200 institutions (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Duderstadt, 2009; McAllister, 2010). The NCAA designates schools into one of three separate divisions largely based on school



size, funding, and competition levels. For the remainder of this study we will focus on the Division I level.

Presently, Division I intercollegiate athletics is big business. In 2010, Division I athletic departments spent 7.9 billion dollars maintaining and running their programs (Anderson, 2016). To enable such aggressive spending habits, university athletic departments have looked to lucrative television contracts, licensing deals, and a myriad of sponsorship agreements to help mitigate a portion of the costs (Desrochers, 2013). These deals generate large sums of revenue for athletic departments, but they also benefit the university as a whole, most notably showcasing academic institutions to a national audience (Anderson, 2016; Pope & Pope, 2014). This type of media attention and financial investment in athletics often draws the ire of academics as many view this type of behavior contradictory to the mission of higher education (Duderstadt, 2009). The debate about the role that athletics plays in the landscape of college and university life in the United States is not a new one, but better understanding of the issues provides some context for the pressures and political environment athletic directors must successfully navigate.

### **Historical Context**

Sports initially entered American colleges and universities as student-organized recreation activities (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). As interest surrounding these events grew, student-athletes wanted to test their skills against peers from other colleges and universities. Intercollegiate contests rapidly became extremely popular with students as well as the general public (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many

intercollegiate games were on a path to professionalism, as many athletes were not only paid, but some were not even students (Duderstadt, 2009). In 1906 President Theodore Roosevelt, concerned with brutality and lack of ethical behavior in college athletics, called on leaders in higher education to take the lead in restoring ethical conduct. The president's staunch advocacy for amateurism within college athletics spawned the formation of the NCAA. The NCAA served as a governing body for intercollegiate athletic programs and in their constitution declared, "An amateur sportsman is one who engages in sports for the physical, mental, or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom the sport is an avocation. Any college athlete who takes pay for participation in athletics does not meet this definition of amateurism" (Duderstadt, 2009, p. 71).

Despite the initial efforts to control college sports, their popularity grew immensely. Contests evolved from participatory activities for students into a spectator event for both students and fans alike (Duderstadt, 2009). This transformation offered many benefits that university administrators could not afford to ignore. College presidents began to see that "successful sports teams attracted enrollments, offered a unifying vehicle for very diverse student bodies, and engendered support from surrounding communities who used the teams as the basis for egoistic rivalries with one another" (Beyer & Hannah, 2000, p. 107). The role of intercollegiate athletics in the world of higher education gained further legitimacy in the 1920s, with the emergence of the field of physical education. This field provided an academic justification for the existence of athletic programs. With this development, athletics was formally

incorporated into many universities and recognized as part of education (Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

At the time, the growth in college athletics was largely due to the unifying effect that competitions had on the many different populations that made up the growing American university campus. Students, faculty, and alumni became communities connected by identifying with athletic events. Increasingly, this sense of community bound by a common interest in athletics expanded beyond college campuses to hundreds of thousands of fans with very little, if any, connection to the universities (Duderstadt, 2009). The development and impact of these communities became so powerful that “very few schools felt that they could survive or prosper as academic institutions if they abolished or downgraded their intercollegiate athletics programs” (Beyer & Hannah, 2000, p. 107).

Interest in college athletics grew exponentially with the advent of commercial radio. In 1927, the Rose Bowl became the first coast to coast national broadcast of any college sporting event. The ensuing larger spotlight and national acclaim that college sports, football in particular, started to garner began drawing the ire of many academicians within higher education. A report presented by the Carnegie Foundation found “serious fault with college football, noting its increasing commercialization and professionalization, the lack of integrity of players, coaches, and fans, and the dangers its ‘demoralizing and corrupt system’ posed for both participants and academic institutions” (Duderstadt, 2009, p. 72). Although this report illuminated growing concerns that commercializing intercollegiate athletics would threaten the integrity of academic

institutions, it resulted in no reform. For most major universities, big-time college athletics had become ingrained into the university culture.

Moving forward, the 1960s and 1970s marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of college athletics, as the emergence of television turned what had always been spectator events into public entertainment in the form of nationally broadcast competitions. Television networks found that promoting and marketing college sports, much as they would other commercial activities, by generating great media hype, hiring captivating announcers, and influencing colleges to arrange extravagant events, they could entice major national audiences. Division I college football and basketball were no longer spectator events; they became commercial products.

The commercial value of college sports hit a new high in 1984 when the NCAA negotiated a one-billion-dollar deal with CBS for the exclusive right to broadcast the NCAA basketball tournament. Unprecedented at the time, this deal was the first of many large television contracts that have shaped, and continue to shape, the landscape of collegiate athletics. Television offered the never before seen opportunity for institutions and conference officials to utilize the enhanced exposure to build institutional brand awareness and cultivate new and different streams of revenue (Grimes & Chressanthis, 1994). By 2013, the television contracts for college athletics eclipsed the annual media contracts for Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, and The National Basketball Association (Desrochers, 2013).

## Connection to the University

For as long as intercollegiate athletics has existed, the role it plays in relation to the university has been the subject of immense scrutiny and debate. What started as a student-led initiative, Division I college athletics now represents a multibillion-dollar industry (Wong, 2016), and one that university leaders consider invaluable (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). Successful athletic programs (primarily football programs) serve as a powerful marketing arm for their universities, expanding new applicant and donor pools, enhancing the academic reputation of the university, reducing acceptance rates, and raising the average SAT scores and GPAs of incoming students (Anderson, 2016; Pope & Pope, 2014). In 2009, current Oregon State University athletic director Scott Barnes pertinently described college athletics in regard to the role they play in higher education as “the front porch of the university. It’s not the most important room in the house, but it is the most visible” (Longman, 2009, p. A1).

As the profile of college athletics has grown in the past two decades, so has the pressure for university administrators to produce successful athletic programs. The enhanced pressure to reap the rewards of today’s highly commercialized climate of college athletics has cultivated a fierce, zero-sum competition between institutions for the limelight. This competition has led to what is now commonly referred to as the *arms race* of college athletics; in an effort to gain an advantage over their peer institutions there is a national trend of university and athletics administrators to spend increasing amounts of money to upgrade athletics facilities or invest in coaches’ salaries (Smith, 2012). The pressure to keep up has cultivated a win-at-all-costs phenomenon that is pervasive in all

levels of college athletics (Weight, Navarro, Huffman, & Smith-Ryan, 2014; Fort, 2016), and research shows that the race is accelerating swiftly without an end in sight (Bass, Schaeperkoetter, & Bunds, 2015).

The aggressive commitment by university administrators around the country to maximize the commercialization of athletics and the win-at-all-cost phenomenon perpetuated by those efforts have opened up schools to new, different, and detrimental liabilities. Critics of commercialization within college athletics are quick to point out that greatly enhanced exposure also opens universities up to significantly more risk, even potentially endangering the academic mission of the university (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). Elaborating on the negative impact of commercializing college athletics, former president of the University of Michigan, James Duderstadt (2009), said in general, big-time college athletics has “threatened the integrity and reputation of our universities, exposing us to the hypocrisy, corruption, and scandal that all too frequently accompany activities driven primarily by commercial value and public visibility” (p.

11). Additionally, there is a growing concern and major pending litigation regarding equity in the treatment of, and benefits given to, student-athletes (Duderstadt, 2009; Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

Since its inception, college athletics has always been a vital component of university life in the United States. Athletics has always been seen as a unifying vehicle for diverse subcultures on a college campus and an organic means of engaging support from alumni and external communities (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). However, the newly discovered positive impacts, which spawned from the rapidly evolving commercialization

efforts, have engaged university administrators and contributed to shaping the student experience in ways we have never seen. Pope and Pope (2014) showcased the power of college athletics by demonstrating that universities would have to enhance their financial aid up to 32% to see similar increases in application numbers as are found when the university reaches the Final Four in basketball or finishes in the top ten in football. For schools that are relatively unknown or lack academic prestige, investing in the development of successful athletics programs can be a powerful catalyst for upward institutional mobility (Anderson, 2016).

### **Role of the Athletic Director**

The enhanced profile of college athletics, escalation of commercialization, and acceleration of the pace of innovation has transformed the role and responsibilities of Division I athletic directors. Today's athletic directors, much like presidents of the university, are very public figures because they publicly represent their university and athletic department. Duderstadt (2009), former president of the University of Michigan, believed that "the visibility—and vulnerability—of intercollegiate athletics makes the selection and support of a strong athletic director one of a president's most important tasks" (p. 60-61). Because of the high-profile nature of the job, and the impact on the university at large, often many athletic directors report directly to the president and most of them are considered part of their executive leadership team (Duderstadt, 2009).

Athletic directors are the chief administrators in athletic departments of athletics and have many internal and external responsibilities (Powers, 2015). Athletic directors imagine a vision for their department and support the development of a culture that will

engage department employees in a common purpose to bring that vision to life. Athletic directors oversee the budget, hiring and firing decisions, student-athlete support programs, marketing and commercialization endeavors, departmental adherence to both university and NCAA rules, and play an active role in fundraising initiatives (Marburger, 2015).

Until the mid-1990s, Division I athletic directors were primarily selected from the ranks of either college or professional coaches. The common rationale was that coaches understood the competitive landscape well, had a wealth of experience in college athletics, and would be strong advocates for student athletes. But as commercialization turned college athletic departments into multimillion dollar sports enterprises, the role of the athletic director evolved dramatically. The coaching candidate lacked a fundamental understanding of financial management (Duderstadt, 2009), and university presidents began hiring candidates with strong business and financial backgrounds. As of 2014, “82% of Division I athletic directors had a background in the business or revenue side of the department” (Wong, 2014, p.13).

The landscape of college athletics is changing at a breakneck pace (Wong, 2016) and the decisions made regarding athletics have never had such impact and exposure (Duderstadt, 2009). The growth of athletic department operating budgets has accelerated the *arms race* of college athletics and increased the pressure for athletic directors to cultivate winning programs. Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) suggested that the pressure to do more with less, demands innovative and inspiring leadership to encourage subordinates to pursue a common goal (Northington, 2015). Emeritus Professor of



Management at the MIT School of Management, Ed Schein (1985), espoused that “the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture” (p. 2). In the highly-competitive, highly-commercialized climate of Division I athletics, the better an athletic director understands their department and the forces acting within it, the better they can shape the “powerful, tacit, and often unconscious set of forces that determine both our individual and collective behavior” (Schein, 1999, p. 19) to meet the challenges of the future (Schein, 1999).

Utilizing the CVF as guide, the researcher will be able to explore how both the leader and full-time departmental employees perceive the present and preferred athletic department culture. This is important because a shared understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are critical for a leader to leverage the organization’s strengths and ensure present cultural attributes do not inhibit future goal attainment.

### **Theoretical Lens**

The use of theory in academic inquiry provides researchers with justified explanations for their expectations and predictions (Creswell, 2008). Kerlinger (1979) defined theory as “a set of interrelated constructs (variables), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena” (p. 64). Labovitz and Hagedorn (1971) contribute to a better understanding of the role of theory in research; in their definition of theoretical rationale, they describe it as, “specifying how and why the variables and relational statements are interrelated” (p.17).

In this study, the CVF was used as the theoretical framework to analyze the present and desired cultures of both the athletic director and athletic department staff. This framework has been used by researchers to “study leadership roles and effectiveness in organizational culture, and human resource development in many types of organizations, including higher education” (Maloney, 2008, p.19; Cameron & Freeman, 1991).

Robert Quinn and John Rohrbaugh developed the CVF in the early 1980s as a result of their research studying the major indicators of effective organizations. University of Michigan faculty members statistically analyzed 39 indicators of effectiveness, and two primary dimensions emerged. One dimension addresses organizational focus, differentiating between an internal focus on the people in the organization and an external focus on the organization itself. The second dimension is related to organizational structure, contrasting a preference for control and stability vs. flexibility and dynamism (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Cameron and Quinn (2011) further elaborated that “together the two dimensions form four quadrants, each representing a distinct set of organizational effectiveness indicators. These indicators of effectiveness represent what people value about an organization’s performance” (p. 12). Each of the four quadrants has been labeled with a cultural archetype to distinguish its most salient characteristics: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market (Figure 2.1). Although organizations may have aspects of all four culture types present, the CVF helps to identify an organization’s dominant culture type (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

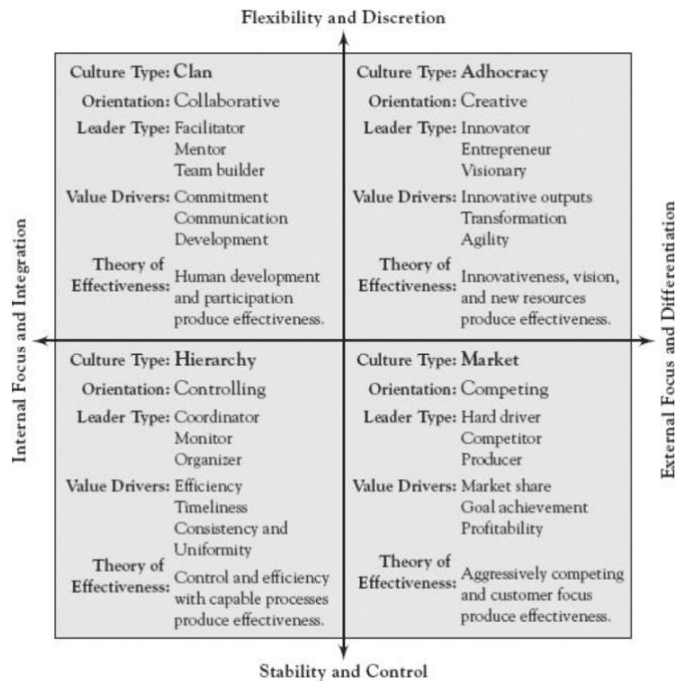


Figure 2.1 Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

The CVF provides a validated and focused theoretical framework for assessing the central values of the organization (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). By analyzing the cultural values currently in place and comparing them to those that would be preferred, the CVF helps to identify incongruencies present in an organization’s values-in-use and their espoused values (Kaarst-Brown, 2004). This framework was designed to help leaders diagnose and facilitate change in organizational culture, and it has become the most utilized framework for assessing organizational culture in the world (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

### Competing Values Framework (CVF) Culture Archetypes

#### Hierarchy

Hierarchical cultures are most often represented by formal and structured work places. Standardized rules and procedures govern what people do and act as the glue that holds the organization together. Effective leaders in this quadrant are most often good coordinators and organizers, as maintaining a stable, smoothly running organization is of chief importance. (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

### **Market**

Market cultures are characterized by organizations that focus on transactions with the outside constituencies of the organization (e.g., suppliers, customers, contractors) rather than the internal management. This culture type operates primarily through economic market mechanisms, competitive dynamics, and monetary exchange. Effective leaders in this quadrant are described as highly competitive and productive, while understanding that profitability and bottom-line results are the primary objectives of the organization. (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

### **Clan**

Clan cultures are most aptly described as having shared values and goals, while promoting an atmosphere of collectivity and mutual help. Clan-type organizations tend to act more like extended families, where the primary task of leaders is to empower employees and facilitate their participation and commitment. Clan cultures define success in terms of their internal climate and concern for people (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

### **Adhocracy**

Adhocracy cultures are most often represented by highly responsive, adaptable organizations. They foster high degrees of flexibility and creativity, while solving new

and emerging issues as they arise. Effective leaders within this quadrant are seen as risk takers and cultivate entrepreneurship, creativity, and cutting edge activity (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

The CVF was chosen as the theoretical framework for this study because it is the most dominant framework for assessing culture in the world (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The CVF was empirically derived and has demonstrated both face and empirical validity. Cameron and Quinn (2011) suggest that the CVF has become adopted so widely because the framework has shown, “a high degree of congruence with well-known and well-accepted categorical schemes that organize the way people think, their values, their assumptions, and the ways they process information” (p.33).

### **Competing Values Framework in Research**

Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki (2011) noted that the CVF has been used as an assessment model in over 10,000 organizations globally. Additionally, both the reliability and validity of instruments based on the framework have been empirically supported. The CVF has been used to examine organizational effectiveness in a broad cross section of areas and industries, including nonprofits (Herman & Renz, 2008), higher education institutions (Obendhain & Johnson, 2004), emergency departments (Tregunno, Baker, Barnsley, & Murray, 2004), management information systems (Cooper & Quinn, 1993), employment services organizations (Rohrbaugh, 1981), as well as banks, a variety of companies related to the oil and gas industry, insurance, construction, telecommunications, food and drink, steel, cement, clothing, and health care

companies in Qatar (Al-Khalifa & Aspinwall, 2001; Grabowski, Neher, Crim, & Mathiassen, 2015).

In the first example, Jung, Chan, and Hsieh (2017) utilized the CVF to challenge the belief and past research regarding linear relationships between organizational culture and employee turnover intention. The authors utilized a large-scale survey carried out by the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs in the central government of South Korea in 2005. The survey was administered to 14 different government agencies; finance, police home affairs, education, environment, agriculture (and forestry), welfare (and health), construction (and transportation), customs services, procurement services, culture (and tourism), veterans administrations, government legislation, and meteorological administration. In total, 4136 employees were sampled. The researchers then examined the relationship that each culture type had with employee turnover intention. The regression results validated their hypothesis that there was a U-shaped association between clan and market cultures and turnover intention, while also showing that a linear relationship exists between hierarchical cultures (Jung, Chan, & Hsieh, 2017).

In the second example, Flanigan (2016) utilized the CVF to explore differences in employee perceptions of the current and desired cultures within the Department of Strategic Enrollment Management at Virginia Commonwealth University. The author also used the data collected from the survey to develop a metric-driven strategy to more closely align the existing culture with the preferred state. The CVF was selected for this study primarily because it “would lend itself to the creation of a culture change plan”

(Flanigan, 2016, p. 118). The author surveyed all 164 full-time staff members who worked in the department. Results showed that the staff collectively asserted a preference for the future culture of their department to increase elements of the adhocracy and clan cultures while curtailing the hierarchy and market cultures (Flanigan, 2016).

In the third example, Grabowski, Neher, Crim, and Mathiassen (2015) set out to understand the relationship between the CVF and organizational effectiveness in volunteer organizations. The authors combined the CVF with rigorous action research methodology to assess the organizational effectiveness of a voluntary agency serving the developmentally disabled, Right in the Community. Over the course of eight months, the authors collected data from multiple sources including collaborative workshops, field observations, board meetings, archival surveys and documents, websites, and semi-structured interviews. The transcribed data were then coded using a coding scheme based on the CVF. Results of this study show that the CVF helped improve the organization's management of scarce resources, organizational structure, governance, and innovative capabilities (Grabowski, Neher, Crim, & Mathiassen, 2015).

CVF has been used to study aspects of organizational culture in multiple settings. As collegiate athletic departments construct and maintain individual cultures within higher education, the CVF can be used to examine the culture of this department from the perspective of the leader (i.e., the athletic director) and their followers (i.e., departmental full-time employees).

## **Paradigms of Organizational Culture**

Two different paradigms have been used to help understand organizational culture: the functionalist and the interpretivist paradigms. The functionalist paradigm is positivist in nature and asserts that organizations produce culture. The functionalist cultural research aims to objectively and empirically discover tangible, pragmatic indicators of culture (Zamanou & Glaser, 1994; Putnam, 1983). In contrast, the interpretivist paradigm argues that “organizational culture is an emergent complex phenomenon of social groupings, serving as the prime medium for all members of an organization to interpret their collective identity, beliefs, and behaviors” (Glendon & Stanton, 2000, p. 194). The interpretive cultural research aims at understanding how organizational members make sense of their particular organization. In a sense, this style of research will tell a story of organizational life in great detail (Pacanowsky & O’Donnell-Trujillo, 1983). Glendon and Stanton (2000) elaborate that an interpretive perspective views “culture as a metaphor for understanding how organizations work and why they respond in particular ways to environmental influences” (p. 195). This study relied on an interpretive paradigm to conceptualize, assess, and analyze the organizational culture of a Division I athletic department in the Southeastern United States.

