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Beyond the Textbook: An Approach to Facilitating Student Understanding of Organizational Culture in Organizations

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Organizational culture has been likened to an onion, an umbrella, sticky glue, and an iceberg. Due to the multifaceted nature of the subject matter, presenting and explaining this topic to students can be a daunting task. This article describes an assignment that allows students to discover and understand organizational culture by conducting a cultural analysis of organizations. Student groups collaboratively complete this assignment by locating a research site, administering a questionnaire, processing quantitative data using a statistical analysis software package, analyzing qualitative data using content analysis with analytic coding, developing a formal written report, and making an oral presentation to representatives of the organization under study. The various components of the exercise allow students to practice critical and reflective thinking skills, explore quantitative and qualitative research methods, refine written and oral communication skills, apply knowledge and skills from various software applications, and provide experience working in a team environment. *Organization Management Journal*, 10: 45–65, 2013. doi: 10.1080/15416518.2013.781400

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The importance or influence of organizational culture has been a topic of considerable discussion, debate, and interest in and out of academia since Peters and Waterman published their work *In Search of Excellence* (1982) and Deal and Kennedy published *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (1982). More recently, in the 2008 Fortune 500 issue of *Fortune* magazine, Collins illustrated the importance of culture by noting that many of the companies that have achieved long-term success on this particular list have done so by holding “tight to the core values [culture] that have remained fixed for 100 years or more” (p. 74, bracketed word added).

In making the case for culture’s relevance, Vasu, Stewart, and Garson (1998) have noted that “research in both the public and private sectors underscores the fact that organizational

culture concretely influences what happens in organizations” (p. 266). This point is reinforced by Lundberg (1996), who states, “In general, organizational culture is functional in that it provides meaningful responses to the sorts of questions that pervade human as well as organizational existence: Who are we, what are we about, and how should we behave” (p. 14). To this, Schein (1999) adds:

Culture matters. It matters because decisions made without awareness of the operative cultural forces may have unanticipated and undesirable consequences. (p. 3)

Culture matters because it is a powerful, latent, and often unconscious set of forces that determine both our individual and collective behavior, ways of perceiving, thought patterns, and values. Organizational culture in particular matters because cultural elements determine strategy, goals, and modes of operation. (p. 14)

While the topic of organizational culture is pervasive across much of the management curricula—the authors of this article note mention of it in strategic management; ethics; business, government, and society; entrepreneurship; marketing; small business management; management information systems; human resource management; and accounting courses—the actual depth of coverage is scanty at best. For example, a cursory examination of four contemporary management texts resulted in observed coverage of organizational culture ranging from 4 to 12 pages. These page counts represent nothing more than simple page counting and do not discount for the pictures, tables, charts, or graphs that commonly break up text in such books. The primary emphasis of the coverage is on providing a definition of the concept and supplying examples of culture in contemporary organizations. Little is done to educate and inform the student with regard to discovering and defining an organization’s culture. Overall, this situation is puzzling when the topic is considered in light of the breadth of discourse and importance attributed to it over the course of the past three decades.

Despite acknowledgment of the relevance of organizational culture in both the academic and popular press, management instructors continue to struggle with defining organizational culture in meaningful ways to management students. Hatch

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(1993) and Lundberg (1996) provide evidence and examples of this challenge through their reviews of existing constructs and definitions, respectively. Sackman (1991) adds that the “existing definitions of culture do not facilitate its study” and that “many of these definitions are not equivalent in what they include” (p. 295). Wilson (1989) notes that “organizational culture admittedly is a vague concept” (p. 92). Finally, Smircich (1983) notes that “the idea of corporate culture arouses a great deal of interest among academics and practitioners. Perhaps because it is such a ‘common-sense’ term, we all ‘know’ what it means without much explanation” (p. 346).

To illustrate the challenge of educating students about organizational culture, consider the task of explaining how organizational culture can be like an “iceberg, onion, umbrella and sticky glue” (Morgan, 1989, p. 157) or the meaningfulness of defining culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has 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 their problems. (Schein, 1992, p. 12)

Arguably these definitions have meaning to many, if not the majority of, management instructors, but not necessarily the management students in whom the instructors are attempting to instill this knowledge and understanding. Specifically, how easily translated are these vagaries to the sophomore or junior undergraduate student sitting in upper level management classes? Barclay and York (1996), commenting specifically on this issue, observed that students “often find these discussions [related to culture] confusing if the concepts are not related concretely to their own experience” (p. 125, bracketed text added).

Compounding matters further is the fact that our undergraduate, and even graduate, students possess less significant work experience than we believe, think, or wish they did. Actual levels of work experience differ by institution and area of study within the various fields of management, and this has emerged as a contemporary challenge especially in light of recent economic struggles. This experiential void places limits on our students’ ability to grasp the definitions we are using to explain organizational culture and to internalize or link the meanings to their own personal experiences in and with organizations. Working within the limitations that have been noted, this article outlines a semester-long project that has been used to teach undergraduate and graduate students about organizational culture.

Underlying this particular approach to studying culture are many of the ideas included in Schein’s (1992) work. As students complete the various levels of data collection and analysis, they have opportunities to explore and understand the artifacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions that the analyzed organizations espouse and put to use. It should be noted that the method presented in this article is very hands-on in nature

and grounded in the ideals of a Chinese proverb, “Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.” Instructors often tell and show what organizational culture is. This project provides students with an opportunity to personally see, feel, and discover what culture is and how it is exhibited and used within actual organizations.

The remainder of this article focuses on describing the specific method used in teaching undergraduate and graduate students about organizational culture. A discussion of the assignment outputs, specifically the written report and oral presentation formats, is also included in this portion of the article. This method has emerged and evolved over a number of years and continues to evolve as the authors gain more experience using it in the classroom, receive feedback from students and peers, and add personal reflection.

TEACHING NOTES

The assignment described here is a semester-long, multimethod cultural analysis project that has been used successfully with small teams of undergraduate and graduate organizational behavior students. While it is perhaps best suited for classes studying organizational behavior, the method could theoretically be used in a number of management-related courses (e.g., Principles of Management, Business Ethics, and Strategic Management).

A proposed assignment timetable is presented in Table 1. In brief, over the course of a semester, students are required to gain access to an organization, complete human subjects protection training, develop/modify and distribute a cultural survey, conduct and transcribe interviews, analyze quantitative and qualitative data, write a formal report, and develop and deliver a formal oral presentation. The exercise culminates in the delivery of a formal 10-minute oral presentation to organizational representatives followed by a planned 10-minute question-and-answer period. Additional detail and description of the timing, tools, and student activities involved in each of these assignments are presented later in this article.

The overarching goal of the teaching technique/method is to actively engage students in learning about a complex organizational behavior topic. The method presents instructors with the means of making an amorphous organizational behavior topic more “real” to students. This is accomplished by moving beyond simply reading about the topic to actively engaging the topic by conducting research and analyzing data leading to the discovery of a specific organization’s culture. According to adult learning theory, this type of “hands-on” or “doing” coursework typically results in deeper levels of learning, greater meaning, and understanding of the material (Caudron, 2000). Enhanced learning occurs as students engage the material directly, interact in student teams with classmates possessing different knowledge, perspectives, and understanding of the subject matter, and receive additional support from the instructor via personal discussion, feedback, and supplemental readings and other materials.

TABLE 1
Proposed Organizational Culture Assignment Timetable

Week(s) of course	Assignment(s)
1	Introduction, assign human participant protection training, and assign teams
2	Assign organizational cultural analysis
3	Human participant protections certification due
4	Modified organizational culture survey and interview protocol due
5 and 6	Distribute organizational culture survey Complete organizational employees interviews
7	Collect organizational culture surveys
8	Input organizational culture survey data into statistical analysis software
9	Transcribe organizational employees' interview results
10	Analyze organizational culture survey data set
11	Analyze organizational employees' interviews
12	Complete organizational unobtrusive observations
13 and 14	Draft and complete final organizational culture report and presentation
15	Deliver professional presentation and final organizational culture report to organizational representative(s)

The assignment deliverables include a written report and an oral presentation given to organizational representatives. Due to the nature of these outputs, students who have completed foundational skills including workplace/business writing, business software productivity application courses (especially word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software), and principles/fundamentals of management will be best prepared to complete the assignment. Coursework in human resource management and statistics may also prove to be beneficial.

Upon completing this semester-long cultural analysis exercise, students will have gained or experienced the following:

- A deeper and more thorough understanding of organizational culture in organizations.
- Increased insight into and understanding of the research process and the development of theory.
- A firsthand understanding of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis research techniques by conducting actual research.
- An enhanced understanding of the data triangulation concept (i.e., multimethod research; see Figure 1).
- Writing skills through creation and submission of a formal written report.
- Presentation skills through the delivery of a formal presentation to the client and class.
- Application knowledge of various software application skills to a project (e.g., MS Word, PowerPoint, and Excel; SPSS; Ethnograph).

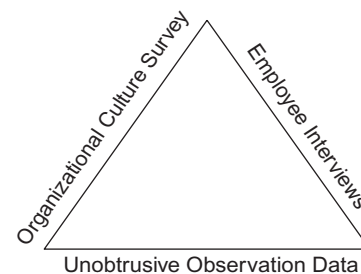


FIG. 1. Multimethod research data triangulation.

- Insight into small-group dynamics.
- A greater understanding of management's roles of planning, leading, organizing, and controlling in the completion of an assigned task.

The approach and requisite analyses afford instructors opportunities to address many of the learning outcomes mandated by most accreditation bodies. Specifically, this assignment is a beneficial academic exercise as it addresses the following proposed Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) program goals:

- Conceptualize a complex issue into a coherent, persuasive written or oral statement.

- Develop a well-written report that explains findings, organizes ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justifies a conclusion or recommendation.
- Make an effective oral presentation that explains findings, organizes ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justifies a conclusion or recommendation.
- Acquire and use analytical tools and skills for evaluating information, solving problems, and making sound decisions.
 - Synthesize and evaluate the relevance of data.
 - Demonstrate critical and reflective thinking skills in exploring new questions, analyzing complex issues from multiple perspectives, and arriving at reasoned conclusions.
- Acquire and use information technology in decision making.
 - Learn to use information technology.
 - Apply information technology in analysis and communication.
- Understand the importance of group dynamics in achieving organizational goals and acquire the skills needed for effective teamwork.
 - Understand the importance of group dynamics in achieving organizational goals.
 - Acquire and use the skills needed to work productively in teams.

A proposed grading rubric is included in Appendix A.

DETAILED ASSIGNMENT NOTES

Week 1—Introduction, Assign Human Participant Protection Training, and Assign Teams

During the first week of the semester the project is briefly introduced to the students. As part of the introduction, the class members are informed that they must complete human participant protection training by week 3 and are assigned to small groups.

Students should be informed of human participant protection guidelines for conducting interviews, collecting survey data, and working with members of a functioning organization. Additionally, a requirement of the assignment is that students completing this assignment deliver an oral and written report to the management/leadership of the studied organization. Thus, issues of confidentiality and anonymity are important and relevant components of this training. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research's Protecting Human Research Participants Web-based training is an excellent resource to use in completing this requirement (<http://phrp.nihtraining.com>). Educators should perform due diligence prior to undertaking this assignment and review the human subjects training requirements, if any, for their specific institution.