## **Organizational Culture Theory**

This study will utilize Schein’s (2004) theory of organizational culture. Schein’s theory underlies the foundations of the theoretical lens used in this study by providing a meaning of culture on multiple levels of consciousness. Cameron and Quinn (2011) posit



that the CVF was “developed on the basis of the fundamental assumptions that people use in making sense of the world and in their organizational activities” (p.52). Additionally, each culture type and quadrant of the CVF represents the basic assumptions, orientations, and values — the same elements that constitute an organizational culture.

Schein (2004) believes that “the essence of a culture lies in the pattern of basic underlying assumptions, and after you understand those, you can easily understand the other more surface levels and deal appropriately with them” (Schein, 2004, p. 32).

Schein (2004) asserts that an organization’s culture manifests itself and can be studied at three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. He uses the term level to refer to the degree to which a particular cultural phenomenon is visible to an observer.

### **Artifacts**

Schein’s (2004) artifacts of an organization represent the surface and most visible level of an organization’s culture. Artifacts consist of all things that you can see, hear, and feel within an organizational environment (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2 List of examples of common artifacts of organizational culture (Schein, 2004)

## ARTIFACTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

- The architecture or physical layout of a group
- Common language
- Common technology
- Artistic creations
- Group decision making processes
- Group members dress
- Group members manners of address
- Group members emotional displays
- Stories told about the organization
- Published list of values
- Observable rituals or ceremonies
- Charters
- Formal descriptions of how the organization works
- Communication mediums

(Schein, 2004)

The artifacts of an organization can be powerful in shaping culture by having an immediate emotional impact on the people within the organization (Schein, 1999). This level of culture can be difficult to understand without understanding the underlying basic assumptions that give these artifacts meaning.

### **Espoused Values**

The espoused values are the beliefs, principles, goals, strategies, aspirations, and ideologies articulated by the organizations' leaders (Nguyen, 2010). Schein (2004) further stated that this level of culture remains conscious and the values are explicitly articulated, because they serve as a stabilizing force for members in the face of difficult situations. "Espoused values are the consciously developed formal organizational practices such as strategies, goals, policies, and informal practices like implicit norms" (Armenakis, Brown, & Mehta, 2011, p. 306). In addition, these espoused values also help to educate new members on how to behave in the current organization.

## **Basic Underlying Assumptions**

Schein (2004) noted that determining the differences that exist between the espoused values of an organization and their actual values can be quite difficult. Because of that difficulty, Schein believed that basic underlying assumptions were more powerful in determining an organization's culture (Scott, 1997).

Basic underlying assumptions are the most cognitive and difficult to identify (Schein, 2004). Basic assumptions refer to the taken for granted and often unconscious assumptions that are shared by an entire group (Schein, 2004). This level of culture is a dominant factor in determining how members of a group chose to behave, how they process information, how they develop common thought patterns, and how they feel. Basic underlying assumptions are the foundation of the group norms that guide behavioral expectations and are shared within the group (Cooke & Szumal, 1993).

Shared assumptions are socially constructed by group members as they develop successful interventions in order to solve problems. Shared basic assumptions are similar to what Argyris and Shon identified as "theories-in-use" (Argyris & Shon, 1996, p. 638). Over a period of time, shared assumptions can become so widespread throughout an organization that they become almost non-debatable and non-confrontable, and hence, difficult to change.

*"When a set of shared basic assumptions is formed by this process, it defines the character and identity of the group and can function as a cognitive defense mechanism both for the individual members and for the group as a whole. In other words, individuals and groups seek stability*

*and meaning. Once achieved, it is easier to distort new data by denial, projection, rationalization, or various other defense mechanisms than to change the basic assumption” (Schein, 2004, p. 32).*

### **Chapter Summary**

The literature review provided an overview of the relevant research on the CVF, organizational culture, and college athletics. The literature showed how the CVF can be utilized to assess organizational culture and can be used to enhance organizational effectiveness. The literature review explored the historical development of organizational culture and the significance it can play in organizational performance. Additionally, this chapter explored the highly commercialized landscape of college athletics. The literature highlighted how the *arms race* of college athletics and the impact that athletic success has on universities are intensifying the pressure for athletic directors to do more with less.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The role that intercollegiate athletics has played within higher education has dramatically evolved since their inception in 1852 (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). What started as student-organized competitions has evolved into high-end commercial productions (McAllister, 2010). The enhanced profile, popularity, and commercialization within college athletics has forced athletic departments to evolve and innovate faster than at any point in history (Duderstadt, 2009). It is more important now than ever for the leaders in college athletics to cultivate organizational cultures that can thrive in the accelerated pace of change, as well as develop the creativity to find new and innovative solutions. To do this effectively there must be a shared understanding of the athletic department's culture (Schein, 2004). The purpose of this study is to explore if and how Big State University athletic director's understanding of the present and preferred athletic department cultures compares to those of the full-time athletic department employees.

#### **Research Design**

The proposed methodology for the study's exploration of organizational culture within the Big State University athletic department is a mixed-methods embedded research design. The design was selected based on the need to assess and compare the athletic director and athletic department employees' perception of the current and preferred cultures within the athletic department. A mixed-methods embedded design enables researchers to utilize each methodology to complement the shortcomings of the other. This approach enables researchers to utilize quantitative assessments to accurately

and expeditiously measure the dominant elements of a particular culture, while using qualitative methods to further explain and explore the quantitative results (Ary, Jacobs, Irvine & Walker, 2018).

The embedded design, as described by Creswell and Clark (2007) is a mixed-methods design “in which one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in a study based primarily on the other data type” (p.67). Bryman (2015) further explained that “one of the two research methods is used to help explain findings generated by the other” (p. 633). Because the focus of this study was descriptive in nature, and the researcher was focusing on exploring differences that might exist in how both the athletic director and employees understand the present and preferred organizational cultures, it was imperative to utilize a mixed-methods embedded research design (Creswell, 2008).

### **Participants**

Organizational culture is a socially constructed phenomenon, that is unique to each particular company and is shared among all members of an organization (Mannion, 2007; Schein, 2010; Fancher, 2007; Andrews, 2012). To truly assess how congruently leaders perceive their organization’s present and preferred cultures, the researcher must develop a robust, comprehensive understanding of each measure (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). To accomplish this, the researcher decided that all full-time employees of the Big State University athletic department, including the athletic director, comprise the target population.

## Sampling

Sampling is a meaningful step in the research process because it helps to provide insight into the quality of the inferences made by the researcher that stem from the underlying findings. (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The researcher must ensure that participants are qualified and have the frame of reference required to thoroughly address the research questions being explored (Sweeney, 2016; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spires, 2002). Decisions about sampling methodologies are important because they can impact a study's trustworthiness, most notably in addressing issues of credibility and transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Sweeney, 2016). In this study, the researcher utilized non-probability, purposive sampling to explore the perceptions of the organizational culture by all full-time employees of the Big State University athletic department.

Traditionally the use of random samples is most closely aligned with quantitative research, whereas purposive or non-probability sampling is most frequently utilized in qualitative research. However, Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) assert that making these assumptions represents a false dichotomy. They state that both purposive and random sampling techniques can be used in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007).

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher aims to sample cases/participants in a strategic, non-random way, as to ensure that the individuals studied are appropriate for the research questions being investigated (Tongco, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Bryman (2015) elaborated,

*“the idea is that the research questions should give an indication of what units need to be sampled. Research questions are likely to provide guidelines as to what categories of people need to be the focus of attention and therefore sampled” (p. 416).*

Employing purposive sampling techniques allows researchers to select populations that they believe they will provide the most robust data. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) elaborated, “If the goal is not to generalize to a population but to obtain insights into a phenomenon, individuals, or events, then the researcher purposefully selects individuals, groups, and settings for this phase that maximize understanding of the underlying phenomenon” (p. 297).

For the purposes of this study the researcher has decided to sample all full-time employees of Big State University athletics department, including the athletic director. The researcher feels that purposefully sampling all full-time athletic department employees will provide a comprehensive and robust description of the perceived organizational culture.

### **Instrumentation**

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) is presently the most utilized instrument for assessing culture in the world (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011), the OCAI was built based on the CVF, which emerged from research that focused on indicators of organizational effectiveness. The OCAI has been used extensively in scholarly research in a wide array of industries at companies around the world (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The instrument allows



researchers to diagnose the dominant elements of an organization's orientation, and it defines the cultural archetype, strength, and present congruence with that population's aspirational culture (Lizbetinova, Lorincova, & Caha, 2016; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The OCAI measures six key dimensions of organizational culture: dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphasis, and criteria of success. Cameron and Quinn (2011) noted that the six dimensions being assessed "are not comprehensive, of course, but they address the basic assumptions (dominant characteristics, organizational glue), interaction patterns (leadership, management of employees), and organizational direction (strategic emphases, criteria of success) that typify the fundamentals of culture" (p. 28).

The OCAI consists of six questions (Table 3.1), each relating to a cultural dimension being measured. The participants are asked to allot 100 points across four alternative statements, each corresponding with one of the four cultural archetypes from the CVF, that most accurately reflect their present organization. The participants are then asked to allot 100 additional points across the same four statements, however, this time they are to divide the points based on how they would like to see their organization in five years-time (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Table 3.1 Images of the six OCAI question in the format in which they were presented to participants (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)

<i>I. Dominant Characteristics</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
B	The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.		
C	The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
D	The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total		100	100

<i>2. Organizational Leadership</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
B	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
C	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
D	The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		
Total		100	100

<i>3. Management of Employees</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
B	The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
C	The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
D	The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		
Total		100	100

4. <i>Organization Glue</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.		
B	The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.		
C	The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.		
D	The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.		
Total		100	100

5. <i>Strategic Emphases</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.		
B	The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.		
C	The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.		
D	The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.		
Total		100	100

6. <i>Criteria of Success</i>		<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A	The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.		
B	The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
C	The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.		
D	The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical.		
Total		100	100

## **Assessment Scale**

The authors of the OCAI chose to use an ipsative rating scale, opposed to the more commonly used Likert scale. The ipsative scale forces the subjects to distribute 100 points among alternatives. This type of scale is also referred to as a forced-choice scale (Baron, 1996). The Likert scale has participants evaluate every variable independently and rate each question on a 1 to 5 or 1 to 7-point scale (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

In Baron's (1996) article *Strength and limitations of ipsative measurement*, she noted that when utilizing Likert scales participants can distort responses, both consciously and unconsciously, away from their true scores. She further noted that Likert responses are prone to "central tendency biases, where respondents avoid using extreme response categories; acquiescence responding, where subjects show a tendency to agree with statements as presented; and social desirability responding, where respondents try to portray themselves in a more positive manner" (p. 52). Ipsative, or forced-choice, scales are designed to curtail such biases (Baron, 1996).

Unlike Likert scales, ipsative scales do not yield independent responses. When examining multiple selections in a forced-choice scale, the alternative choices are related to each other. Researchers believe that identifying and deliberating between the trade-offs when responding to questions mirror the trade-offs that exist in the organization being studied (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Birbeck, 2011; Baron, 1996). Cameron and Quinn (2011), the developers of the OCAI, note that the primary advantage of a forced-choice scale "is that it highlights and differentiates the cultural uniqueness that actually

exists in organizations” (p. 183). Because respondents cannot score all the items on the survey equally high, using an ipsative scale will produce more differentiation in ratings.

Because ipsative data are “perfectly correlated with one another, the correlations render the measures not suitable for correlation-based statistical analysis, like factor analysis and regression” (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 24). In light of the limitations that accompany data derived from a forced-choice scale, Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) developed a version of the assessment using a Likert scale. In their study, 796 executives were given both versions of the instrument and the results were compared. After a multitrait-multimethod analysis and multi-dimensional scaling, the authors concluded that the scale was both a valid and reliable instrument (Kwan & Walker, 2004). Cameron and Quinn (2011) suggest that researchers use the statistical technique that best aligns with their research agenda and their research questions.

### **Scoring the OCAI**

Upon completing the OCAI, the researcher started by adding the point totals for all six of the A questions in the Now column. Once the A total was completed the researcher then totaled the scores for the B, C, and D questions, respectively. After getting the totals for each culture type, the researcher then divided that sum by six, the number of questions. The researcher then repeated this process for the Preferred column. The results of both the Now and Preferred scores were then plotted on a graph to illustrate the cultural profile for this organization. Figure 3.2 is an example of what a cultural profile looks like.

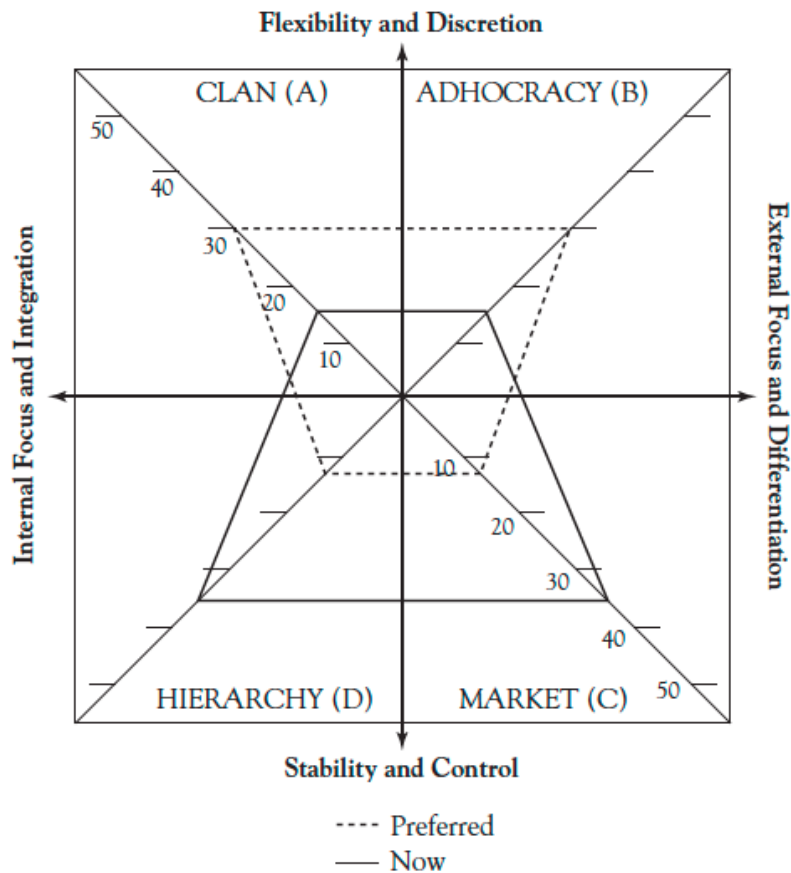


Figure 3.2 Graphical OCAI example

### Data Collection

Data collection started with an email from the associate athletic director explaining the purpose of the study, the importance of the data, and lastly, asking all full-time departmental employees to participate by clicking a link imbedded in that message. Participants who clicked the link were directed to an online version of the OCAI assessment (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). To ensure confidentiality for the respondents, no identifying information was collected. OCAI Online, an online database, developed by the creators of the OCAI assessment, hosted the surveys, collected responses, and stored

all raw data on their secure, password-protected server. Final data collection was accessible in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

Results from the OCAI were shared with a group of athletic department employees in focus group interviews. The researcher asked a series of open-ended questions to identify themes and examples that help illustrate the discrepancies that existed between the present and preferred organizational culture.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Quantitative**

To determine if there were statistically significant differences between the athletic director's perception of the present and preferred athletic department cultures, and those of the full-time employees within the department, the researcher utilized a one-sample t-test. T-tests are an inferential statistical analysis utilized to determine whether the differences that may exist between population means, or between a population mean and a specific value, are statistically significant.

Equation 3.0

$$t = \frac{\text{mean} - \text{comparison value}}{\text{Standard Error}}$$

After the data were collected, the researcher transferred the data from Microsoft Excel to SPSS, statistical analysis software. Next, the researcher performed a series of t-tests, using an alpha level of 0.05, to test 14 different hypotheses. To account for the increasing error rate that occurs when calculating multiple t-tests, the researcher employed Bonferroni's Correction. The correction requires the researcher to divide the alpha level by the number of t-tests being performed. The researcher compared the



present and preferred cultural profile of the full-time employees to that of the Big State University athletic director. Additionally, the full-time employee's present and preferred scores for each of the six cultural dimensions measured by the OCAI, were compared to those of the athletic director. T-tests were computed to measure which differences were statistically significant with a 95% confidence interval.

For each of the 14 hypotheses, the athletic director is considered the independent variable and is represented by  $\mu_0$ . Full-time athletic department employees are considered the dependent variable and are represented by  $\mu$ . If the probability value of any t-tests is less than 0.05 then there is a statistically significant difference, and the null hypothesis will be rejected. The following is a list of the hypotheses:

*Hypothesis #1 – Overall Cultural Profile Present*

$$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$$

*Hypothesis #2 – Overall Cultural Profile Preferred*

$$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$$

*Hypothesis #3 – Dominant Characteristics Present*

$$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$$

*Hypothesis #4 – Dominant Characteristics Preferred*

$$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$$

$$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$$

*Hypothesis #5 – Organizational Leadership Present*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #6 – Organizational Leadership Preferred*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #7 – Organizational Glue Present*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #8 – Management of Employees Preferred*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #9 – Management of Employees Present*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #10 – Organizational Glue Preferred*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #11 – Strategic Emphases Present*

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #12 – Strategic Emphases Preferred*

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #13 – Criteria of Success Present*

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

*Hypothesis #14 – Criteria of Success Preferred*

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

### **Qualitative**

The focus group interview sessions were transcribed and thematically analyzed by the researcher. The themes identified were subsets of the primary intent of the research, which complement and expand on the initial quantitative conclusions (Barrios, 2013). The goal of this phase of the study was to further interpret the OCAI results, in addition to better understanding the social construction of the Big State University athletic department culture (Creswell, 2008).

### **Validity and Reliability**

The validity and reliability for the OCAI has been demonstrated by numerous researchers in studies of various types of organizations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) established the reliability of the OCAI in their study of 796 executives from 86 different public utility firms who rated their own organizations culture. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each of the cultural archetypes being assessed by the OCAI. The researchers found coefficients to be 0.74 for the clan

culture, 0.79 for the adhocracy culture, 0.73 for the hierarchy culture, and 0.71 for the market culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Whitaker, 2011). Further, both Yeung, Brockbank, and Ulrich (1991) and Zammuto and Krakower (1991) found the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each culture type to be above 0.70, and in line with Quinn and Spreitzer's original study. Generally, coefficients above 0.70 indicate reliability of the scale within the instrument (Arroyo, 2015; Whitaker, 2011).

The validity of the OCAI was first demonstrated by Cameron and Freeman (1991) in their study of organizational culture in 334 institutions of higher education. The authors surveyed 12 to 20 individuals from each university, totaling 3,406 respondents from across the United States. The authors concluded that cultural strength and cultural congruence were not as powerful in predicting organizational effectiveness as culture type. Their results showed no statistically significant differences between strong and weak cultures and dimensions of organizational effectiveness. However, significant differences did exist when comparing the various culture types. "Evidence for the validity of the culture instrument was uncovered when the culture type was matched with the domain of effectiveness in which the organization excelled and by the type of decision making, structure, and strategy employed" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p.197).