Completion of the human participant protection training is a relevant experience as it provides students with insights into the protections that are required of researchers and afforded to human subjects. Furthermore, the training explores human subjects content and protection issues that are typically included in the appendices of many organizational behavior and research methods textbooks.

Student groups may be assigned by the instructor or determined by the students. One outcome of using the groups is that it affords the instructor an additional opportunity to discuss group dynamics as related to an organizational setting as students complete various phases of the project throughout the semester.

Finally, at this point students are asked to begin to consider organizations for the study. Students have completed this organizational cultural analysis at various for-profit companies, non-profit organizations, and government organizations. Previous research sites have included a large metropolitan zoo; a National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) race track organization; a small regional newspaper organization; a small, popular restaurant; a state minimum-security prison; a volunteer fire department; and a youth-focused, religious-based, non-profit organization. Of import here is the issue of semester-long researcher access to the organization.

Students may develop their own materials for approaching the organization or tailor the instructor-developed template and approach to assist in this process (see Appendices B–E). As part of the learning process, this step teaches students how to market themselves and their projects to the target organizations, as the students are often unfamiliar with the organizations they are approaching. Additionally, the process provides an opportunity to work on oral and written presentation skills. This step really should not be undertaken until the human subjects training component has been completed.

Week 2—Assign Organizational Cultural Analysis

During the second week of the course, which focuses on the textbook coverage of organizational culture, students are provided with additional information and materials regarding the cultural analysis. Specifically, students receive the complete assignment as well as materials that outline the content of the final report (see Appendices B–H). A key document shared with students at this point is the sample table of contents for their final written reports (see Appendix B). This document outlines the minimum requirements for the project. Students are free to add at their discretion materials beyond these requirements (many of which are suggested in organizational culture discussions throughout the semester). Students and instructors might supplement and enhance this assignment with additional organizational culture (e.g., Sackman, 1991) and organizational culture assessment (e.g., Denison & Mishra, 1995) readings and resources deemed useful by the instructor.

During week 2 students are introduced to the multiple methods (i.e., interviews, surveys, and observations) to be utilized

in this project. Students are asked to modify the interview protocol and the questionnaire to fit the specific organization to be studied. The instructor then reviews both of these data collection tools in a timely manner to ensure that there are no errors or omissions. Note that the interview protocol should not be changed, as all the cultural assessment tools should have been submitted to the instructor's institutional review board for review and approval with final approval by the instructor. Students and instructors might find Babbie's (2010) text *The Practice of Social Research* to be a helpful resource as they complete this step in the research process.

It is important to remind students to complete the human participant online training, which is due in week 3. Failure to complete this training in a timely fashion impinges greatly on the group's ability to complete its work on schedule.

Week 3—Human Participant Protection Training Certification Due

The NIH Office of Extramural Research's Protecting Human Research Participants' Web-based training generates a completion certificate when a student successfully completes the training. All students are required to submit a certificate by the end of week 3.

Week 4—Modified Organizational Culture Survey and Interview Protocol Due

Student teams are required to submit their modified interview protocols and organizational culture surveys (Denison & Mishra, 1995). Previously the students were presented with models of these instruments (see Appendices C and D). The content of these documents was developed from prior students' input and reviewing various textbooks and work from Schein (1992, 1999), Morgan (1989), and Denison and Neale (1994). Revisions made to these protocols are necessary to account for differences in organization function, structure, and language.

Student teams are required to adopt these instruments to permit consistent data collection methodology. The teams are also required to draft a letter of introduction for the cultural survey. Students are allowed to use the template contained in Appendix E as a guide.

It may be necessary at this point to remind students that the protocol and survey should also be approved, if required, by the organization each team is working with. Failure to take this step may affect the timeline for completing this assignment. Based on prior experience with this exercise and speaking anecdotally, most organizational managers like to review the materials to be used to collect data from their employees. Some organizations have also required approval from the Human Resources Management Department or regional management.

Week 5—Complete Organizational Employee Interviews

Students are required to work with the organizational representative to secure names of three to five employees at

different levels (e.g., top-level management, mid-level management, front-line management) of the organization to interview. The employees to be interviewed should be representative of the organization's employees and selected from different areas of the organization. Depending on the size of the student group, it is good experience and practice to have each student (or a pair of students) complete an interview. After the interviewees have been identified, students then make arrangements for the approximately 30- to 40-minute face-to-face interviews in a private, quiet location. Students will read an informed consent statement at the beginning of the organizational culture interview protocol (see Appendix C) to participants prior to their participation in the interview. Students are required to ask permission of the participants if they choose to audiotape the interviews. Care must be taken to ensure that any audiotapes or digital files are safeguarded for confidentiality and retained according to an approved destruction schedule.

Students are required to fully transcribe the three to five employee interviews from the audio recordings. These transcriptions are only submitted with the group's final written report to the instructor to ensure interviewee confidentiality. Transcribing interviews provides students with an appreciation of the effort and time involved in developing verbatim transcripts. Transcribing interviews also provides an opportunity to really listen to and hear what the interviewee has to offer about the organization's culture and to determine the general themes that may develop from the qualitative data. Note that the selected employee interviews can and will very likely occur while data from the organizational culture survey are being collected.

Week 6—Distribute Organizational Culture Survey

The letter of introduction from the organizational representative is attached to the front of the paper-based organizational culture survey (Denison & Mishra, 1995). The survey package, including the letter of introduction and the formal survey, is distributed to employees following a predetermined selection plan, which could include all employees or a sample. It is possible that the letter of introduction might not be used if the survey is distributed in a face-to-face setting. The surveys used in student projects to date have been paper-based as determined by organizational preference and capability. This preference is perhaps due to limited or no e-mail access by all employees. It is possible to set up these surveys as online surveys. The online format might increase the response rate, as participants may perceive greater confidentiality and anonymity, as well as gain a greater sense of flexibility in terms of when the survey can be completed.