Kwan and Walker (2004) confirmed the validity of the OCAI in their study of seven higher education organizations. To date, scholarly research has provided evidence of validity through congruent cultural validity (Cameron & Freeman, 1991), convergent validity through the use of multi-scales (Kwan & Walker, 2004), discriminant validity

through multi-scales, and multi-trait patterns (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991; Whitaker, 2011; Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The OCAI has been proven to be a reliable and validated tool for assessing organizational culture. The purpose of this study was to explore how the Big State University athletic director's understanding of the present and preferred athletic department culture compares to that of the rest of the athletic department employees. Based on the research questions, the author selected to utilize the OCAI in this study. Cameron and Quinn (2011) validate this decision in discussing the OCAI's intended purpose:

*“The OCAI is designed to help identify an organization's current culture or the culture that exists today.... The same Instrument helps identify the culture that organization members believe should be developed to match future demands of the environment and the opportunities to be faced by the organization in the coming years” (p. 23-24).*

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented a description of the methodology that was selected for this mixed-methods study. The study utilized an embedded design, in which the quantitative data was identified as the primary data source and qualitative data as the supplemental data source. The researcher also reported the target population and selected methodology of sampling. In addition, the researcher introduced the OCAI and discussed the procedures for analysis and data collection and the validity and reliability of the

instrument. Chapter four will report the statistical findings as well as themes identified in the focus group interviews.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This mixed methods study explores how the leaders within the athletic department at Big State University understand departmental culture in comparison to the employees within this department. The present and preferred department cultures were assessed using the OCAI survey. Responses were analyzed quantitatively for comparison and to determine if any statistical differences between groups existed. Once the quantitative data analysis was completed, qualitative focus groups were held to facilitate a better understanding of the quantitative data and to obtain a richer description of the departmental culture. This chapter presents the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the investigation, as well as demographic data, results from the OCAI survey, and findings from thematic analyses of focus group interview sessions.

#### **Demographic Data**

Table 4.1 shows the target population and response rate of employees within Big State University's athletic department. Out of 227 individuals asked to participate, 113 respondents completed the OCAI survey, which yielded an overall response rate of 49.8%. The total number of responses exceeded the minimum requirement of 64 participants, which was the minimum number of responses needed to enable the researcher to draw statistically significant findings from the data.

The response rate differed between men and women, 54.9% identified as female and 44.9% identified as male. Therefore, females within the department had a 10% higher response rate than their male coworkers, even though the gender distribution within the

Big State University athletic department population is skewed heavily male. Of the 227 full-time employees within the athletic department, 156 are male making up 68.7% of the population whereas females (71) make up 31.3%. Examining the total responses (113), 62.5% (70) self-identified as male, 34.8% (39) of the respondents self-identified as female, and 2.7% (4) preferred not to disclose their gender (Figure 4.1). Although the overall athletic department population is predominantly male, the studied population is not as skewed as the population within the department (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Gender distribution of the Big State University athletic department, study respondents, and response rate

	Invited	% of Department	Respondents	Response Rate
TOTAL	227	-	113	49.8%
Men	156	68.7%	70	44.9%
Women	71	31.3%	39	54.9%

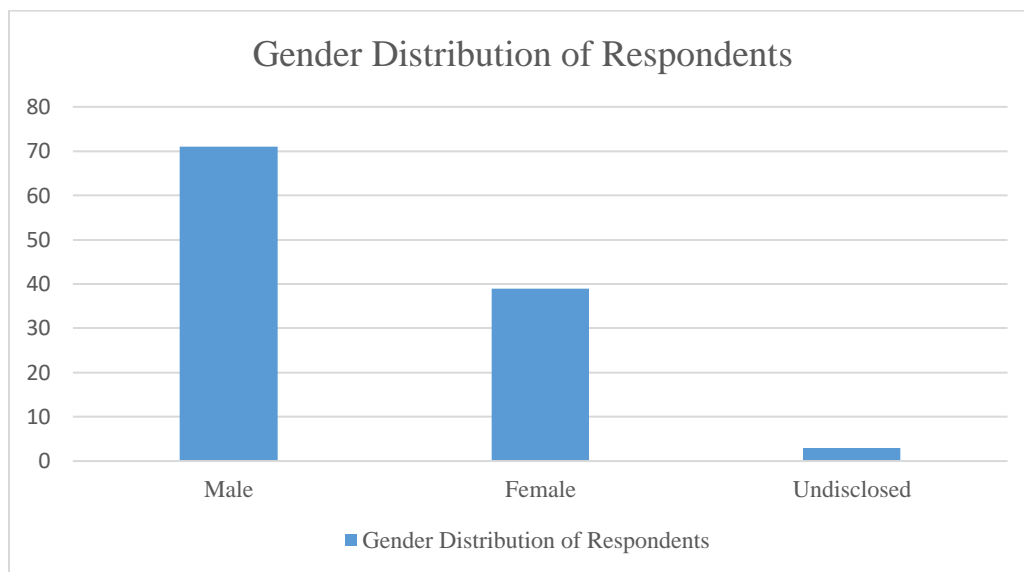


Figure 4.1 Gender distribution of respondents



## Athletic Department Role

Respondents were asked to self-identify their role within the Big State University athletic department into one of four categories: (1) Administration: which referred to senior level administrative staff; (2) Coaches: which referred to coaches per NCAA rules; (3) Sport support: which referred to positions that are not coaches but actively support specific sports within the department; and (4) Administrative support: which included any position not on the senior staff or considered to support a specific sport. Of the 113 respondents, 26 (23%) self-identified as part of the administration, 21 (18.6%) identified as administrative support, 35 (31%) identified as a coach, and 31 respondents identified as sport support (Figure 4.2).

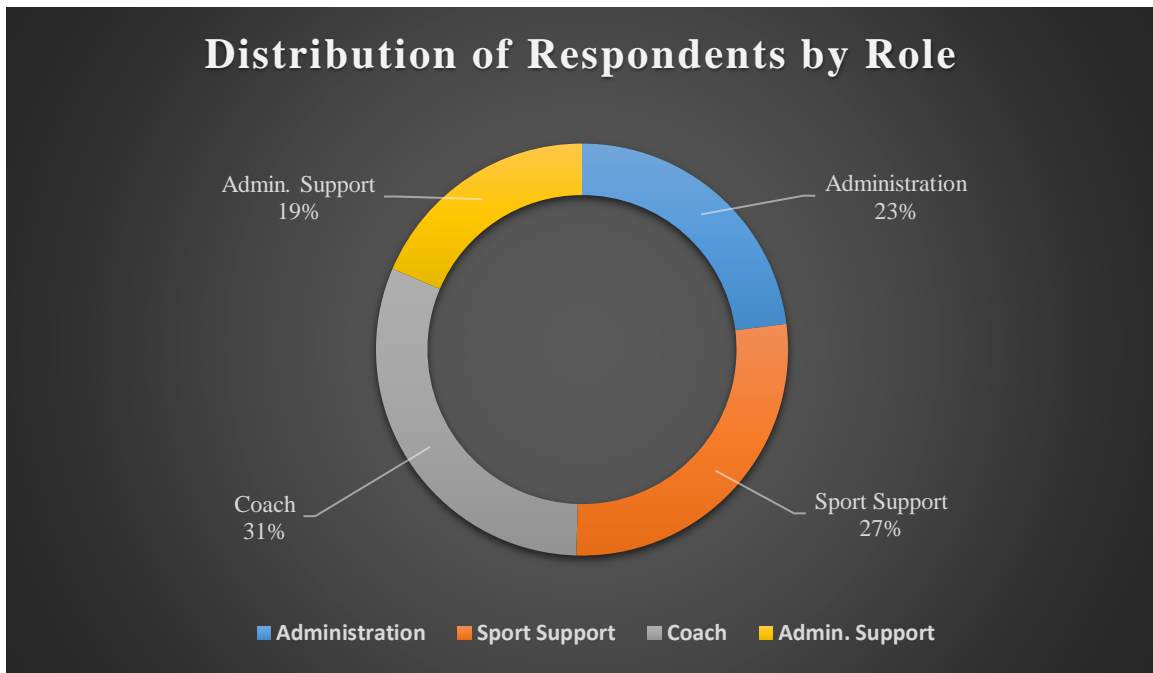


Figure 4.2 Distribution of respondents by role

Lastly, Table 4.2 provides the distribution of participants, detailing the gender distribution by role within the sample population.

Table 4.2 Gender distribution by role

<b>Role</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>No Response</b>
Admin. Support	21	8	13	0
Administration	26	15	8	2
Coach	35	27	8	0
Sport Support	31	20	10	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>percent</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	<b>34.8%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>

### **Quantitative Data and Analysis**

The purpose of this research was to explore how the athletic director's perception of the current and preferred departmental culture compares to that of the rest of the athletic department employees. To answer this question comprehensively it is essential to fully explore each of the four sub-questions within the results of the OCAI survey.

Per OCAI protocol, cultural profiles were established for both the athletic director and department employees. This entailed creating an overall profile for both as well as sub-profiles for each of the major indicators of success assessed by the instrument. Additionally, each cultural data point from the department employees, for both present and preferred, was compared to that of the athletic director utilizing a t-test to determine if the differences exhibited were statistically significant. To account for the increased error rate from running multiple t-tests, Bonferroni's correction was implemented to

ensure that each comparison was calculated at the appropriate level of significance ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Sub-Question #1: What is the athletic directors understanding of the current athletic department organizational culture?**

The athletic director saw the present culture within the department aligning most strongly with the clan culture (Figure 4.3). With a score of 48.33, the clan culture scored 28.33 points higher than the adhocracy culture, which was the next closest score of 20 (Figure 4.3). The hierarchical culture scored similarly with a score of 19.17. With a score of 12.50, the athletic director scored market culture the lowest of the four, and it was least salient within the present culture.

**Sub-Question #2: What is the Athletic Director's understanding of the future (aspirational) culture of the athletic department?**

The data indicate that the athletic director felt strongly that to be successful in the future, a strong clan culture should remain the dominant culture within the department (Figure 4.3); clan culture received the highest average score (47.5). The adhocracy culture had the second highest score (27.5); it was rated more than 12 points higher than the market culture, the third highest rated culture scoring 14.2. The athletic director rated the hierarchical culture the lowest with an average score of 10.8.

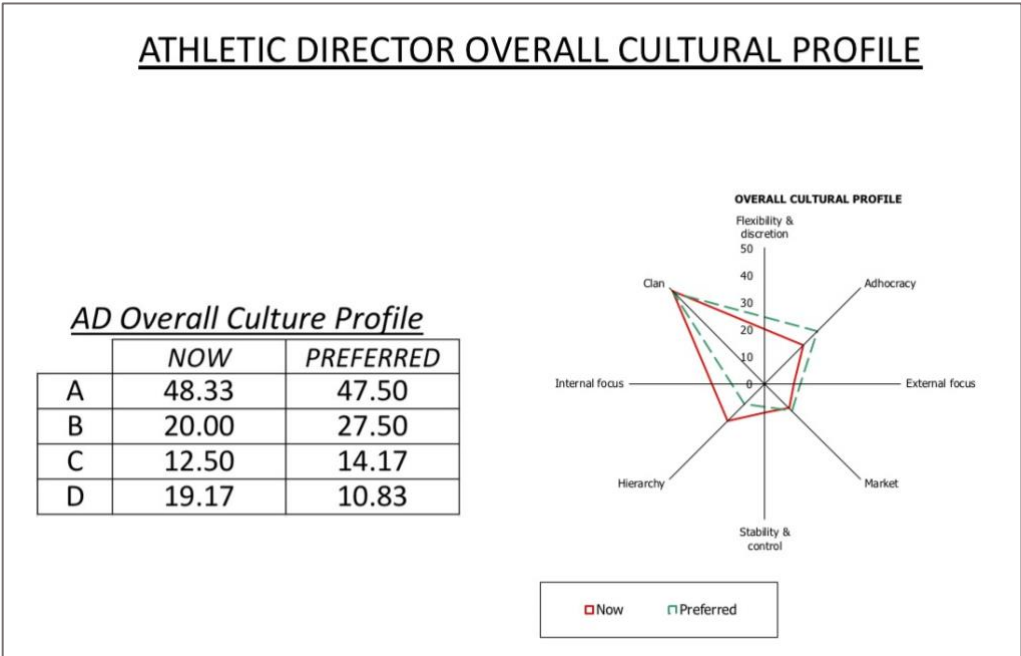


Figure 4.3 Overall cultural profile of the athletic director

**Sub-Question #3: What are the departmental employees’ understanding of the current organizational culture in the athletic department?**

The employees saw the present organizational culture within the department most dominantly aligned with the market culture (Figure 4.4). Market culture received an average score of 31.33 from the employee population. The clan and hierarchical cultures were the second and third highest rated cultures with average scores of 26.72 and 23.11, respectively. Adhocracy was the least dominant culture archetype with a score of 18.84.

**Sub-Question #4: What are the departmental employees’ understanding of the future (aspirational) culture of the athletic department?**

The employee population indicated that in order for the organization to be successful in the future, the organizational culture must be dominantly aligned with the clan culture. Scoring 40.82, the clan archetype scored just over 19.00 points higher than the next highest rated culture type (Figure 4.4). Adhocracy was the second strongest archetype with an average score of 20.98. The market and hierarchical cultures scored the third and fourth highest, averaging 19.40 and 18.80, respectively.

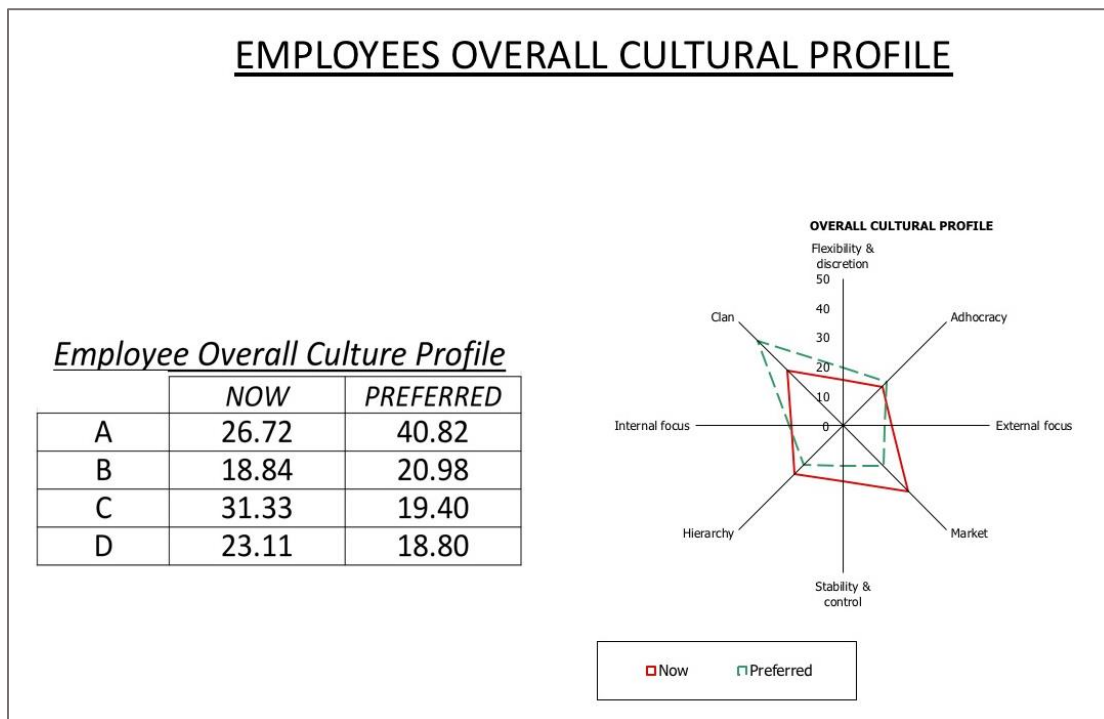


Figure 4.4 Overall cultural profile of the athletic department employees

**Analysis of Perceptions**

To understand the differences in how both the athletic director and department employees assessed the present and preferred organizational culture in the Big State University athletic department, the researcher performed a series of t-tests to determine the statistical validity of the variation displayed in the results of the OCAI. Fourteen hypotheses were developed and tested to determine if the variation between the employee population's and athletic director's scores were statistically significantly different.

The researcher compared the overall culture scores in addition to the current and preferred scores from each of the six cultural dimensions assessed by the OCAI. To account for the increasing Type I error rate from performing multiple t-tests, Bonferroni's Correction was implemented in the analysis. To calculate Bonferroni's Correction, the alpha value of 0.05 was divided by the number of t-tests performed, 56. The adjusted alpha value was 0.000892. Table 4.3 displays the means for both the employee population and athletic director, the standard deviation and results of the t-tests for each element of the OCAI assessment. The highlighted values indicate result that are not statistically significant.

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics for the difference between the athletic director and employees OCAI results

## t-Test OCAI Scores

Variable	emp mean	AD mean	emp sd	mean dif	t-value	p-value
OVERALL_A_NOW	26.7	48.3	16.9	-21.6	-13.49	0.00000
OVERALL_B_NOW	18.8	20.0	8.8	-1.2	-1.39	0.16800
OVERALL_C_NOW	31.3	12.5	15.8	18.8	12.62	0.00000
OVERALL_D_NOW	23.1	19.2	9.9	3.9	4.16	0.00006
OVERALL_A_PRE	40.8	47.5	17.8	-6.7	-3.97	0.00013
OVERALL_B_PRE	21.0	27.5	9.0	-6.5	-7.69	0.00000
OVERALL_C_PRE	19.4	14.2	10.5	5.2	5.25	0.00000
OVERALL_D_PRE	18.8	10.8	8.7	8.0	9.71	0.00000
DOM CHAR_A_NOW	30.0	75	19.4	-45.0	-24.51	0.00000
DOM CHAR_B_NOW	14.9	10	9.5	4.9	5.54	0.00000
DOM CHAR_C_NOW	31.2	15	17.7	16.2	9.72	0.00000
DOM CHAR_D_NOW	23.8	0	17.1	23.8	14.70	0.00000
DOM CHAR_A_PRE	42.2	45	19.3	-2.8	-1.51	0.13283
DOM CHAR_B_PRE	21.9	40	12.0	-18.1	-15.92	0.00000
DOM CHAR_C_PRE	21.3	15	13.4	6.3	5.02	0.00000
DOM CHAR_D_PRE	14.6	0	10.4	14.6	14.86	0.00000
ORG LEAD_A_NOW	22.3	10	17.0	12.3	7.63	0.00000
ORG LEAD_B_NOW	20.3	20	13.4	0.3	0.21	0.83330
ORG LEAD_C_NOW	31.6	20	22.9	11.6	5.35	0.00000
ORG LEAD_D_NOW	25.9	50	14.8	-24.1	-17.27	0.00000
ORGL EAD_A_PRE	39.9	50	20.5	-10.1	-5.22	0.00000
ORG LEAD_B_PRE	21.3	30	11.3	-8.7	-8.18	0.00000
ORG LEAD_C_PRE	15.8	10	12.4	5.8	4.98	0.00000
ORG LEAD_D_PRE	23.0	10	13.9	13.0	9.93	0.00000
MGT EMP_A_NOW	28.9	60	20.6	-31.1	-15.95	0.00000
MGT EMP_B_NOW	17.5	20	12.8	-2.5	-2.06	0.04141
MGT EMP_C_NOW	30.9	0	22.3	30.9	14.67	0.00000
MGT EMP_D_NOW	22.7	20	17.5	2.7	1.62	0.10863
MGT EMP_A_PRE	41.3	50	18.4	-8.7	-5.00	0.00000
MGT EMP_B_PRE	20.9	30	11.6	-9.1	-8.27	0.00000
MGT EMP_C_PRE	17.9	10	12.2	7.9	6.79	0.00000
MGT EMP_D_PRE	19.9	10	13.0	9.9	8.08	0.00000
ORG GLUE_A_NOW	29.1	70	20.9	-40.9	-20.77	0.00000
ORG GLUE_B_NOW	22.3	15	16.8	7.3	4.60	0.00001
ORG GLUE_C_NOW	28.2	10	19.1	18.2	10.07	0.00000
ORG GLUE_D_NOW	20.4	5	14.6	15.4	11.17	0.00000
ORG GLUE_A_PRE	41.1	50	21.1	-8.9	-4.44	0.00002
ORG GLUE_B_PRE	21.3	20	13.7	1.3	1.00	0.32006
ORG GLUE_C_PRE	21.1	15	11.3	6.1	5.68	0.00000
ORG GLUE_D_PRE	16.5	15	11.7	1.5	1.33	0.18665
STRAT EM_A_NOW	24.1	30	18.4	-5.9	-3.40	0.00092
STRAT EM_B_NOW	22.0	30	12.1	-8.0	-7.00	0.00000
STRAT EM_C_NOW	30.6	15	21.3	15.6	7.76	0.00000
STRAT EM_D_NOW	23.3	25	14.2	-1.7	-1.24	0.21706
STRAT EM_A_PRE	38.8	45	20.2	-6.3	-3.28	0.00138
STRAT EM_B_PRE	22.3	25	11.4	-2.7	-2.52	0.01324
STRATEM_C_PRE	18.6	15	11.4	3.6	3.32	0.00124
STRAT EM_D_PRE	20.4	15	10.7	5.4	5.35	0.00000
SUCCESS_A_NOW	25.9	45	21.6	-19.1	-9.38	0.00000
SUCCESS_B_NOW	16.1	25	11.9	-8.9	-7.91	0.00000
SUCCESS_C_NOW	35.5	15	23.2	20.5	9.36	0.00000
SUCCESS_D_NOW	22.5	15	17.9	7.5	4.46	0.00002
SUCCESS_A_PRE	41.6	45	23.3	-3.4	-1.55	0.12361
SUCCESS_B_PRE	18.3	20	10.5	-1.7	-1.72	0.08777
SUCCESS_C_PRE	21.7	20	14.0	1.7	1.31	0.19358
SUCCESS_D_PRE	18.4	15	12.0	3.4	3.00	0.00330

= Statistically Insignificant

## **Hypotheses Testing**

The variation of how both the athletic director and the department employees saw the present and preferred athletic departmental cultures was analyzed. The researcher performed 14 different hypothesis tests to statistically understand the variation in the data and answer the primary research question. Hypotheses 1 & 2 tested the perceptions, both present and preferred, of the overall profiles from the athletic director and employee population. Hypotheses 3-14 examined the six elements of organizational culture assessed by the OCAI. These six elements were explored to assess the variation in scores and consisted of (1) dominant characteristics; (2) organizational leadership; (3) management of employees; (4) organizational glue; (5) strategic emphases; and (6) criteria of success. , To better understand the quantitative results and gain a more complete picture of the differences in each population's perception, these six elements of organizational culture were analyzed and examined. Means  $\pm$  Standard Deviation are reported where appropriate.

### ***Hypothesis #1 – Overall Cultural Profile Current***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.5 displays the OCAI results for the overall cultural profiles for how the athletic director and employees understand the present organizational culture within the athletic department. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the scores of the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 26.7 with a standard deviation (SD) of 16.9. In



contrast, the athletic director had a mean of 48.3. The employees and athletic director scores were significantly different from each other with a mean differential of -21.6 points, a t-score of -13.49, and p-value of 0.00000. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 18.8 and a SD of 8.8. The athletic director had a mean of 20.00. For this archetype, the mean differential was -1.2 points, a t-score of -1.39, and p-value of 0.16800, this variance was not statistically significant. For the market culture, there was a significant difference between the scores of the employees and the athletic director; the employees had a mean of 31.3 and a SD of 15.8, whereas the athletic director had a mean of 12.5. The market culture presented a mean differential of 18.8 points, a t-score of -12.62, and p-value of 0.00000. For the hierarchical culture; the employees had a mean of 23.1, a SD of 9.9, while the athletic director's mean was 19.2. The mean differential for this archetype was 3.9 points, with a t-score of 4.16, and p-value of 0.00006, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in the clan, market, and Hierarchal culture are all statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative was accepted.

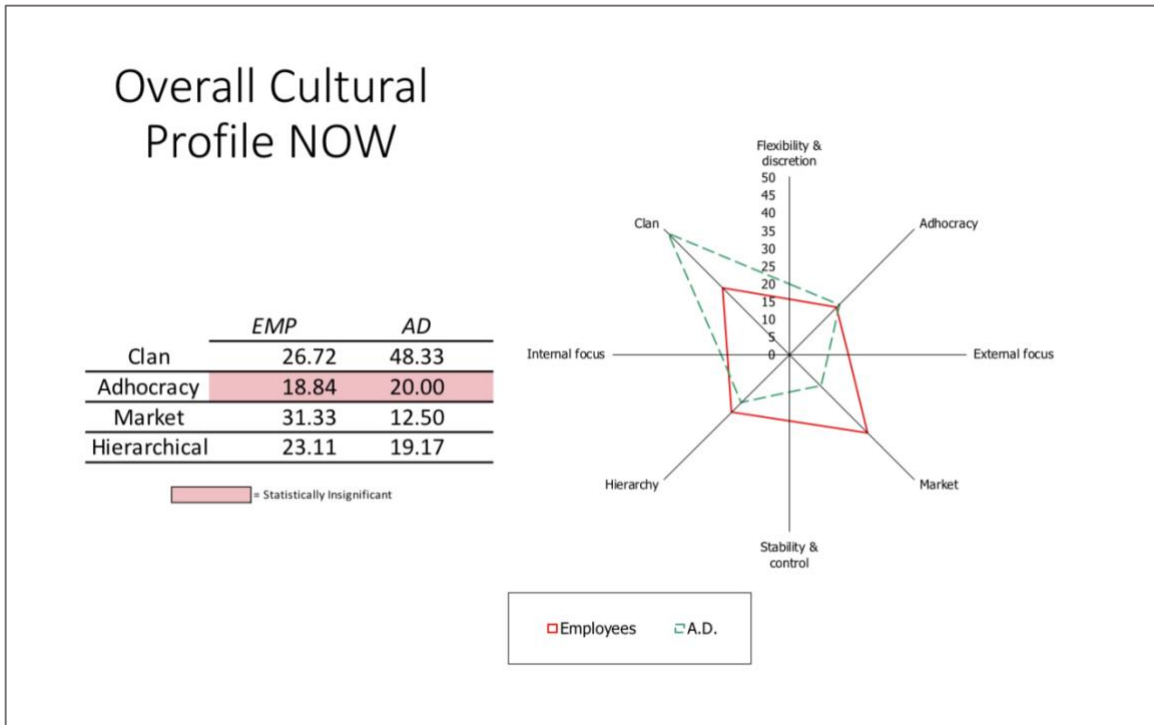


Figure 4.5 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the overall cultural profiles for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #2 – Overall Cultural Profile PREFERRED***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.6 displays the OCAI results for the overall cultural profiles for the athletic director and employees’ preferred organizational culture within the athletic department. The descriptive statistics (Table 4.3) show how the athletic director’s scores compare statistically to the employees. For the clan archetype; the employees had a mean of 40.8 and a SD of 17.8 while the athletic director had a mean of 47.5. Here the mean differential was -6.7 points, a t-score of -3.97, and p-value of 0.00013, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees

had a mean of 21.0 and a SD of 9. For adhocracy, the athletic director had a mean of 27.5, providing a mean differential of -6.5 points, a t-score of -7.69, and p-value of 0.00000, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture; the employees had a mean of 19.4 with a SD of 10.5, and the athletic director had a mean of 14.2. For the market culture archetype, the mean differential was 5.2 points, with a t score of 5.25 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture; the employees had a mean of 18.8, a SD of 8.7, and the athletic director had a mean of 10.8. For the preferred hierarchical archetyoe, the mean differential was 8 points with a t-score of 9.71 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

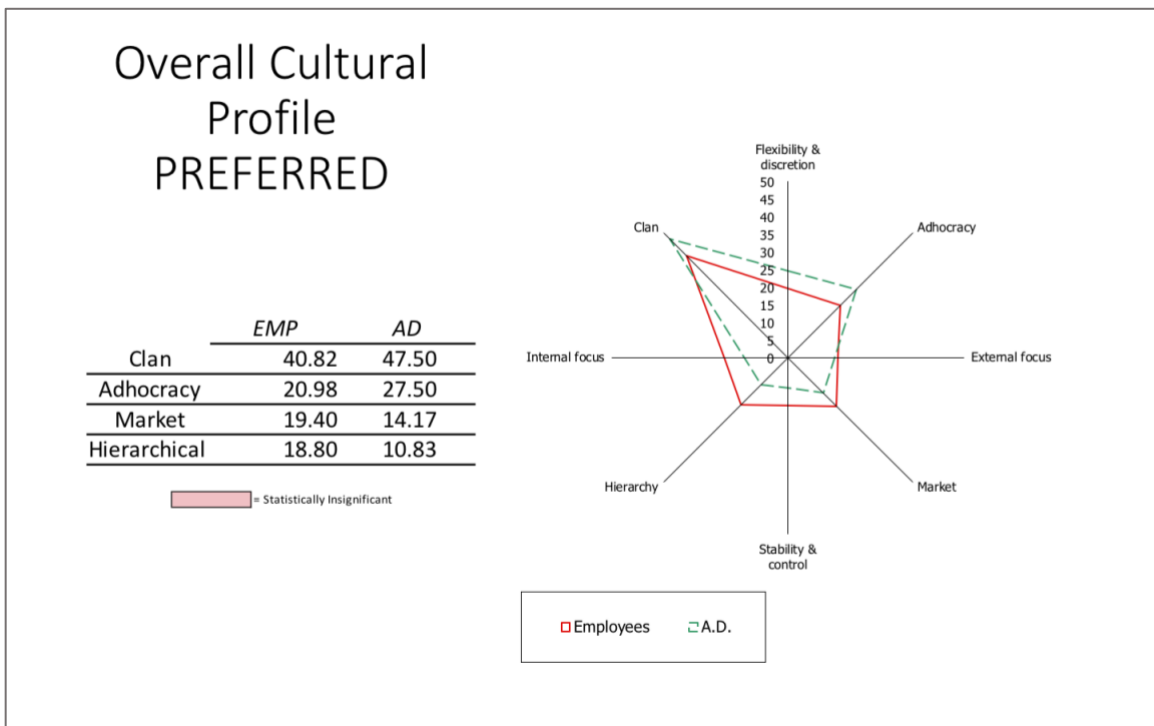


Figure 4.6 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the overall cultural profiles for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #3 – Dominant Characteristics NOW***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.7 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director's and employees' understand the dominant characteristics within the present athletic department organizational culture. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 demonstrate how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype; the employees had a mean of 30 with a SD of 19.4 and the athletic director had a mean of 75. The mean differential was -45 points with a t-score of -25.51 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 14.9 with a SD of 9.5 and the athletic director had a mean of 10. For the adhocracy archetype, the mean differential was 4.9 points with a t-score of 5.54 and p-value of 0.00000, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 31.3 with a SD of 17.7 and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the market culture was 16.2 points with a t-score of 9.72 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture; the employees had a mean of 23.8 and a SD of 17.1 whereas the athletic director had a mean of 0. For the hierarchical archetype, the mean differential was 23.8 points with a t-score of 14.7 and p-value of

0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in every archetype are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

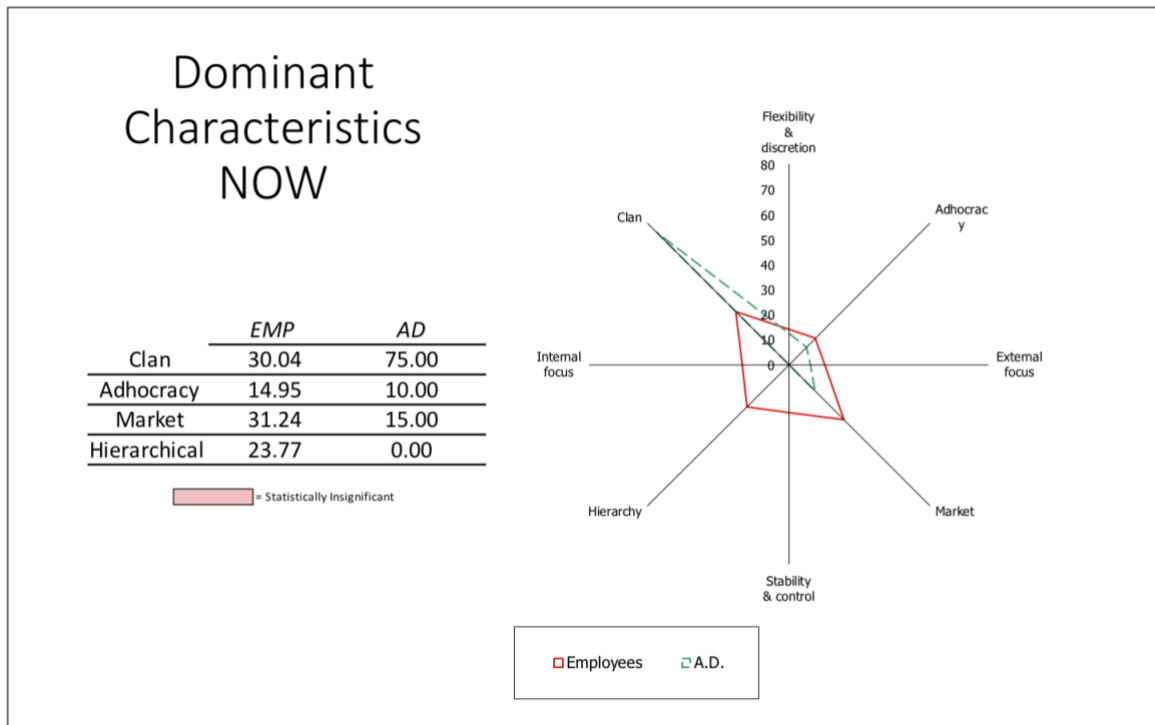


Figure 4.7 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the dominant characteristics for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #4 –Dominant Characteristics PREFERRED***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.8 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees’ would prefer to see the dominant characteristics within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the

athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 42.2 with a SD of 19.3. The athletic director had a mean of 45 presenting a mean differential of -2.8 points, a t-score of -1.51, and p-value of 0.13283, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 21.9 with a SD of 12, whereas the athletic director had a mean of 40. For the adhocracy archetype, the mean differential was -18.1 points with a t-score of -15.92 and p-value of 0.00000, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 21.3 with a SD of 13.4. The athletic director had a mean of 15, creating a mean differential of 6.3 points, a t-score of 5.02, and p-value of 0.00000 making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, employees had a mean of 14.6 with a SD of 10.4. The athletic director had a mean of 0; thus, the mean differential was 14.6 points with a t-score of 14.86 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that difference in variances in the adhocracy, market, and hierarchical archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative is accepted.

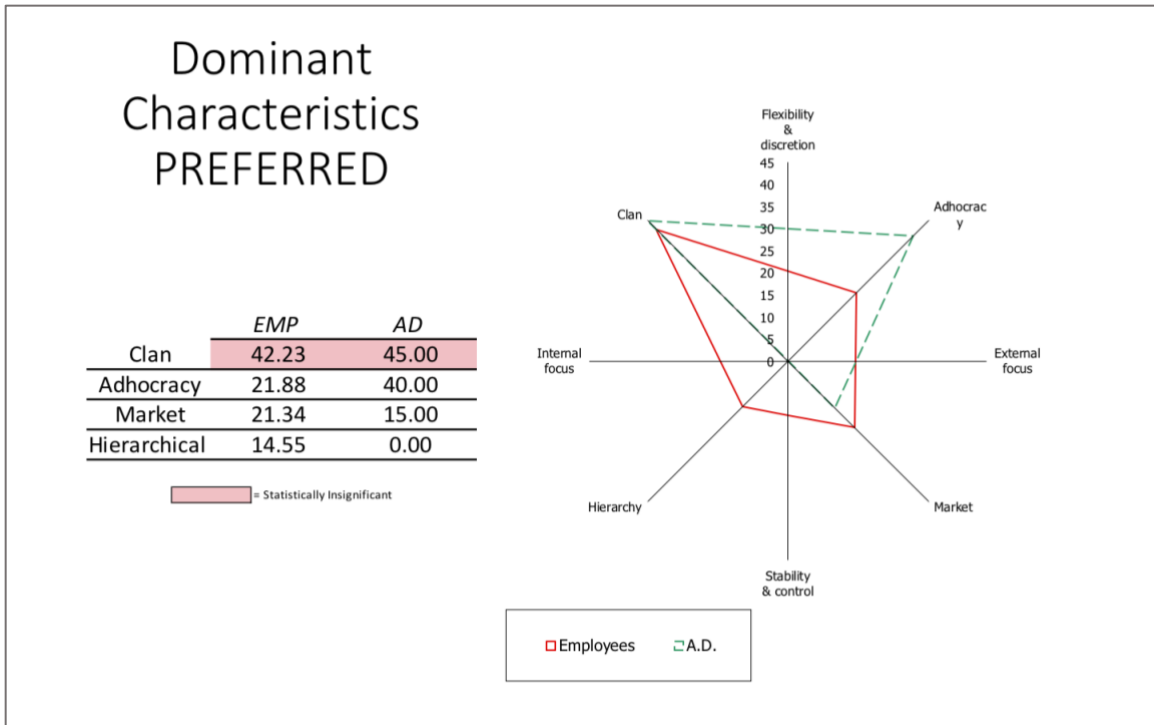


Figure 4.8 Preferred Graphical and tabular OCAI results for the dominant characteristics for the athletic director and employees

**Hypothesis #5 – Organizational Leadership NOW**

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.9 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees’ perceive the organizational leadership within the present athletic department organizational culture. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director’s scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 22.3 with a SD of 17 and the athletic director had a mean of 10. For the clan archetype, the mean differential was 12.3 points with a t-score of 7.63, and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the

adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 20.3 with a SD of 13.4. In comparison, the athletic director had a mean of 20, creating a mean differential of 0.3 points, a t-score of 0.21, and p-value of 0.83330, therefore, making this variance statistically insignificant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 31.6 and a SD of 22.9; the athletic director had a mean of 20. For the market culture archetype, the mean differential was 11.6 points with a t-score of 5.35 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 25.9 and SD of 14.8; the athletic director had a mean of 50. The mean differential for the hierarchial archetype was 24.1 points with a t-score of -17.27 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. Difference in variances in the clan, market, and hierarchical archetypes are statistically significant (Table 4.3), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate is accepted.