Week 7—Collect Organizational Culture Surveys

The completed surveys can be collected in person, via a collection box, or via mail (or via a database if the survey is

conducted online). If the surveys are completed in a face-to-face setting, student group members can personally collect the surveys. Often the surveys are collected via a specially labeled collection box. The collection box should be a tightly sealed corrugated cardboard box with a letter-size slit in the top and wrapped in one sheet of paper to ensure that it is tamper-proof. Students then return to the organization at the end of the collection period to pick up the survey collection box. Alternatively, the surveys can be returned to the student teams in specially addressed business reply envelopes if that is determined to be the desired method to ensure an adequate response rate. Any or all of these data collection methods can be used.

While “there is no agreed-upon standard for a minimum acceptable response rate” (Fowler, 2002, p. 42), the response rates for this assignment generally have ranged from 10 to 22%. Obviously, larger organizations have the potential for more responses; however, the goal is to increase the response rate to provide greater explanatory power to the findings. The more employee voices and the greater the diversity/representativeness of the organization sample, the better the findings will be able to be explained.

Week 8—Input Organizational Culture Survey Data Into Statistical Analysis Package

This step in the assignment provides the instructor with an opportunity to expose students to specialized statistical software packages. As the assignment is currently used, students are required to utilize a statistical software package (e.g., Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS], Minitab, etc.) to analyze the data collected from the employees. While Microsoft Excel could be used to complete this portion of the assignment, specialized statistical software packages perform the analyses much easier. In class the instructor can introduce how to set up a data file, as well as how to input the data from the surveys. SPSS or Minitab tutorials can be made available online or via a learning management system for additional use and practice by the students. As this exercise is best performed in an upper level undergraduate or graduate management course, the students have often had a series of quantitative courses including statistics or quantitative business analysis. This prior experience has been seen to facilitate the understanding of the statistics generated by statistical software packages.

Week 9—Transcribe Organizational Employee Interviews

The three to five interview transcripts are due for submission to the course instructor and inclusion in the final organizational culture analysis. Student groups are asked to complete verbatim transcripts to experience and appreciate transcript transcription. These transcriptions are only submitted with the group’s final written report to the instructor, to ensure interviewee confidentiality.

Week 10—Analyze Organizational Culture Survey Data Set

After the data files are set up, the instructor presents to the students the 12 categories underlying the Denison organizational culture survey. Denison and Mishra’s (1995) 12 themes include: Agreement; Capability Development; Coordination & Integration; Core Values; Creating Change; Customer Focus; Empowerment; Goals & Objectives; Organizational Learning; Strategic Direction & Intent; Team Orientation; and Vision.

The instructor then introduces the students to the organizational culture survey data dictionary (see Appendix F) to explain how several questions contribute to the understanding of each of the twelve themes.

Students are then asked to run descriptive statistics and generate bar charts for each question’s responses in the data set following the cultural survey categories. Students and instructors might find the Greasley (2008) *Quantitative Data Analysis Using SPSS* text to be a helpful resource. As students are required to submit one electronic document for the organizational cultural analysis, students will need to learn how to import the statistical software package-generated charts into a word processing document.

Week 11—Analyze Organizational Employee Interviews

Students are required to “mine” the qualitative data from the employee interviews to ascertain the themes that develop from the employees. The instructor walks the students through how to recognize themes that develop in the interview data that are congruent or incongruent with the 12 themes underlying the Denison organizational culture survey. Students and instructors might find Wodak and Krzyzanowski’s (2008) *Qualitative Discourse Analysis in the Social Sciences* a helpful resource as they work through this step of the research process.

Specifically, the data collected from the interviews are analyzed using the analytic coding method of data analysis discussed in Lofland and Lofland (1995). The qualitative data can be input into Microsoft Word or another word processing program and files or documents can be created for each of the Denison organizational culture survey themes. The data can then be analyzed and coded using various highlighter colors to ascertain the major themes that emerged from the interview data. In subsequent passes through the coded data, the students are to look for emerging secondary themes, patterns, trends, and/or tendencies in the qualitative data. Alternatively, qualitative data analysis software (e.g., ATLAS.ti, Ethnograph) can be used to analyze the interview data.

Week 12—Complete Organizational Unobtrusive Observations

Each group member is required to complete an unobtrusive observation following the Organizational Culture Observation Analysis Guidelines (see Appendix G). The observations are often completed by group members when they come on-site

to perform organizational member interviews. Students often cite observations of the physical facilities, employee attire, and signage.

Specifically, the data collected from the observations are analyzed using the analytic coding method of data analysis described previously (Lofland & Lofland, 1995). The qualitative data can be input into Microsoft Word or another word processing program and files or documents for each of the Denison organizational culture survey themes can be developed. The data are then coded using various highlighter colors to ascertain major themes that emerged from the observation data. In subsequent passes through the coded data, the students are to look for emerging secondary themes, patterns, trends, and/or tendencies in the qualitative data. Alternatively, qualitative data analysis software (e.g., ATLAS.ti, Ethnograph, NVIVO) can be used to analyze the observation data.

Weeks 13 and 14—Draft and Complete Final Organizational Culture Report and Oral Presentation

During this time period, student groups are required to draft the final, binder-clipped organizational culture report following the model provided in the sample table of contents (see Appendix B) and using American Psychological Association (APA) formatting. Student groups are encouraged to work with the course instructor or writing center to make revisions to strengthen the report. The ultimate goal of this process is to develop a near-professional-quality report.

Concurrent with the work being performed on the formal written report, student groups are spending time planning, developing, and creating professional-level presentations from the final written report. This work might include scripting the formal report, creating various materials and images for use in the report, and developing a presentation using a presentation software package.