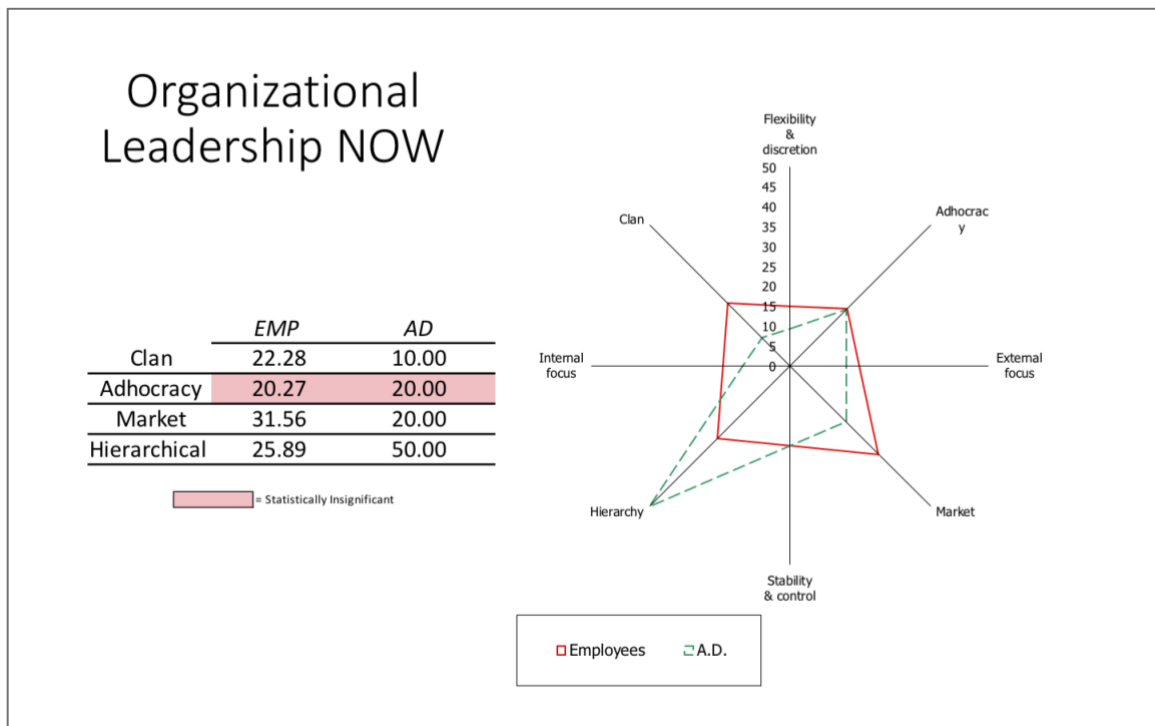




Figure 4.9 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the organizational leadership for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #6 – Organizational Leadership PREFERRED***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.10 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees' would prefer to see the organizational leadership within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 39.9 and SD of 20.5 and the athletic director had a mean of 50; the mean differential was -10.1 points with a t-score of -5.22 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. The adhocracy archetype had an employee mean of 21.3 had a SD of 11.3. The athletic director had a mean of 30, creating a mean differential of -8.7 points, a t-score of -8.18, and p-value of 0.00000; thus, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 15.8 and SD of 12.4. The athletic director had a mean of 10, which created a mean differential of 5.8 points with a t-score of 4.98 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 23 and SD of 13.9; the athletic director had a mean of 10. For the hierarchical archetype, the mean differential was 13 points with a t-score of 9.93 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in every archetype are

statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

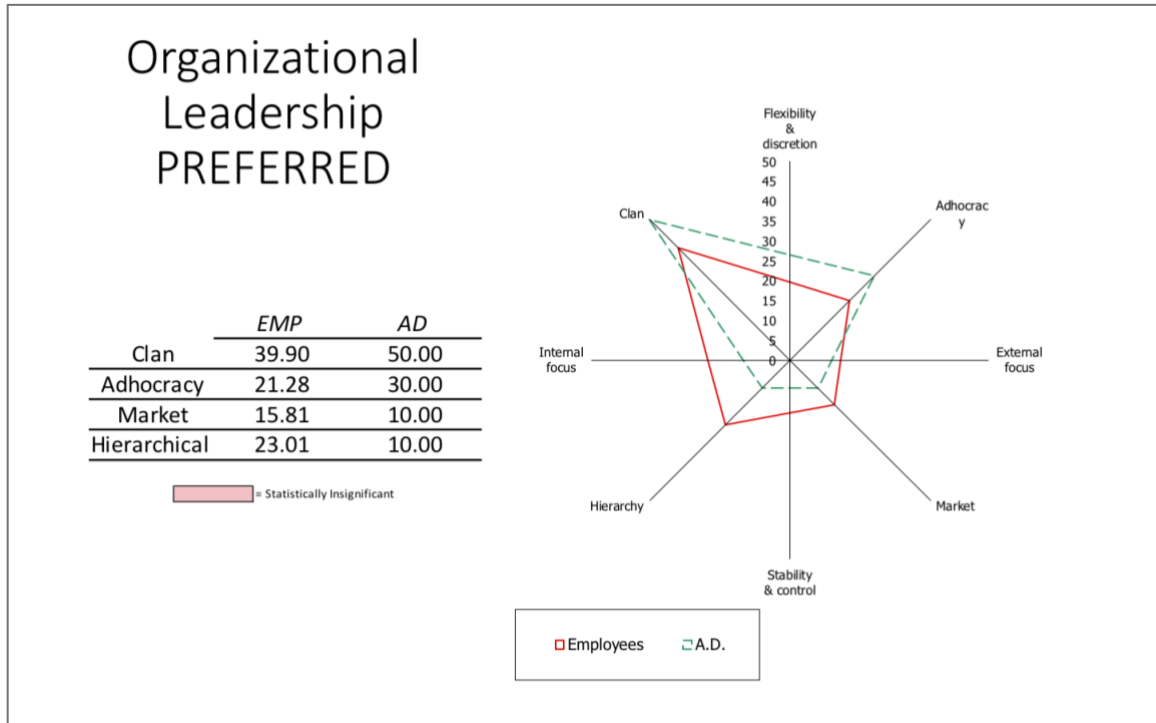


Figure 4.10 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the organizational leadership for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #7 – Management of Employees NOW***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.11 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees perceive the management of employees within the present athletic department organizational culture. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 demonstrate how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to those of the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees mean score of 28.9, with a SD of 20.6, was lower than the

athletic director mean of 60. The mean differential of -31.1 points with a t-score of -15.95 and p-value of 0.00000, makes the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 17.5 with a SD of 12.8, while the athletic director had a mean of 20. For the adhocracy archetype, the mean differential was -2.5 points with a t-score of -2.06 and p-value of 0.04141, making this variance statistically insignificant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 30.9 with a SD of 22.3, and the athletic director had a mean of 0.00. With a mean differential of 30.9 points, a t-score of 14.67, and p-value of 0.00000, the variance of means is statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 22.7 and SD of 17.5. The athletic director had a mean of 20, creating a mean differential of 2.7 points, a t-score of 1.62, and p-value of 0.10863; thus, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that difference in variances in the clan and market archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate is accepted.

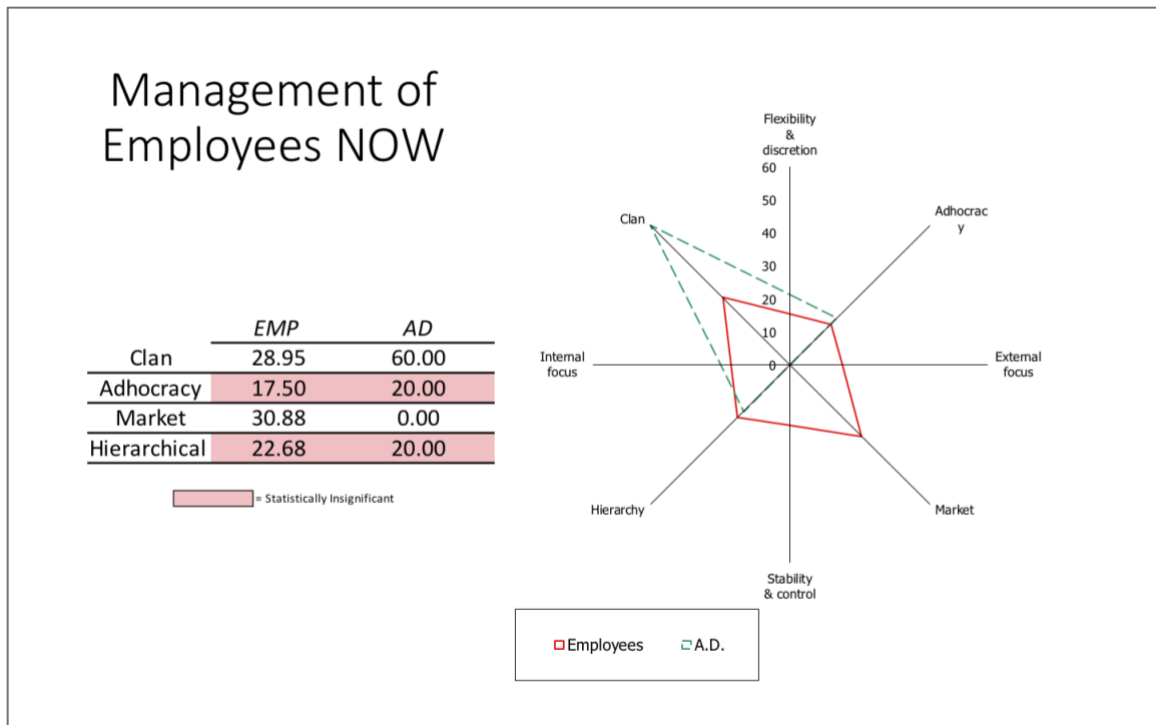


Figure 4.11 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the management of employees for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #8 – Management of Employees PREFERRED***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.12 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees would prefer to see the management of employees within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 demonstrate how the athletic director’s scores statistically compare to the employees’. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 41.3 with a SD of 18.4; the athletic director had a mean of 50. This created a mean differential of -8.7 points, a t-score of -5, and p-value of 0.00000, thus, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the

adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 20.9 and SD of 11.6. In comparison, the athletic director had a mean of 30 which created a mean differential of -9.1 points, a t-score of -8.27, and p-value of 0.00000, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture archetype, the employees had a mean of 17.9 and a SD of 12.2. The athletic director had a mean of 10 which created a mean differential of 7.9 points, a t-score of 6.79, and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 19.9 and SD of 13; the athletic director had a mean of 10. The mean differential for this archetype was 9.9 points with a t-score of 8.08 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in all four archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternate is accepted.

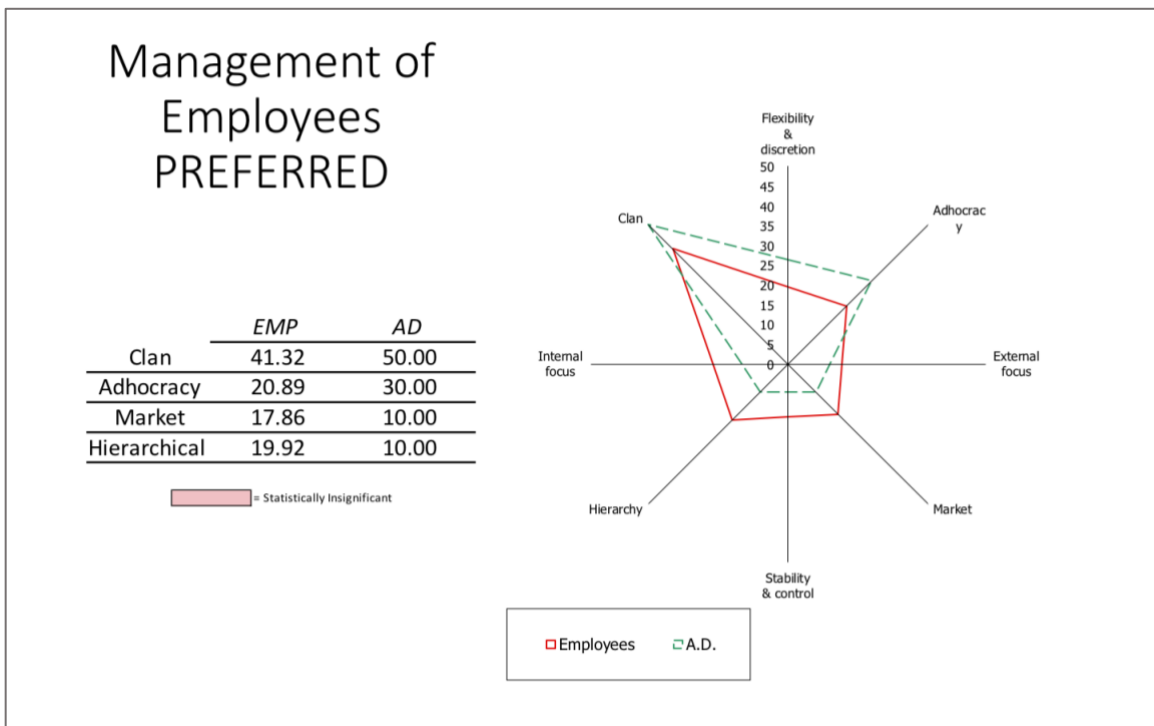


Figure 4.12 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the management of employees for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #9 – Organizational Glue NOW***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.13 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees perceive the organizational glue within the present organizational culture of the athletic department. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 29.1 with a SD of 20.9. The athletic director had a mean of 70 for the clan archetype, thus creating a mean differential of -40.9 points, a t-score of -20.77, and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 22.3 with a SD of 16.8 and the athletic director had a mean of 15. This comparison presented a mean differential of 7.3 points with a t-score of 4.60 and p-value of 0.00001, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture; the employees had a mean of 28.2 with a SD of 19.1, and the athletic director had a mean of 10. The mean differential for the market archetype was 18.2 points with a t-score of 10.07 and p-value of 0.00000, thus making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 20.4 with a SD of 14.6. In comparison, the athletic director had a mean of 5, creating a mean differential of 15.4 points, a t-score of 11.17, and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from table 4.7 indicate that

differences in all four archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

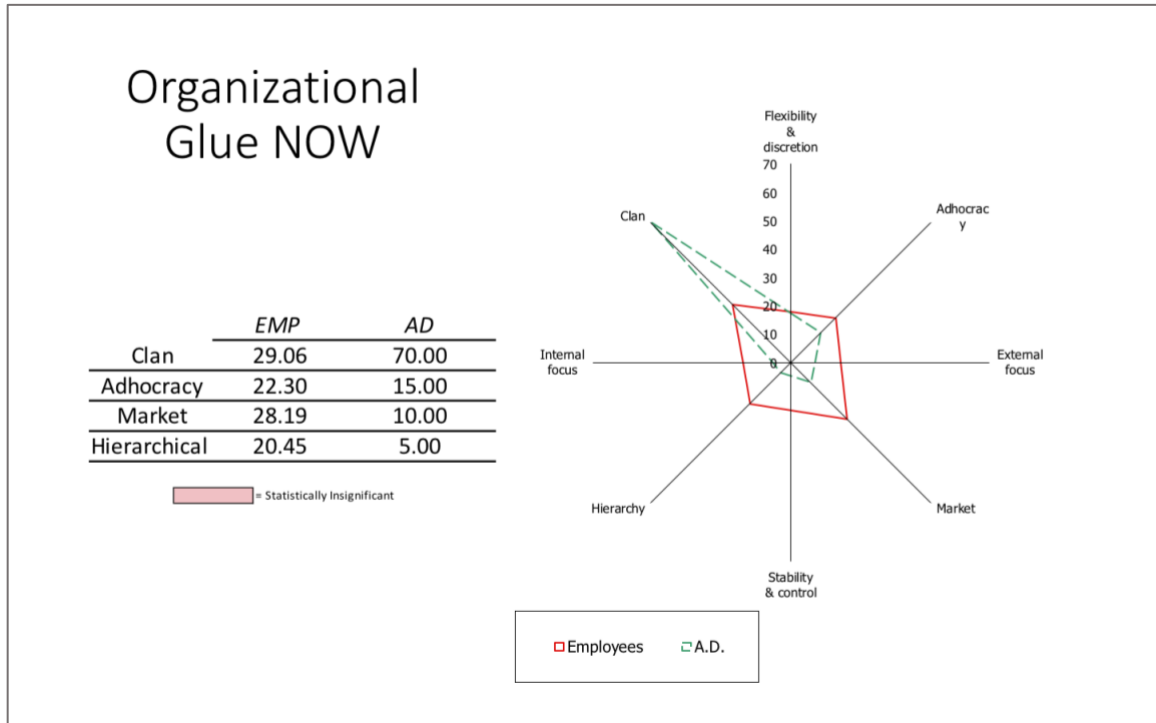


Figure 4.13 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the organizational glue for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #10 – Organizational Glue PREFERRED***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.14 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees' would prefer to see the organizational glue within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 41.1 with a SD of 21.1; the athletic director had a mean of

50. The mean differential for the clan archetype was -8.9 points, with a t-score of -4.44 and p-value of 0.00002, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 21.3 with a SD of 13.7, and the athletic director had a mean of 20. The mean differential for the adhocracy archetype was 1.3 points with a t-score of 1, and p-value of 0.32006, making this variance statistically insignificant. For the market culture archetype, the employees had a mean of 21.1 with a SD of 11.3, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. For the market archetype, the mean differential was 6.1 points with a t-score of 5.68 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 16.5 and a SD of 11.7 and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the heirarchical archetype was 1.5 points with a t-score of 1.33, and p-value of 0.18665, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. Difference in variances in the clan and market archetypes are statistically significant (Table 4.3), therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.



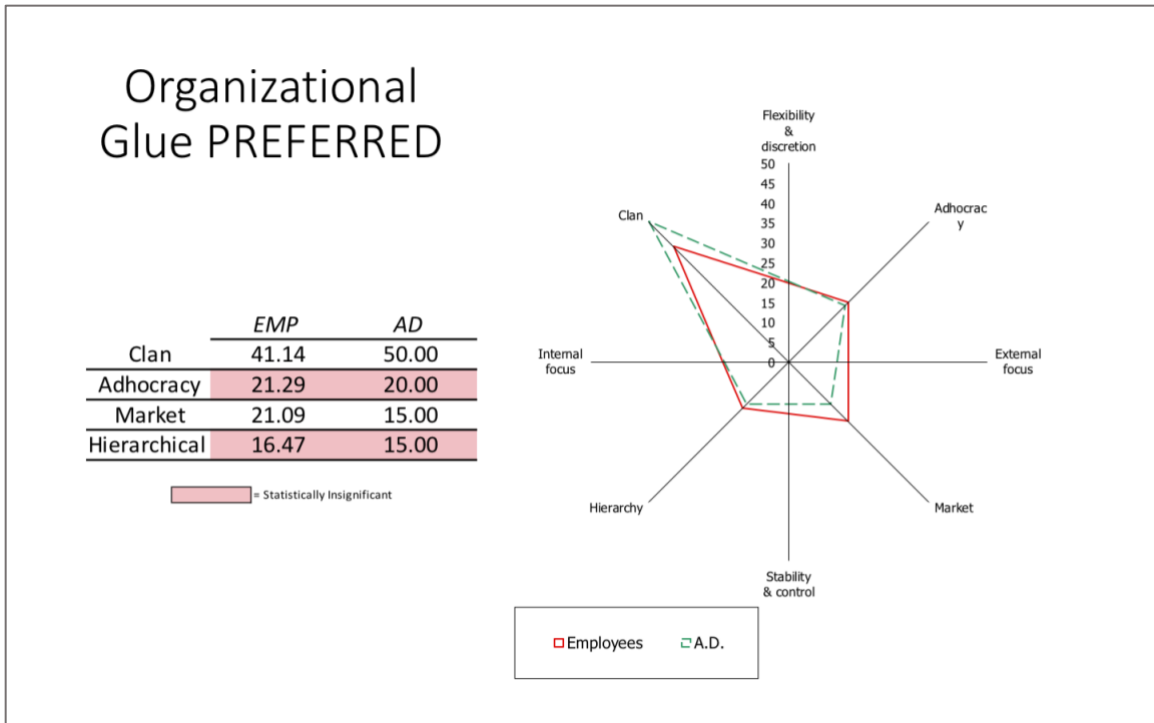


Figure 4.14 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the organizational glue for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #11 – Strategic Emphases NOW***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.15 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees perceive the strategic emphases within the present organizational culture of the athletic department. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director’s scores statistically compare to the employees’. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 24.1 with a SD of 18.4, and the athletic director had a mean of 30. The mean differential for the clan archetype was -5.9 points, with a t-score of -3.40, and p-value of 0.00092, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the adhocracy

archetype, the employees had a mean of 22 with a SD of 12.1 while the athletic director had a mean of 30. The mean differential for the adhocracy archetype was -8 points with a t-score of -7 and p-value of 0.00000, thus making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 30.6 and a SD of 21.3. By comparison, the athletic director's mean of 15 created a mean differential of 15.6 points, a t-score of 7.76, and p-value of 0.00000, thus making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 23.3 with a SD of 14.2, and the athletic director had a mean of 25. The mean differential for the hierarchical archetype was -1.7 points with a t-score of -1.24 and p-value of 0.21706, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that difference in variances in the adhocracy and market archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