Week 15—Deliver Oral Presentation and Final Organizational Cultural Report to Organizational Representative(s)

The completed organizational culture analysis is delivered in a 10-minute presentation followed by a 10-minute question-and-answer period. Typically, Microsoft PowerPoint software is used in the delivery of this presentation, but is not required. Use of a PowerPoint presentation reinforces knowledge gained in computer technology/skills courses completed as part of the curriculum. To assist students in the creation of this final presentation, guidelines on how to develop effective PowerPoint slides and presentations are provided via course management software.

All final student presentations are reviewed and critiqued by the instructor prior to the final presentation to the client/organization. Evaluation criteria for the presentation include grammar, mechanics, and spelling; introduction/thesis; organization and analysis; and presentation process, with an

evaluation rubric included in Appendix H. Instructor review and critique is done to ensure that quality presentations are delivered to the organizations studied and to shield the educational institution from any potential liability issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ASSIGNMENT STUDENT FEEDBACK

Overall, the feedback received from approximately 300 graduate and undergraduate students in seven organizational behavior courses has been positive. In terms of specific student feedback, students noted that the organizational culture analysis “assignment was challenging, yet beneficial” and viewed the project as “relevant to everyday situations.” One student indicated that he/she “never knew the difference in organizational culture,” but now has an enhanced understanding of culture and “how organizational culture influences the overall success of an organization and the effects.” Furthermore, students have noted that this “hands-on business-related” assignment “added to theoretical thinking in management,” “showed many new principles and ideas that will be applied in the workplace,” and pushed at least one student to evaluate [his/her] own values and a second to “determine a career.”

Additionally, student comments on the organizational culture assessment have focused on the experience of working in a group. Student feedback in general notes that “the group experience went very well” and indicates that students saw the group experience as a “chance to really ‘dig-in’ to team work” to build “cohesiveness as a team” while “meeting/working closely with a diverse group of people.” One student stated that the project experience created an “open” classroom environment that “prepared me to get along with other people in the class openly.” This sentiment was echoed by a second student, who observed that an outcome of the project for her/him was that it “involved every student in the class.” Students have also seen practical applications of the project experience, as one student noted that the project and process in her/his estimation “prepared me for real life work situations.”

It should be noted that an important and perhaps critical feature of this project is student feedback. As students and classes vary, it is important to view student feedback as a means for evolving, improving and adjusting the organizational cultural analysis methodology and timetable. For example, students in prior iterations of this project commented on the time constraints and tight timeline for completing the project and indicated that “more time [was] needed in group work” and made inquiries into the possibility of having “more group time in class.” Based on this feedback and the instructor’s own reflection, adjustments can be made to fit and adjust the demands of the project. Furthermore, given the breadth of topics and skills addressed in the project (e.g., communication [oral and written], research methods, quantitative and qualitative skills, etc.), instructors can tailor the project to meet their specific course objectives and program needs.

CONCLUSION

As noted previously in this article, despite the fact that organizational culture “arouses a great deal of interest among academics and practitioners” (Smircich, 1983, p. 346) and much has been written about it (Martin, 1992), organizational culture still remains a “vague concept” (Wilson, 1989, p. 92). This project attempts to make the concept of organizational culture less vague and more experiential as students interact with an organization of their choosing and perform a semester-long organizational cultural analysis.

Student groups collaboratively complete this assignment by locating a research site, administering a questionnaire, processing quantitative data using a statistical analysis software package, processing qualitative data using content analysis methodology, developing a formal written report, and making an oral presentation to representatives of the organization under study. Via their firsthand engagement with an organization and the completion of the cultural analysis, students experience and discover the subtleties and nuances of organizational culture and come to a greater understanding of the role and place of culture in organizations and the potential influence it has on their operations and effectiveness.

In addition to the primary goal of increasing student understanding and awareness of organizational culture, the project affords students an opportunity to practice critical and reflective thinking skills, explore and apply quantitative and qualitative research methods, refine and practice written and oral communication skills, and apply knowledge and skills from various software applications. These additional learning opportunities can be shaped and determined by the instructor and the specific needs of the course or program. One of the greatest benefits to the present approach is its flexibility in meeting additional program objectives and providing additional learning experiences and opportunities including group and team work experience, honing of communication skills, and creation of a collaborative, nonthreatening learning environment.

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APPENDIX A: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS ASSURANCE OF LEARNING ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	Fail	Weak	Competent	Advanced	Sophisticated	Measures	Score
	Did not meet project expectations	Limited project accomplishment	Generally met project expectations	Met all project expectations	Exceeded project expectations. Considerable expertise shown	Direct or indirect measurement and/or measurement links	Evaluation assigned to learning objective
	Score = 0	Score = 1	Score = 2	Score = 3	Score = 4		
Conceptualize a complex issue into a coherent, persuasive written or oral statement as a team member.	Develop a well-written report that explains findings, organizes ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justifies a conclusion or recommendation.	Fails to exhibit enthusiasm as a team member. Sometimes fails to prepare for team meetings. Falls behind schedule in assigned tasks by the team.	Contributes to group discussions and follows up with assigned tasks on a timely basis. Studies and understands relevant concepts of the written report.	Shows great interest in learning and assisting the team's success with the written report. Frequently leads efforts and delivers more than required as a team member.		<i>Organizational Culture Assessment Written Report</i>	
Make an effective oral presentation that explains findings, organizes ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justify a conclusion or recommendation.	Fails to exhibit enthusiasm as a team member. Sometimes fails to prepare for team meetings. Falls behind schedule in assigned tasks by the team.	Contributes to group preparation and delivery and follows up with assigned tasks on a timely basis. Studies and understands relevant concepts of the oral presentation.	Shows great interest in learning and assisting the team's success with the oral presentation. Frequently leads efforts and delivers more than required as a team member.			<i>Organizational Culture Assessment Oral Presentation</i>	

(Continued)

APPENDIX A
(Continued)

	Fail Did not meet project expectations	Weak Limited project accomplishment	Competent Generally met project expectations	Advanced Met all project expectations	Sophisticated Exceeded project expectations. Considerable expertise shown	Measures Direct or indirect measurement and/or measurement links	Scores Evaluation assigned to learning objective
	Score = 0	Score = 1	Score = 2	Score = 3	Score = 4		
Acquire and use analytical tools and skills for evaluating information, solving problems and making sound decisions. Synthesize and evaluate the relevance of data.	Lacked an understanding of the nature and usefulness of data.	Minor errors and problems understanding the nature and usefulness of data.	Clear understanding of the nature and usefulness of data.			<i>Interviews and Observations Analyses</i>	
Demonstrate critical and reflective thinking skills in exploring new questions, analyzing complex issues from multiple perspectives, and arriving at reasoned conclusions.	Lacked an understanding of the analysis of complex issues and arriving at conclusions.	Minor errors and problems understanding the analysis of complex issues and arriving at conclusions.	Clear understanding of the analysis of complex issues and arriving at conclusions.			<i>Interviews and Observations Analyses Denison Organizational Culture Survey Analysis</i>	
Acquire and use information technology in decision making. Learn to use information technology.	Lacked an understanding of essential information technology for project.	Minor errors and/or problems in understanding the necessary information technology for project.	Clear understanding of the necessary information technology for project.			<i>Organizational Culture Assessment Written Report Organizational Culture Assessment Oral Presentation</i>	

Apply information technology in analysis and communication.	Lacked an interest in learning to use and/or applying information technology for project.	Minor errors and/or problems in applying the necessary information technology for project.	Clear understanding of the necessary information technology and demonstrated fluency in applying them appropriately.	<i>Organizational Culture Assessment Written Report</i> <i>Organizational Culture Assessment Oral Presentation</i>
Understand the importance of group dynamics in achieving organizational goals and acquire the skills needed for effective teamwork.	Generally not a strong link in the team. Does not try to improve teamwork skills. Makes nominal contributions to team effort. Lacks disciplined focus on the project.	Overcomes weaknesses related to teamwork by working hard and asking good questions. Draws conclusions and translates them to a team member's language.	Strong and hard working team member. Plays a critical role in the team's success. Team members value his/her contributions very highly.	<i>Team Member Effectiveness Evaluation</i> <i>Group Effectiveness Evaluation</i>
Understand the importance of group dynamics in achieving organizational goals.	Lacked an interest in acquiring and/or using the skills needed to work productively in teams.	Minor errors and/or problems in applying the skills needed to work productively in teams.	Clear understanding of the skills needed to work productively in teams and applying them appropriately.	<i>Team Member Effectiveness Evaluation</i> <i>Group Effectiveness Evaluation</i>
Acquire and use the skills needed to work productively in teams.				

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT

Organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions that are considered valid and are taught to new members as the way to perceive, think, and feel in the organization (Schein, 1991). Organizational culture is seen as having three levels, including visible artifacts and creations, testable values, and invisible and even preconscious basic assumptions.

Each work group will work together to research using appropriate data collection methods (e.g., organizational cultural survey; three to five interviews with current employees; organization's place of business observation), analyze, discuss, and write up the findings for a cultural analysis presented as a concise, well-written, three- to five-page maximum report body length, thoroughly proofed professional report with appropriate appendices and a professional presentation. The written report body is to be double-spaced with numbered pages using a 12-point serif font and consistent 1-inch margins following a

standard report format, including a title page, executive summary, reference section, and in text, parenthetical citations using the American Psychological Association (APA) style, as required. Please note that written cultural analyses are to be handed in at the beginning of the class period due. Cultural analyses received after the beginning of the class period in which due will be subject to a letter grade reduction for each day late.

The organizational culture analysis should follow the attached table of contents.

The cultural analysis final report and presentation will be evaluated on (1) the quality of thinking and analysis, clarity of writing, and overall presentation and appearance and (2) group effectiveness and individual contribution as measured through peer review. Additional evaluation criteria for the final report and presentation include grammar, mechanics, and spelling; introduction/thesis; organization and analysis; and overall presentation.

XYZ Organization Organizational Culture Analysis Table of Contents

	<u>Section</u>	<u>Pages</u>
Executive Summary		
Table of Contents		
Introduction		
Cultural Analysis Purpose		
Methodology		
Results		
Mission		
Strategic Direction and Intent		
Goals and Objectives		
Vision		
Consistency		
Core Values		
Agreement		
Coordination and Integration		
Involvement		
Empowerment		
Team Orientation		
Capability Development		
Adaptability		
Creating Change		
Customer Focus		
Organizational Learning		
Study Limitations		
Recommendations		
Conclusion		
Appendix		
Organizational Culture Assessment Questionnaire		
Interview Protocol		
Observations Summary Results		
Interview Summary Results		
Questionnaire Results [Percentile Bar Charts]		

APPENDIX C: XYZ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Informed Consent Statement

We will be asking you a number of questions about your experiences in XYZ Organization. The stories and collected comments that you and others share will be compiled in a cultural analysis report and used for our Organizational Behavior course at ABC University. All comments from this and other interviews will be anonymous. Names will not be attached to any of the stories, suggestions, examples, or comments made.

It would be helpful if you can recall and focus on concrete stories from your past, concrete incidents based on the topics I will be asking you about. It might take a few moments to recall a story—that's fine. Do not feel rushed or pressured to come up with a grand story—there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

We will be taking notes during this interview and also may be tape-recording it with your permission.