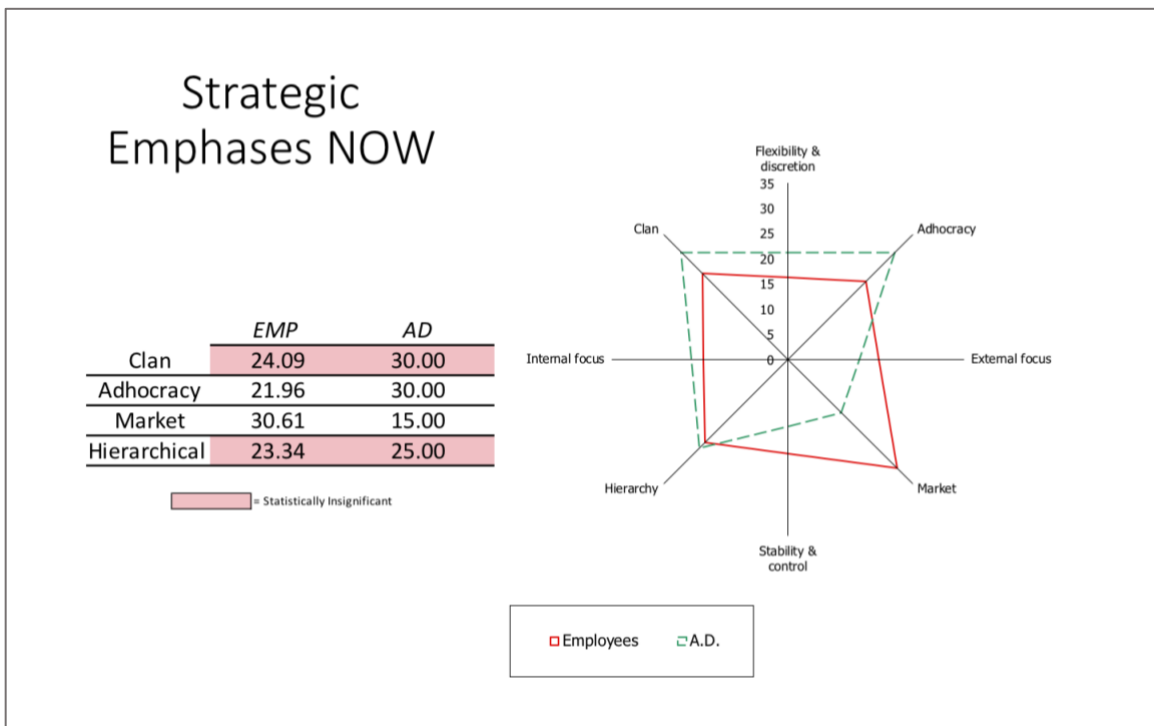


Figure 4.15 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the strategic emphases for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #12 – Strategic Emphases PREFERRED***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.16 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees would prefer to see the strategic emphases within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees'. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 38.8 with a SD of 20.2, and the athletic director had a mean of 45. The mean differential for the clan archetype was -6.3 points with a t-score of -3.28 and p-value of 0.00138, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 22.3 with a SD of 13.7; the athletic director had a mean of 25. The mean differential for the adhocracy archetype was -2.7 points with a t-score of -2.52 and p-value of 0.01324, making this variance statistically insignificant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 18.6 with a SD of 11.4, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the market archetype was 3.6 points with a t-score of 3.32 and p-value of 0.00124, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 20.4 with a SD of 10.7, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the hierarchical archetype was 5.4 points with a t-score of 5.35 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from

Table 4.3 indicate that difference in variances in the hierarchical archetype is statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

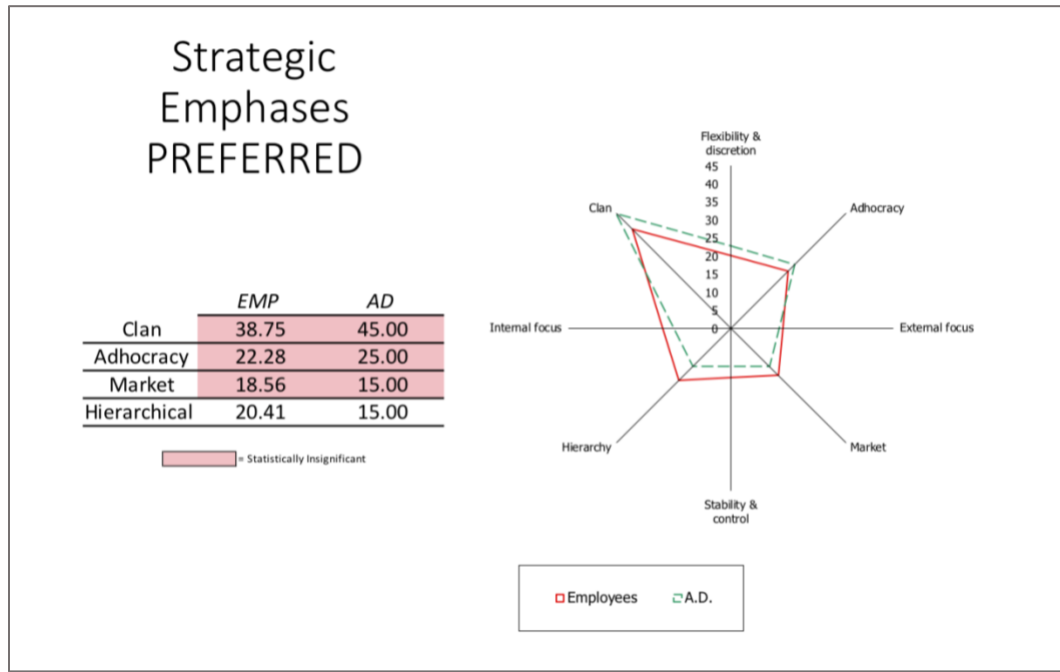


Figure 4.16 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the strategic emphases for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #13 – Criteria of Success NOW***

H<sub>0</sub>:  $\mu = \mu_0$

H<sub>1</sub>:  $\mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.17 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees perceive the criteria of success within the present athletic department organizational culture. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director's scores statistically compare to the employees'. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 25.9 with a SD of 21.6, and the athletic director had a mean of 45. The mean differential for the clan archetype was -19.1 points with a t-score of -9.38 and p-value of

0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 16.1 with a SD of 11.9, and the athletic director had a mean of 25. The mean differential for the adhocracy archetype was -8.9 points with a t-score of -7.91 and p-value of 0.00000, making this variance statistically significant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 35.5 with a SD of 23.2, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for market culture was 20.5 points with a t-score of 9.36 and p-value of 0.00000, making the variance of means statistically significant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 22.5 with a SD of 17.9, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the hierarchical archetype was 7.5 points with a t-score of 4.46 and p-value of 0.00002, making the variance of means statistically significant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in all four archetypes are statistically significant, therefore the null hypothesis is rejected, and alternative is accepted.

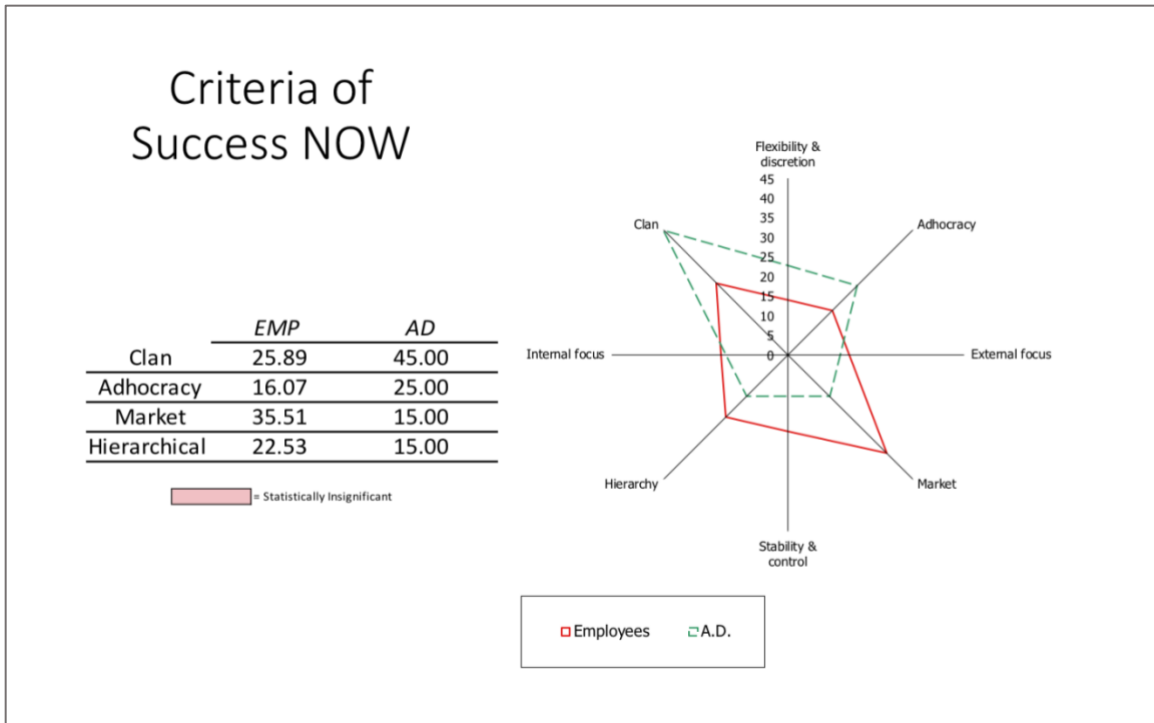


Figure 4.17 Present graphical and tabular OCAI results for the criteria of success for the athletic director and employees

***Hypothesis #14 – Criteria of Success PREFERRED***

$H_0: \mu = \mu_0$

$H_1: \mu \neq \mu_0$

Figure 4.18 displays the OCAI results for how the athletic director and employees would prefer to see the criteria of success within the athletic department organizational culture in the future. The descriptive statistics on Table 4.3 show how the athletic director’s scores statistically compare to the employees. For the clan archetype, the employees had a mean of 41.6 with a SD of 23.3, and the athletic director had a mean of 45. The mean differential for the clan archetype was -3.4 points with a t-score of -1.55 and p-value of 0.12361, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the

adhocracy archetype, the employees had a mean of 18.3 with a SD of 10.5; the athletic director had a mean of 20. The mean differential for the adhocracy archetype was -1.7 points with a t-score of -1.72 and p-value of 0.08777, making this variance statistically insignificant. For the market culture, the employees had a mean of 21.7 with a SD of 14, and the athletic director had a mean of 20. The market culture mean differential was 1.7 points with a t-score of 1.31 and p-value of 0.19358, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. For the hierarchical culture, the employees had a mean of 18.4 with a SD of 12, and the athletic director had a mean of 15. The mean differential for the hierarchical archetype was 3.4 points with a t-score of 3 and p-value of 0.00330, making the variance of means statistically insignificant. P-values from Table 4.3 indicate that differences in every archetype are statistically insignificant, therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

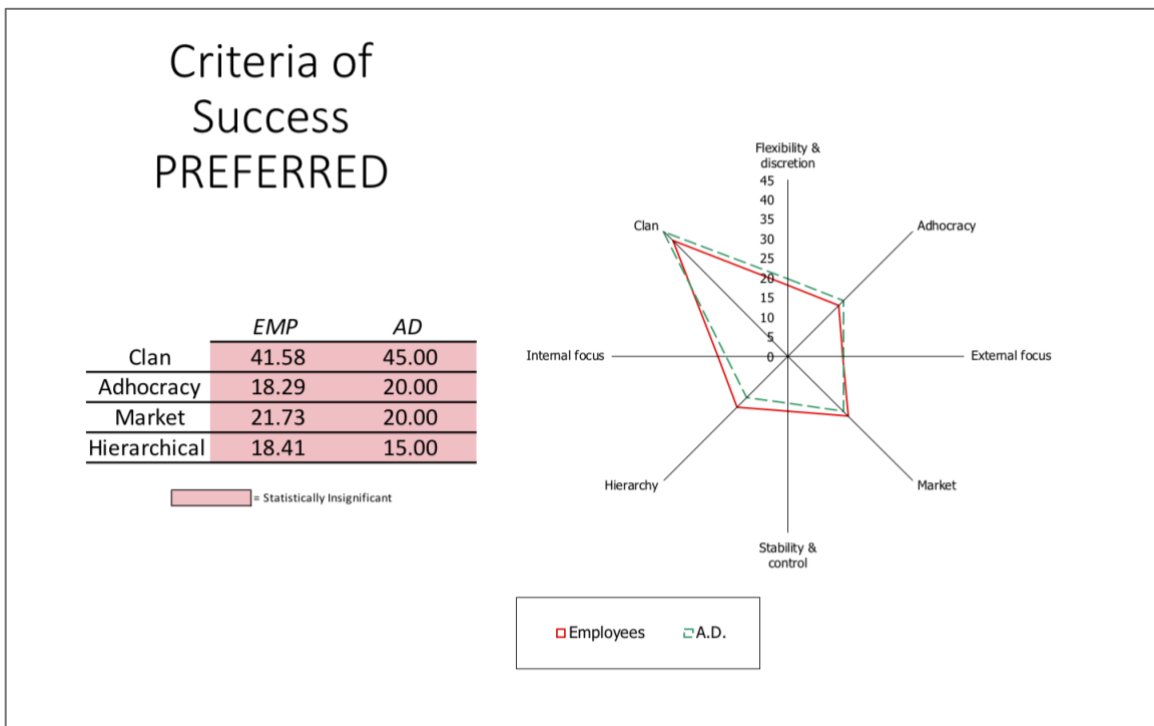


Figure 4.18 Preferred graphical and tabular OCAI results for the criteria of success for the athletic director and employees

#### Quantitative Data Analysis Summary

The analysis of the quantitative data included comparisons of employee and leader responses on the OCAI assessment. Employees differentiated their position within the athletic department as either (1) administration; (2) coaches; (3) sport support; or (4) administrative support. The leader is a direct reflection of the athletic director within the department of athletics. Using the OCAI, the researcher was able to assess the current and preferred states of culture within the department and complete a comparative analysis in which the culture assessment of the employees was compared to that of the athletic director.

The OCAI assessed the present and preferred culture within the athletic department by examining: (1) overall culture; (2) dominant characteristics; (3) organizational leadership; (4) management of employees; (5) organizational glue; (6) strategic emphases; and (7) criteria of success. For each of these seven areas, the researcher developed a hypothesis and a null hypothesis. The null hypothesis stated that no change or statistical difference would be present, and the alternative hypothesis stated that a change or statistical difference would be present. Therefore, the quantitative data analysis for this study included 14 separate hypotheses for examination.

Within each individual hypothesis test, the analysis included comparative data in four distinct areas that are created by the OCAI. These areas are: (1) clan culture; (2) market culture; (3) adhocracy culture; and (4) hierarchical culture. Therefore, for each of



the seven areas listed above, a total of eight comparative tests (four for present and four for preferred) were used to compare the employees' perception of culture to the athletic director's perception of culture for a total of 56 tests. Results from these tests can be found in Table 4.3.

Overall, the quantitative data show that there are several areas in which the athletic director and employees perceive the present and preferred organizational culture significantly differently. Results indicate that there is a much larger disparity in how each population understands the present culture than how each envisions the future. There was less of a difference between the athletic director's and employees' views of the preferred athletic department culture than for the present culture, although the difference was statistically significant. This is a positive signal and indicates that a shared vision of the future exists within the department.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Upon completing the quantitative data analysis, the researcher wanted to provide a richer description of the culture within the athletic department at Big State University. Therefore, the researcher conducted multiple focus group interviews as a means of presenting the quantitative data back to the employees and allow this group to provide additional details and/or descriptions regarding culture within the department.

Three focus group times were determined and communicated to the participants. Participation in a focus group was not dependent on completing the quantitative assessment. Eight employees representing the four different occupational roles within the Big State University athletic department participated in focus group sessions (Table 4.4)..

Table 4.4 Demographic data for focus group participants

Participant Pseudonym	Occupational Role
Taylor JD Cal Andy Rocky Max Addison Anik	To ensure confidentiality of participants and their responses, the researcher actively chose to not match the pseudonyms with an occupational role in the Big State University athletic department. The participant group’s occupational breakdown consisted of three individuals identifying as sport support, one person from administrative support, one administrator, and three coaches.

The focus group sessions were conducted by the primary researcher of this study and were voice-recorded for accurate records. The participants in the focus groups were informed that they were not required to answer any question and could remove themselves from the focus group at any time. In addition, the participants were allowed to select or opt for the researcher to select a pseudonym for data presentation to protect the anonymity of the participants.

The researcher used open-ended questions to encourage participants to give context to the data depicted in the employee’s OCAI results. The interview questions were developed to explore how each participant perceived the differences in the ‘now’ and ‘preferred’ OCAI scores and to develop a better understanding of how the athletic department might improve if their preferred culture were achieved in the future. The focus group interview questions used to guide these conversations can be found in APPENDIX A.

Once the focus group interviews were completed, the researcher transcribed all interviews and began the process of the qualitative data analysis. The primary purpose of

the qualitative analysis was to identify themes that emerged from the focus group sessions held with athletic department employees. In the qualitative analysis, the researcher collected important statements from the interviews and organized them into meaning units. The meaning units were then collected into three overall themes. The following themes were identified: (1) clan culture gap; (2) athletic silos; and (3) bottom line orientation.

### **Theme 1: Clan Culture Gap**

Clan cultures are described as communities with shared values, goals, and atmospheres of collectivity. Clan-focused organizations act like extended families, where the primary task of leaders is to empower and facilitate participation within the organization. Success within the clan culture is defined in terms of positive internal climates and overall concern for individuals (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Therefore, the concept of clan in this assessment is a concept of family. It is a concept of belonging and is ultimately the ideal of wanting to be a part of the “Big State Family”.

Throughout the focus group sessions, participants described a significant gap between the desired clan culture they would like to see in the future and what they perceive to be the present clan culture. When referring to the future, there was substantial agreement among participants that adopting more elements of the clan culture and improving the family culture within the department was something they wanted. This perception was expressed when Taylor stated, “We talk about The Big State Family all the time, and I think that’s [the OCAI data] saying, we want to see that realized in the workplace.” Andy agreed by stating, “We would like a clan culture that is higher. A lot of

people flock to that type of family environment. An inviting environment, a friendly environment, somewhere that you want to go and be around people”. Rocky noted that “the preferred [score] is encouraging. Because you do get the true backbone of the people that took this. They do care about the mentoring, the development, the teamwork. You know, why we’re all here”.

The development of clan culture was described as working to develop relationships. When asked what this change would look like, JD shared that feeling “valued, and more a part of a family environment is to feel like people know who I am. Maybe people know about my family, or where I’ve been in the past, or how I got to where I am. So take a vested interest in who I am as a person as well as who I am as an employee”. Anik described the change as, “more investment into the people within the organization”.

The impact that developing relationships can have on the culture within the department is profound. Cal described this as, “you would have a little better morale at times” and “there would be a lot more communication and collaboration”. Additionally, Addison added that when you make an environment feel “family like, you’re typically more invested”.