1. What is your position with XYZ Organization?
2. How long have you been with XYZ Organization?
3. Does this organization have a mission statement?
 - a. What's in it?
4. Does this organization have clearly stated yearly goals?
 - a. What are they?
 - b. How are they set?
 - c. How are the goals accomplished?
 - d. What criteria are used to determine if the organization has achieved its goals?
5. What is really important in this organization?
6. What three words or phrases would you use to describe this organization's culture?
7. How is the organization's culture taught to new employees?
8. What is this organization's orientation in terms of past, present and future?
 - a. What time units are most relevant to your organization (i.e., hour, day, week, month, quarter, year)?
9. Who gets promoted in this organization?
10. Who fits in and who doesn't fit in this organization?
11. What qualities do the most successful employees in this organization possess?
12. What behaviors get rewarded in this organization?
13. How does this organization recognize employee contributions or accomplishments?
 - a. What are the routine procedures for promotion?
 - b. Are there other means of promotion?
 - c. Are there other, symbolic means of honoring employees?
 - d. Are there positions of power other than rank or seniority in your organization?
14. What is this organization's attitude toward professional and educational advancement?
15. How are sanctions of employees applied?
 - a. What is the formal process?
- b. Is there an informal process? If so, please describe it.
- c. Is the formal process used more or less than the informal process?
16. Please describe the leadership or managerial style in this organization.
17. How are employees addressed in this organization?
18. How does this organization communicate with its employees?
19. How are customers viewed?
20. How are decisions made in this organization?
 - a. Who (i.e., employees or management) makes most of the decisions?
21. Do employees work closely together or work more independently?
22. Are employees encouraged to strictly follow the rules or do whatever is necessary to complete a task?
23. Are employees encouraged to come up with new ideas or suggestions?
 - a. How are employee suggestions viewed?
 - b. Are the employee suggestions used?
24. How does this organization handle conflict or differing opinions?
25. If you used a "family metaphor" to describe your organization, how would you describe it (i.e., traditional, partnership, single parent, orphan, etc.)?
 - a. Are staff members more professional or more collegial?
 - b. Is teamwork encouraged?
26. How are unplanned events handled?
27. If an employee had a personal crisis, would this organization be more concerned about the employee and his or her situation or with the employee being able to continue his or her duties?
28. Is your organization best off if it has the same types of people or if it is diverse?
29. Does this organization have a code of ethics?
 - a. What's in it?
30. What things make it easy or hard for you to do your job?
31. Would you encourage any of your closest friends or relatives to work here?
 - a. Why or why not?
32. Would you be willing to talk to us again if we need a follow up interview?

Thank you for your time.

Interviewer Name: Interview Date: Follow-Up Interview Needed?

APPENDIX D: XYZ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE SURVEY

The organizational culture survey includes questions about your perceptions of organizational and individual concepts. Please respond to all statements honestly with the response that best describes your feelings. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, only statements that best describe your feelings. The goal of this study is to examine themes on an organization-wide basis; however, please do not underestimate the importance of each individual response—your response is important to the success of this study!

Participation in this study is *completely voluntary* and you may choose not to answer any of the questions. Your decision whether or not to participate will *not* affect your current or future relations with **XYZ Organization**. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. Your answers will be kept in the *strictest confidence*; only the prin-

cipal investigators will have access to the completed surveys. *Should you have any questions about the survey, please feel free to call or e-mail research supervisor, Dr. John/Jane Doe, at (123) 456-7890 or jdoe@university.edu.*

When you have completed the questionnaire, please put it in a sealed envelope in the collection box to be picked up by the principal investigators. It is important that your questionnaire be deposited in the collection box by *Insert Day of Week, Month, Day, Year*. Thank you for your assistance.

Organization Workings

These questions focus on *how you think your organization currently functions*. Some questions refer to your “team”; in this case you should think about the unit to which you are assigned. If you are a supervisor/manager, respond to the questions based on the unit you supervise/manage. Please respond to the questions and circle the number indicating your feelings using the following ratings:

7 = Strongly Agree 6 = Agree 5 = Somewhat Agree 4 = Neutral
 3 = Somewhat Disagree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree

1. We are able to meet short-term demands without compromising our long-term.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. This organization encourages innovation and rewards those who take risks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. This organization relies on horizontal control and coordination to get work done, rather than hierarchy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. We have a shared vision of what this organization will be like in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. It is easy to coordinate projects across functional units in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Most employees in this organization are highly involved in their work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. There is a good alignment of goals across levels of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Our approach to doing business is very consistent and predictable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Working in this organization is like being part of a team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. All members of this organization have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Customer comments and recommendations often lead to changes in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. This organization has a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Cooperation and collaboration across functional roles are actively encouraged in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. This organization has a long-term purpose and direction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. This organization is very responsive and changes easily.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. We make certain that the “right hand knows what the left hand is doing.”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Continued)

18. Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. We continuously track our progress against our stated goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. We encourage direct contact with customers by members of our organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. This organization continually adopts new and improved ways to do work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Short-term thinking seldom compromises our long-term vision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Ignoring the core values of this company will get you in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Everyone in this organization believes that s/he can have a positive impact.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Teams are the primary building blocks of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. The capability of people in this organization is viewed as an important source of competitive advantage.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. This organization delegates authority so that people can act on their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. We seldom have trouble reaching agreement on key issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. This organization has a clear strategy for the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Work is sensibly organized in this company so that each person can see the relationship between his/her work and the goals of the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Information is widely shared in this organization so that everyone can get the information s/he needs when it's needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Few things "fall between the cracks" in this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Customer input directly influences our decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. The leaders of this organization set goals that are ambitious, but realistic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. We view failure as an opportunity for learning and improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. This organization continuously invests in the skills of its employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. The leaders in this organization have a long-term orientation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. This organization has a "strong" culture.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. The interests of the final customer seldom get ignored in our decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. It is easy for us to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Different units in this organization often cooperate to create change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Attempts to change this organization seldom meet with resistance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Working with someone from another part of this organization is not like working with someone from a different company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. There is widespread agreement about the goals of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. This organization has an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. The leadership of this organization has "gone on record" about the objectives we are trying to meet.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. People from different organizational units still share a common perspective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. Our organization's strategy is leading other firms to change the way that they compete in the industry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. The people in this organization understand what needs to be done for us to succeed in the long run.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(Continued)