Despite the significant agreement about what the future should look like for the department, there were significant gaps in the descriptions of the present culture. The disparity was expressed in different ways but first appeared when trying to describe why they thought such a large point-disparity was evident in the clan culture between the now and preferred scores on the OCAI. Participants pointed to how the Big State University

slogan, *Big State Family*, is understood by employees as an example of what was missing. Employees in every focus group expressed a lack of connection to the popular slogan and acknowledged that they did not feel like it was reflected well throughout the department. The concept appears to be strong within teams, but lacking within the department as a whole. The quotations from three participants listed below reinforce how they feel the disconnect.

*“I’ve always wondered if the ‘Big State Family’ was more of a marketing thing - how we present ourselves - versus who we really are.”-Max*

*"There's the idea of the facade that this is the Big State Family, but from a workplace standpoint, the day to day, the fans aren't here and the students aren't here, and so maybe they want to echo that message a little more on the day to day, not just on the weekends and at night when there are competitions." -JD*

*“I’ve always questioned the ‘Big State Family’ and what that means. Because I don't really know other than 'we like it here and people are nice'. But does that mean that we're doing business like that? And I don't know if that's true.”-Anik*

To further characterize the disconnect, the focus groups participants routinely referred to the climate within the department as business-like. Taylor stated, “I think that a lot of people feel like the athletic department is run much more like a business than a higher education department”. Additionally, Cal noted that the environment is “very

business oriented and bottom-line focused in this department”. Rocky also reflected that “outside of selling widgets, versus selling a school, it’s not so different from being in XYZ Corporation”.

Describing the business-like concept, participants provided rich descriptions that illuminate how they sense the deficiency of clan culture in the present ethos. Andy stated, “I feel like it’s less about the personnel and more about the bottom-line”. Max added to this by stating, “I don’t feel like the individuals down every one of these halls is quite as important as they used to be”. In describing what was missing, Addison specified, “I think we’re missing some of that relationship part”, and Taylor added, “We’re missing some of that mentorship”. Explaining the importance of a more salient enhanced clan culture, Cal shared,

*“What somebody does outside of work, can also impact the work they do inside the workplace. And to fully understand that, and get the most efficiency out of them, I need to understand what’s going on in their full life... That’s the approach that my supervisor has taken, but above that there hasn’t been a trickle down from them into my level or below”.*

The stories that participants told to describe and explain the present departmental culture varied, but all conveyed the importance of improving the levels of clan culture within the athletic department. The concept of family is important and feeling as if one belongs and is appreciated are important for the development of individuals within the workplace. Respondents felt that the family concept within the clan culture can be a powerful motivational tool, and the development of this concept is desired at every level

of employment. Participants expressed that core components of clan and family should be a constant focus in the department and can be improved with increased communication within and between the departments within athletics.

## **Theme 2: Athletic Silos**

Organizational silos are common in the educational sector, and are commonly described as departmental walls used to separate different subjects and departments within an organization. Athletic departments are also subject to the formation of silos as programs around the country enter into the *arms race* of constructing individual sport facilities. The construction of individualized sport facilities, although seen as necessary for recruiting aspects, can create separation between coaches and sport administrators from other departmental groups. Universally, participants mentioned that a strong connection between employees existed among the small groups of people with whom they work most closely. However, feelings of connectedness did not extend outside of their small groups, and the participants expressed a desire to enhance the sense of connectedness to people outside of their silo. JD described the feelings of connectedness, “In your department, you feel very much like a family, but outside of your silo, it’s not as strong”. Andy explained, “you have your great facilities, your own offices and stuff, but when do we get to see each other? When do we get to connect?”

Participants further expressed that trying to connect with people outside of their silo was difficult, as there were limited opportunities to connect. Rocky elaborated on the lack of opportunity to connect with peers by stating, “you know we have a Thanksgiving lunch and maybe one other mandatory meeting a year. And there’s also a Christmas party

that's not very well attended." Participants also attributed a change in office location to the increased difficulty to connect with their peers. A point echoed by nearly every focus group member is most vividly described by Max when he recalled,

*"In the past, all of the coaches of all of the sports, except for maybe a few were located right next to each other. We would see our colleagues every day and get to interact. Now we're kind of all in our own facilities so we're a lot more separated from each other. So, it's hard to really bridge those connections to the magnitude that we used to when we worked under the same roof."*

When asked what changes could be made, Addison suggested, "maybe trying to figure out ways to get units within the department to get together somehow, whether that's socially or professionally."

Throughout the focus group sessions, participants explained why finding ways to connect with people outside their silo was essential. Anik stated, "I think that's really important [interacting with each other], so we know who each other are — because we are a part of the same department at Big State." Additionally, Taylor concluded, "I enjoy seeing some football coaches, or whoever that I don't normally get to see. I mean we work so much that your community of people has to be here [on campus]. Otherwise you won't have any friends."

Overall, employees within the department of athletics are respectful of the time that is required to be successful within athletics and appreciative of the sport benefits and opportunities provided by individualized facilities. However, they do not want to lose the



family atmosphere and collegial connections that are professionally important within athletics. JD summed up this theme with the following statement, “Point is, we don’t see football, we don’t see baseball, we don’t see our family. If you’re not connected to the other people in this big organization, you become this island.”

Focus group participants openly and frequently expressed their desire to feel more connected with their colleagues. The participants explained that working in college athletics puts a considerable strain on their lives outside of work, and cultivating friendships and connections with their peers was essential to their overall happiness as well as positively impacting the quality of their work. Enabling opportunities for athletic department employees to enhance their feelings of connectedness with individuals outside of their silos will be efficacious moving forward.

### **Theme 3: Bottom Line Orientation**

The final theme identified from the focus groups was that participants do not mind the escalating pressure to meet high expectations. In every focus group, participants expressed recognition and understanding of the enhanced pressure to win and raise money that has permeated the Division I college athletics ethos. Participants embrace meeting high expectations and understand that on-field success is imperative for the future success of the organization as a whole. Cal expressed this concept by stating, “You gotta make money and you gotta win.” The bottom line orientation was reinforced from Andy when he stated, “With any business it goes back to the bottom line,” as well as from Matilda, who stated, “You gotta win. I think that’s the reality of it.”

Overall, the bottom line orientation theme summarizes the employee understanding of the competitive nature of athletic organizations. Rocky's understanding was communicated when he stated, "We're here to win, we're here to get this done, we're here to win championships." Ultimately, athletic personnel understand that wins drive programs forwards and increase expectations. Many of the participants found value in the pressure to meet high expectations. Max commented, "a lot of what drives us is wins and losses. We're not the English department, you know." Similarly, Addison explained that

*"at the end of the day, there's benchmarks that we need to get to, to accomplish the goals we want to get to, so we can fundraise and build new facilities and create these atmospheres that enables us to recruit these great coaches and student-athletes."*

Participants within the focus groups acknowledged the stress and anxiety associated with the pressure to win. Anik characterized the lived experience by sharing, "at the end of the day, the reality is that your livelihood depends on whether you win." Importantly, several participants expressed that the negative feelings commonly associated with the pressure to meet high expectations could be mitigated by increasing levels of clan culture within the environment. JD summed-up this sentiment when he said, "I think a lot of coaches don't have a problem with the nature of the business," indicating that the departmental culture can overcome the pressure to win.

Overall, athletic department employees understand, and to a certain degree enjoy, the pressure to win at the Division I level. The high expectations are an accepted part of the athletic culture. However, participants expressed that departmental culture can affect

how employees deal with raised expectations in regards to on-field success. They feel that more of a positive clan culture can facilitate beneficial relationships within the department that provide employees with a group of peers to confide in as well as serve as mentors within the department. Participants noted that these relationships improve organizational culture as well as employee satisfaction, thus making the high expectations manageable.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis Summary**

Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the focus group interviews. Theme one identified a significant gap between the levels of clan culture that employees desire to see in the future and what they perceive the levels of clan culture are presently in the department. Participants were all in agreement about what they wanted the future to look like, but they all expressed similar frustrations with the defect of clan elements in the present ethos. Theme two identified the strong feelings among employees that the athletic department is highly siloed, and participants expressed a desire to feel a stronger sense of connection with their peers. Theme three identified a sense of acceptance and understanding among employees concerning the escalating pressure to meet high expectations. Participants acknowledged that the pressure to win can be unsettling, but they also expressed that they see the value of setting high expectations and have a thorough understanding of the positive impacts that accompany winning.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the results for this mixed-methods study. Of the 227 athletic department employees asked to participate in this study, 113 respondents

completed the OCAI survey, which yielded an overall response rate of 49.8%. The quantitative results show that there are several areas in which the athletic director and employees perceive the present and preferred organizational culture significantly differently. The qualitative phase of this study included focus group interview sessions that provided the opportunity for employees to further explore and provide context for the quantitative data collected with the OCAI. Themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis were consistent with the results of the OCAI survey and helped to explain employee attitudes and shared values, as well as to provide insight into why employees felt as they did.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the study and a discussion of the findings. The chapter is divided into four parts. First, the researcher provides a summary of the study, followed by a discussion of the conclusions, significance of the findings, limitations, and the implications of future research. Lastly, the researcher will provide a summary of the entire research project.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to explore and compare how both the athletic director and employees of the Big State University Athletic Department perceive the present and preferred (future) organizational culture within the athletic department. To answer the central research question the researcher had to first answer the following sub-questions: (1) What is the athletic director's understanding of the current organizational culture of the athletic department?; (2) What is the athletic director's understanding of the preferred culture within the athletic department?; (3) What is the department employees' understanding of the present organizational culture of the athletic department?; and (4) What is the employees' understanding of the preferred culture within the athletic department? These are important questions to answer because deepening the understanding of the present and preferred organizational culture positively impacts a leader's ability to manage their culture in ways that facilitate adaptation to change and innovation in the future (Schein, 2004).

The population from which the sample was drawn was all full-time athletic department employees whose positions within the department fell under one of four titles: administrator, sport support, coach, or administrative support. Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of the respondents by their role within the Big State University Athletic Department. An electronic version of the OCAI was distributed to 227 athletic department employees; 113 responses were completed, which provided a response rate of 49.8%. After the results from the quantitative surveys were calculated, the researcher scheduled focus group interview sessions with employees. Eight people participated in the focus groups, which helped to further explore and explain the employees' results from the OCAI.

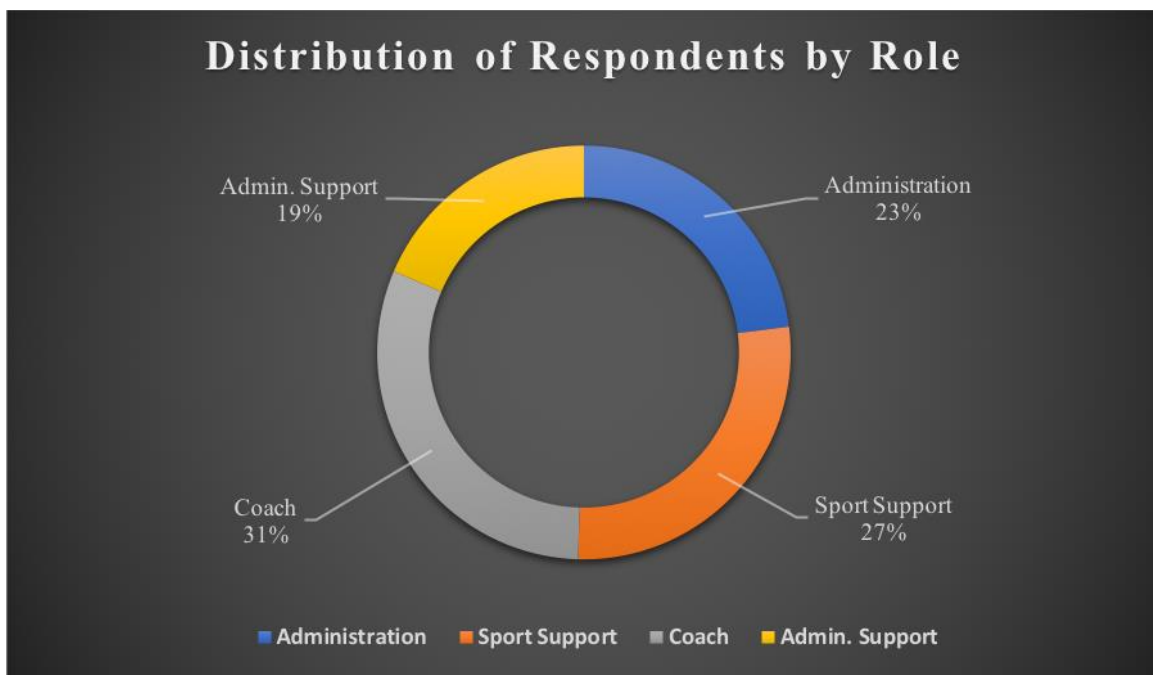


Figure 5.1 Distribution of respondents by role

## Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis of the OCAI showed the athletic director’s perception of the present culture within the Big State University Athletic Department as clan 48.33, adhocracy 20, market 12.50, and hierarchical 19.17 (Figure 5.2). According to the OCAI, the athletic director’s perception of the preferred departmental culture was clan 47.50, adhocracy 27.50, market 14.17, and hierarchical 10.83 (Figure 5.2).

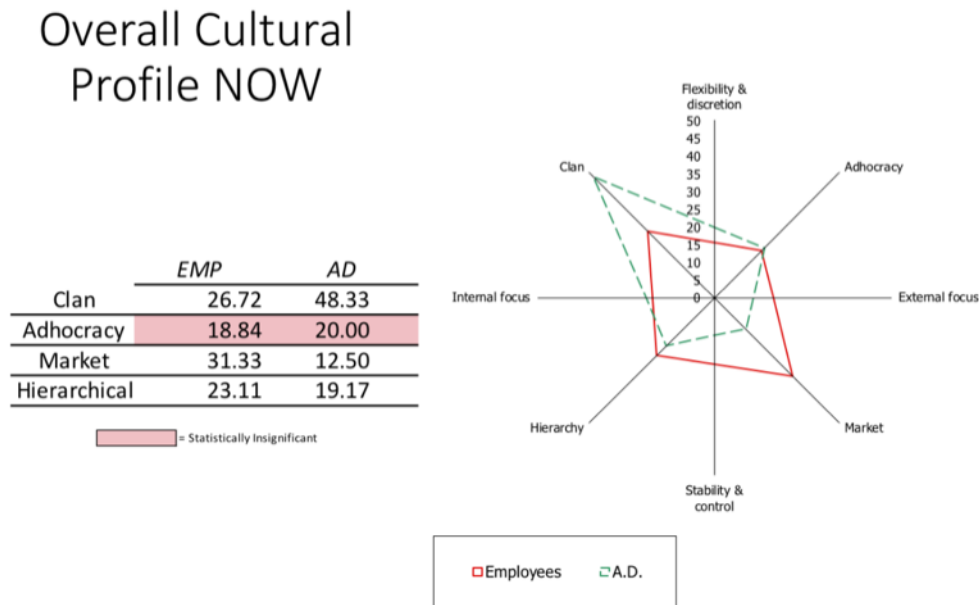


Figure 5.2 Present overall cultural profile

Additionally, results from the OCAI survey showed that the employee population viewed the present culture within the athletic department to be clan 26.72, adhocracy 18.84, market 31.33, and hierarchical 23.11 (Figure 5.3). Collectively the employees expressed a desire for the preferred organizational culture to be clan 40.82, adhocracy 20.98, market, 19.40, and hierarchy 18.80 (Figure 5.3).

## Overall Cultural Profile PREFERRED

	EMP	AD
Clan	40.82	47.50
Adhocracy	20.98	27.50
Market	19.40	14.17
Hierarchical	18.80	10.83

= Statistically insignificant



Figure 5.3 Preferred overall cultural profile

The comparison of the athletic director and employees' OCAI results show that there are several areas in which the athletic director and employees perceive the present (Figure 4.5) and preferred (Figure 4.6) Big State University Athletic Department culture significantly differently. The results indicate that there is a larger disparity in how each population understands the present culture than how both discern the future. There was less of a difference between the athletic director's and employees' views of the preferred athletic department culture than for the present culture, although the difference was statistically significant.

### Qualitative Results

At the conclusion of the quantitative data analysis, focus groups were scheduled to obtain a richer description of the quantitative data provided by the OCAI. Focus group



sessions were scheduled at three separate times to provide flexibility for participation from the athletic department employees. Focus group sessions were communicated through athletic department emails and personal communication. Overall, the three focus group sessions were completed with eight total participants. The focus group participants represented all four occupational subgroups within the study.

After completing the qualitative data analysis the findings were sorted into three themes: (1) clan culture gap; (2) athletic silos; (3) bottom line orientation. Then the researcher sought to provide a richer description of the culture within the athletic department at Big State University. Therefore, the researcher conducted multiple focus group interviews as a means of presenting the quantitative data back to the employees and allow this group to provide additional details and/or descriptions regarding culture within the department. The focus group participants discussed the three themes.

The first theme, clan culture gap, represents the significant gap between the type of clan culture that the employees desire in the future and what they perceive to be the deficiencies in the clan culture presently. Clan-focused organizations act like extended families, in which the primary task of leaders is to empower and facilitate participation within the organization (Bremer, 2012). Participants expressed strong agreement about what the future would look like, however, they also expressed significant frustration with the deficiency of clan elements in the present ethos. The stories that participants provided to describe and explain the present departmental culture varied, but all conveyed the importance of improving the level of clan culture within the athletic department.

The second theme, athletic silos, represents the sentiment that participants feel that the Big State University Athletic Department is highly siloed, and a strong desire exists to feel more connectedness with colleagues. Universally, participants mentioned that a strong connection among employees existed within the small groups of people with whom they work most closely. However, feelings of connectedness did not extend outside of their small groups, and the participants expressed a desire to enhance the sense of connectedness to people outside of their silo. JD summarized the theme explaining, “Point is, we don’t see football, we don’t see baseball, we don’t see our family. If you’re not connected to the other people in this big organization, you become this island.” Participants were unambiguous in communicating that cultivating friendships and connections with their peers was essential to their overall happiness as well as positively impacting the quality of their work.

The final theme, bottom line orientation, represents a shared acceptance and understanding from the participants of the escalating pressure to meet high expectations. In every focus group, participants expressed recognition and acceptance of the enhanced pressure to win and raise money that has permeated the Division I college athletics ethos. Participants shared that they understand that wins drive programs forward and increase expectations. Some participants find value in the pressure to meet high expectations. Max shared, “a lot of what drives us is wins and losses. We’re not the English department, you know.” Overall, employees understand the pressure to win at the Division I level. High expectations are an accepted part of the athletic culture. However, participants also expressed that departmental culture can affect how employees deal with

raised expectations in regards to on-field success. They explained that a stronger positive clan culture could facilitate beneficial relationships within the department which would provide employees with a group of peers to confide in as well as to serve as mentors. Participants added that these relationships would improve organizational culture as well as employee satisfaction, thus making the high expectations manageable.

### **Findings**

The focus of this research was to explore how the Big State University athletic director's perception of the present and preferred departmental culture compared to that of the rest of the athletic department employees. For leaders, developing a shared understanding of both the present and preferred culture is critical to ensure the coordination of the group's efforts to manage change and innovation (Van den Steen, 2003; Schein, 2004). Failure to develop a shared understanding can result in uncoordinated efforts to improve and result in the perpetuation of a work environment that stifles creativity and makes goal attainment less likely (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

### **Present**

The findings in Chapter Four and discussed above show that there are statistically significant differences in how the athletic director and employees perceive the present culture. The quantitative data obtained from the OCAI demonstrated that employees perceived the athletic department culture to be most strongly aligned with the results-oriented, highly-competitive elements associated with the market archetype. In contrast, the athletic director's OCAI results indicated that he sees the departmental culture to be staunchly aligned with the familial-feeling, people-focused, clan archetype. He evaluated

the clan culture to be more than twice as strong as the next strongest culture type and nearly twice as strong as how the employees rated it. Conversely, the athletic director scored the market culture, the archetype that the employees rated highest, lowest of the four archetypes, which indicates that he believes the elements associated with the market culture to be the least salient in the present athletic department culture.

Interestingly, both the athletic director's and employees' dominant archetypes for the present departmental culture (market and clan) represent opposite and competing values and assumptions. The market archetype is considered a highly-controlled, externally focused environment. The clan archetype is described as a highly-flexible, internally focused environment. Over time, the cultural incongruence exhibited in both population's perception of the present culture, has been shown to "inhibit the organization's ability to perform at their highest levels of effectiveness" (Cameron & Quinn, 2011, p. 85).

Comparing the athletic director's and employees' overall cultural profiles indicates that the athletic director views the present culture within the athletic department as immensely more familial, people-focused, and cohesive than the views of the employees. The gap in perception is exemplified in the data when examining the dimensions of culture assessed in each of the OCAI questions. There were substantial point differentials in how the athletic director and employees perceive the specific cultural dimensions; the athletic director had higher points for dominant characteristics (44.96 point differential), organizational glue (40.94 point differential), and the management of employees (31.05 point differential). This indicates that the athletic

director perceives the environment to be substantially more personal, familial, and people-focused. He clearly identifies the glue that bonds individuals within the department to be loyalty and mutual trust, whereas the employee population is much less clear. Additionally, the athletic director views the management style in the organization to be characterized by teamwork and consensus, whereas the employee population characterizes the management style as highly-competitive and achievement oriented.

The gap in how the athletic director and employees perceive the present culture within the athletic department emerged as one of the dominant themes from the focus group interviews. To illustrate the incongruence, participants pointed to the Big State University slogan, Big State Family, and the lack of connection the employee population feels to the popular motto. Max said, “I’ve always wondered if the ‘Big State Family’ was more of a marketing thing — how we present ourselves — versus who we really are.” Anik added, “I’ve always questioned the ‘Big State Family’ and what that means. Because I don’t really know other than ‘we like it here and people are nice’. But does that mean that we’re doing business like that? And I don’t know if that’s true.” The lack of connection to the familial atmosphere that is marketed by the department indicated the underlying issue —employees feel a significant deficiency of the clan archetype within the present department culture. Typifying this sentiment, JD shared that inside the athletic department, “I feel like it’s less about the people and more about the bottom-line.”

## **Preferred**

The quantitative data obtained from the OCAI results also demonstrated statistically significant differences were present for all four archetypes when comparing how the athletic director and employee populations viewed the preferred organizational culture. The differences in the means of the preferred culture between populations were much smaller compared to the same scores for the present culture.

Cameron and Quinn (2011), the authors of the OCAI, suggest that in addition to exploring discrepancies in scores, researchers also examine how culture types are emphasized in various parts of the organization. Cameron and Quinn (2011) refer to this analysis as evaluating the congruence among archetypes. Using this lens, the athletic director and employees preferred OCAI results show that, despite the differences in means, there is a high degree of congruence between the two. Sweeney (2016) noted that a highly congruent understanding of a preferred culture “can result in more positive outcomes, such as increased performance and overall organizational success” (p. 68).

The strongest and most important area of congruence between the athletic director and employees is their shared belief that to be successful in the future the clan culture must become the dominant cultural archetype. Despite a 6.68 point disparity, both populations rated the clan archetype highest, nearly 20 points higher than the next closest archetype (athletic director 47.50; employees 40.82). These scores indicate that both the athletic director and employees believe that the preferred athletic department culture should be characterized by greater levels of trust, mentorship, loyalty, and connection. Describing what this culture might look like to be more clan-like, Andy said,

*“I would feel valued, and more a part of a family environment is to feel like people know who I am. Maybe people know about my family, or where I’ve been in the past, or how I’ve gotten to where I am. So take a vested interest in who I am as a person as well as who I am as an employee.”*

Max echoed, “people would care about the mentoring, the development, the teamwork, you know — why we’re all here.”

There is also significant congruence in the way the athletic director and employees view their least desirable preferred cultural archetypes. Despite the statistically significant differences reported in the quantitative data, both populations rated the hierarchical and market archetypes as the least desirable. The hierarchical and market archetypes are the two culture types most associated with high levels of control. This indicates that both populations believe that, in the future, the organization’s culture should rely less on indices of control, mechanistic processes, stable metrics, and controlling management practices. Focus group participants made it clear that the employees accepted the goal attainment pressures characteristic of the Market archetype, as ‘part of the job’ and probably necessary to maintain the department’s reputation. John’s response captured the nearly unanimous feelings in the group,

*“at the end of the day, there's benchmarks that we need to get to, to accomplish the goals we want to get to, so we can fundraise and build new facilities and create these atmospheres that enables us to recruit these great coaches and student-athletes.”*

The populations' congruent perception of these archetypes as least necessary in the future, when considered together with their shared belief in the importance of a clan culture, indicate that the athletic director and employees both share a desire for a more adaptable and nimble departmental culture. It also implies a shared perception that both populations believe that a more people-centric, flexible culture will be required to compete in the ever-changing landscape of Division I athletics.

The adhocracy archetype represents an interesting point of differentiation when comparing the athletic director's and employees' preferred OCAI results. Both the athletic director and employees rated adhocracy, the archetype most associated with innovation, as their second most important preferred archetype. However, the employees' scores did not indicate that they saw the need to noticeably change present practices. This point was consistent with the focus group interviews. Unprompted, not a single respondent noted the need for greater innovation in the future. Moreover, when asked to explain the employee population's minimal score increase from present to preferred, interview participants downplayed the need to be more innovative in the future often noting that they are already a high performing organization. Cal noted that "we're already doing well." Addison added that it's hard to think of being more innovative when "you sell out every game and your fundraising arm is among the best in the country." Additionally, interviewees were candid in their reticence to embrace higher levels of innovation. J.D.'s response was widely shared in the group, "Most people innately don't like change. It makes them uncomfortable, they're unsure about it. They say, will it work? We've done it this way, why would we do it differently?" Several of



the responses inferred that the controlling nature of the market archetype, the employees' present dominant cultural archetype, may make them reticent to commit to higher levels of innovation.

This study attempted to explore how the Big State University athletic director's perception of the present and preferred athletic department cultures compared to the perceptions of the rest of the employees in the department. The data showed that the athletic director's perception of both the present and preferred cultures are statistically different on most measures of culture that have been identified as important to the success of an organization. In this study, both the quantitative and qualitative data collected showed that significant differences in perceptions exist. Also, an analysis of the data led to similar conclusions as to where the differences in perception exist. Although both the present and preferred cultures were statistically significantly different, the research showed that the differences in the present state were significantly more pronounced. Despite the significant differences in the athletic director's and employees' perceptions of the preferred future culture, there were similarities in the responses. Most notably, both the athletic director and the employees reported that they believed that the dominant preferred future culture would be consistent with high levels of trust, more employee engagement, more mentoring, and less management control.

### **Significance of the Study**

In the United States, organizations spend more than 70 billion dollars annually to improve the ability of leaders to create teams capable of making more significant, creative contributions (Carroll, Singaraju, & Park, 2015). Most of these efforts have

focused primarily on improving leader behavior and have focused much less on the attitudes of the followers and the organizational culture. There was a time when our preoccupation with leader behavior as a primary lever to improve performance made sense; however, those times have long passed. Today, leaders recognize the clear shift in power over the last half century that has been turbocharged by technology and social media and has resulted in employees and students who are less compliant and who want more involvement in the decisions that affect their lives. This devolution of power in organizations coupled with the fact that most environments are more competitive, have led to a growing recognition that building more effective and adaptive teams will require leaders to improve their abilities to manage the cultural attributes of their organizations (Kellerman, 2012).

This study attempted to assess perceptions of organizational culture and to provide a tool to help leaders accelerate their improvement efforts. The researcher utilized a mixed-methods embedded research design, combining the OCAI survey with focus group interviews to study how both the athletic director and employees perceive the present and preferred athletic department cultures. This approach can serve as the first step in a process that ensures a shared understanding of an organization's culture. This increased understanding can serve to facilitate organization-wide conversations that not only cultivate a shared understanding of the present culture, but can aid in the development of a well-understood vision of the future.

Historically, culture has not been effectively measured in most organizations. In addition to the underestimation of the effect of culture on performance, the challenges of

measuring the shared attitudes and beliefs of people and the costs involved in such an analysis have made the development of cultural measurement competencies more difficult (Schein, 2010). Because much of the cultural pressures that exist in an organization are tacit and not consciously understood by people in the organization, it can be difficult to elicit feedback about issues that they do not, or maybe even cannot, articulate. The OCAI provided a baseline measurement of the differences in perception between the athletic director and department employees. This, in turn, created a common vocabulary in the focus groups that enabled people to better explain perceived cultural pressures. They were able to not only describe the cultural attributes that they considered most important, but they were able to explain their feelings and their decision making process.

Understanding why people feel as they do today and understanding why they want the culture to change in the future enables employees to develop a cognitive road map that not only can provide confidence in the organization's efforts to change, but it can substantially reduce the resistance that can exist in trying to adapt today's practices for the future. When the data are used to create conversations that increase awareness, people can become more mindful of the cultural pressures to conform to the past, and they can choose to make decisions that result in the development of new norms and practices.

Culture is a stabilizing mechanism. It allows people in organizations to find a degree of certainty and predictability in the complexity of their collective efforts. One of the primary potential benefits of developing a shared understanding of the present and

preferred cultures is that this collective perception can serve to provide a sense of predictability that does not rely on past practices. Change can be difficult. But change in environments that are perceived to be unpredictable, uncertain, or unsafe, often result in more fear and less innovation (Schein, 2010). When people know where they are today and where they are headed tomorrow, there is a stability from that understanding which can make it safer for people to change present habits and build new competencies.

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation is this research is not generalizable across all collegiate athletic departments. The data collected is only representative of the perceptions and experiences of the athletic department employees who chose to participate in the study at this specific institution. Therefore, the organizational culture of the studied institution does not reflect the organizational culture of all athletic departments across the country.

Additionally, focus group participation was a potential limitation. Although members of each research subgroup participated in the focus group sessions, the overall participation numbers were not as robust as desired.

### **Implications for Future Research**

The use of a mixed-methods embedded research design in this study proved to be an efficient methodology to ascertain a rich and accurate understanding of an athletic department's culture. Because this research only explored the organizational culture of one athletic department, the results are not generalizable beyond the Big State University Athletic Department.

Future research in athletic departments should include schools of different sizes and different aspirations in order to identify trends that might exist in the way that people at different levels in an athletic department hierarchy view culture. For example, Big State University is an NCAA Division I school with a successful football program, a wide variety of competitive sports, significant infrastructure, and significant fundraising goals, but are these results unique to large athletic departments? Do most athletic directors and employees perceive the clan culture to be the most desirable culture for the future? Do most employees believe that there is a greater sense of management control in the present culture than is helpful? Do most athletic directors see the need for a future culture that better supports innovation? Would the study results be similar in smaller athletic departments or in schools where football is not a significant focus? In smaller athletic departments, might the athletic director's perception be closer to those of department employees simply because the size of the department might have led to more face-to-face communications? In universities or colleges that do not have high fundraising goals, would employees feel the pressure, to meet goals, that is inherent in the market archetype?

When future studies fill in these gaps, it could provide people the information they need to change their priorities and to begin to build competencies that will yield a better and more shared understanding of the cultural pressures that enhance or inhibit future performance.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The implications of this study are beneficial because they enable Big State University's department of athletics to develop a better understanding of the present and preferred cultures within the department. While the results of the OCAI indicate that significant differences exist in the perceptions of the present culture, there were similarities between these two groups when assessing the preferred culture. This information, while important for both parties, can be vital to the director of athletics in his effort to better understand the employee perceptions of culture within and can help him develop strategies to address specific areas in which the employee group would like to see improvements. In this way, the OCAI was not only beneficial in assessing the organizational culture of the department, it provided a blueprint for leaders within the department to effectively develop strategies to facilitate change.

The finding that the athletic director perceives the present and preferred culture differently than the employees of the rest of the athletic department does not, by itself, create a process through which the department can improve its ability to adapt, innovate or become less change averse. It does, however, demonstrate the gap in understanding that exists within this specific organization, provide a common vocabulary, and help the team create a framework that can be used in facilitating conversations for positive change. Knowing the existence of this gap, the athletic director and administrators must continue to work with the employees of the department to promote a collaborative effort to increase clan-like attributes and to lessen perceptions of fear and anxiety that can be consequences of the present dominant market archetype. Creating policy or policy

changes to promote the family atmosphere of the clan archetype will improve the overall organizational culture by promoting cooperation, mentoring, and support among groups within the department. Policies enhancing collaboration between the occupational subgroups can be implemented to reinforce the family atmosphere of Big State University and deconstruct some of the silos that employees perceive in the present culture.

The result of dialogues like those recommended above will be unique to the Big State University Athletic Department. There are no universal, straightforward answers to developing a department or individual team's ability to adapt to a fast-changing environment. Every organization and every team are relationally-created and are as unique as the people who work there. Trying to paste one organization's solution on another organization's culture has a long history with few success stories. Effective efforts to change, innovate, and adapt must begin with the recognition on the part of team members that change is necessary; that the status quo will not lead to success in the future; and the future that is envisioned is worthy of their collective efforts. This unfreezing of present attitudes and beliefs can loosen the conscious and unconscious hold that the present culture has on the team's performance (Schein, 2010).

When the gaps in perception are significant, and the organization is actively seeking to understand why the differences in perception exist, in addition to how the present culture might support or inhibit future goal attainment, it is possible that the outcome of these conversations will be greater team alignment (Schein, 2010). As to cultural attributes, the organization may find that the present culture is critical to their future success while in other areas, they may become unfrozen and begin to understand

that meaningful change and innovation will be required to become the department they envision for the future. Differences in perception can be highlighted and debated with the shared underlying belief, that a more unified and aligned organization will be better able to plan a different path forward.

An even greater potential benefit of these conversations will be the engagement and commitment of the employees that can result from their collective efforts. It has been long recognized that people are more committed to what they help create. It has not proven effective for teams to separate the planning of a change from the execution of that change effort (Schein, 2010). The conversations that can ensue from the processes outlined in this study can serve to meaningfully involve much of the athletic department in understanding the present culture and future preferred culture. Additionally, the results from this study can serve as the basis for involving members of the department in developing strategies to accelerate the pace of change and innovation. Involvement is not a tactic when it comes to effective leadership. It is the recognition that involvement is how people work best, and processes like the ones outlined here can serve to kick-start positive changes within the organization (Maslow et al., 1998).

### **Summary**

This study was designed to explore how the athletic director's and athletic department employees' perceptions of the present as well as the preferred cultures compare to each other. This is important because without a shared understanding of cultural pressures, the tacit nature of these pressures can inhibit effective decision making. Also, this can hinder an organization's ability to adapt to fluctuating market



environments without people realizing the culture's stabilizing effect. When people are blind to cultural pressures, they cannot manage the culture; they are often managed by the culture.

This study utilized a mixed-method research design to combat the historical weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative cultural research methodologies. It was designed to test whether this research design could be used to both help clarify the cultural perceptions of different populations within an organization and also serve as the impetus for cultivating conversations that lead to better organizational alignment.

The OCAI was selected because of its high reliability for assessing the key attributes of culture that most correlate with organizational success. The qualitative interviews provided the opportunity for employees to further explore and provide context for the quantitative data collected with the OCAI. In this study, the qualitative data were consistent with the results of the OCAI survey and helped to explain employee attitudes and shared values, as well as to provide insight into why people felt as they did.

Results indicate that statistically significant differences exist between the athletic director's and employees' perceptions of the present and preferred athletic department cultures. The data suggest that the perceptual differences were greatest in their understanding of the present departmental culture. OCAI results show that the athletic director believes the dominant cultural archetype to be consistent with the values of a clan culture. The clan archetype is characterized by high levels of trust, mentoring, cohesion, loyalty, and low levels of management control. Athletic department employees however, felt that clan-like attributes were inconsistent with their perception of the

dominant culture at present. Instead, the employees indicated that the present dominant cultural archetype is the market culture. Market archetypes are characterized by highly controlled, immensely competitive environments where there is considerable pressure to meet goals. The OCAI evaluates culture primarily on two dimensions: one emphasizes effectiveness criteria related to control and flexibility, whereas the other differentiates effectiveness criteria that emphasize an internal or external focus (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). In this case, the athletic director's perceptions of the present culture is significantly different in both dimensions.

Comparing the athletic director's and the employees' perceptions of the preferred culture, the data show statistically significant differences in each of the four cultural archetypes. However, in the quantitative data analysis, important similarities emerged which suggest that both the athletic director's and employees' preferred cultural profiles share material similarities. Both populations rated the clan archetype as their dominant, preferred cultural archetype. Both populations believe that a departmental culture characterized by high levels of trust, mentoring, and support are desirable to carry out the organization's mission in the future. For the athletic director, this will not require a meaningful shift from his present understanding. His OCAI scores show that he believes the present athletic department culture to be heavily dominated by elements of the clan archetype. In contrast, for employees, the athletic director's perception of the present culture validated their belief that significant changes in the organizational culture would be important to future success.

In addition, the athletic director and the employees rated the preferred hierarchical and market archetypes as their least desirable. Although the hierarchical and market archetypes are different concerning an external or internal focus, both archetypes are characterized by high levels of management control. For employees, this again suggests that in the future, significant change is desired, as they rated the present dominant archetype strongly aligned with the highly competitive and controlling market culture.

The employees' OCAI results that show their desire for a significantly different preferred culture were validated in focus group interviews. Participants in the focus groups provided information that was remarkably consistent with the quantitative data. In addition, the participants were specific in the need for more trust, more connection, and more support. Surprisingly, the OCAI results suggest that the employees understood and even advocated for a preferred culture that was more bottom-line and goal-oriented than the athletic director, as long as significantly more clan-like attributes characterize the organization in the future.

The data also show that the athletic director desires a preferred culture that better supports innovation. The desire for greater innovation in the future was consistent with data from the qualitative interviews; employees were consistent in their recognition of the pace of change in Division I athletics. That said, neither the qualitative or quantitative data suggest that employees believe that the culture should shift in that direction. There is some evidence that employees believe that the present culture supports sufficient levels of innovation. But there is also evidence to suggest that the controlling nature of the

market culture, the dominant archetype identified by employees, may affect their survey responses.

The consistency of the data was impressive. Not only were the qualitative and quantitative data consistent in documenting the differences and similarities in the preferred and present cultural archetypes, but the consistency of the qualitative data across organizational functional boundaries and among different roles was also noteworthy. The mixed-methods research design employed not only answered the research question and identified the significant differences between athletic director and employee perceptions, but it also provided information about why people felt as they did and what commitment people were willing to make in the future. It also clarified what kind of culture would be required to make those commitments. The results of this study were not intended to be a process that would result in organizational improvement. Instead, it was designed to test whether this research design might be used to understand the differences that may exist between the perceptions of leadership and the remainder of the athletic department employees. To this end, the mixed-methods embedded research design performed as anticipated. For leaders, this design may prove useful to jump-start discussions among members of their department. These discussions could lead to greater congruence between present and preferred cultures, an increased sense of predictability about the future, and significantly more involvement among employees. And today, as the power continues to shift from leaders to the led, these types of process which involve more people in the improvement processes can benefit leaders in the quest to gain the commitment of their teams.



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