51. Problems seldom arise in this organization because we have the skills necessary to do the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. This organization responds well to competitors and other changes in the external business environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. This company has a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
54. The managers in this company “practice what they preach.”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
55. Decisions in this organization are usually made at the level where the best information is available.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
56. The “bench strength” of this organization is constantly improving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
57. The strategic direction of this organization is clear to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
58. Business planning in our organization is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
59. There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
60. There is clear agreement about the “right” way and the “wrong” way to do things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Demographics

In this last part of the survey are questions about you, your position in the organization, and the organization. This information is being collected to help the principal investigators look at the kinds of similarities and differences that may exist across the organization. Therefore, it is very important that you respond to this section. Again, **your answers are completely confidential.**

1. What is your sex? __Female __Male
2. How old are you? ____years
3. What is the highest educational level you have reached?
 __Some High School __Completed College
 __Completed High School __Some Graduate School
 __Some College __Completed Graduate School
4. How long have you worked for the organization? _____ years
5. Do you work in the central office or in a field office?
 __Central Office __Field Office
6. What level of the organization are you in?
 __Employee—Not a __First Line Supervisor
 Manager/Supervisor __Manager
 __Second Line Supervisor __Top Manager
7. Which **one** of the following **best** describes the type of work that you complete?
 __Inspection __Public Relations
 __Preparation of Procedures __Technical & Professional
 __Interpretation Performance
 __Professional Consultation __Planning
 __Scheduling __Evaluation
 __Research __Personnel Functions
 __Coordination __Negotiations
 __Supervision __Other

8. How many people work in your department? _____

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. It is important that the questionnaire be completed and insert collection instructions by Day of Week, Month, Day, Year.

APPENDIX E: XYZ ORGANIZATION SUPPORT LETTER

Month, Day, Year

Dear Employee:

XYZ Organization has agreed to participate as a site to conduct research on job attitudes in the workplace.

The job attitude survey includes questions about your perceptions of organizational and individual concepts. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, only statements that best describe your feelings. Your responses will be kept **strictly confidential** as no one from *XYZ Organization* will have access to the completed surveys. The goal of this study is to examine themes on an organization-wide basis; however, please do not underestimate the importance of each individual response.

I hope you will take the time to complete the survey. Your input will provide valuable information to assist in learning more about job attitudes in the workplace. Thank you in advance for your participation and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jane/John Doe
 Organizational Contact Title

APPENDIX F: XYZ ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE SURVEY DATA DICTIONARY

Survey statement number	Question text
	Empowerment
7.	Most employees in this organization are highly involved in their work.
24.	Everyone in this organization believes that s/he can have a positive impact.
31.	Information is widely shared in this organization so that everyone can get the information s/he needs when it's needed.
55.	Decisions in this organization are usually made at the level where the best information is available.
58.	Business planning in our organization is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.
	Team Orientation
4.	This organization relies on horizontal control and coordination to get work done, rather than hierarchy.
10.	Working in this organization is like being part of a team.
14.	Cooperation and collaboration across functional roles are actively encouraged in this organization.
25.	Teams are the primary building blocks of this organization.
30.	Work is sensibly organized in this company so that each person can see the relationship between his/her work and the goals of the organization.
	Capability Development
26.	The capability of people in this organization is viewed as an important source of competitive advantage.
27.	This organization delegates authority so that people can act on their own.
36.	This organization continuously invests in the skills of its employees.
51.	Problems seldom arise in this organization because we have the skills necessary to do the job.
56.	The "bench strength" of this organization is constantly improving.
	Core Values
23.	Ignoring the core values of this company will get you in trouble.
46.	This organization has an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.
53.	This company has a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.
54.	The managers in this company "practice what they preach."
59.	There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business.
	Agreement
28.	We seldom have trouble reaching agreement on key issues.
38.	This organization has a "strong" culture.
40.	It is easy for us to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.
42.	When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.
60.	There is clear agreement about the "right" way and the "wrong" way to do things.
	Coordination & Integration
6.	It is easy to coordinate projects across functional units in this organization.
8.	There is a good alignment of goals across levels of this organization.
9.	Our approach to doing business is very consistent and predictable.
44.	Working with someone from another part of this organization is not like working with someone from a different company.
48.	People from different organizational units still share a common perspective.
	Creating Change
16.	This organization is very responsive and changes easily.
21.	This organization continually adopts new and improved ways to do work.
41.	Different units in this organization often cooperate to create change.
43.	Attempts to change this organization seldom meet with resistance.

(Continued)

APPENDIX F
(Continued)

-
52. This organization responds well to competitors and other changes in the external business environment.
- Customer Focus**
11. All members of this organization have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.
12. Customer comments and recommendations often lead to changes in this organization.
20. We encourage direct contact with customers by members of our organization.
33. Customer input directly influences our decisions.
39. The interests of the final customer seldom get ignored in our decisions.
- Organizational Learning**
3. This organization encourages innovation and rewards those who take risks.
17. We make certain that the “right hand knows what the left hand is doing.”
18. Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.
32. Few things “fall between the cracks” in this organization.
35. We view failure as an opportunity for learning and improvement.
- Strategic Direction & Intent**
13. This organization has a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.
15. This organization has a long-term purpose and direction.
29. This organization has a clear strategy for the future.
49. Our organization’s strategy is leading other firms to change the way that they compete in the industry.
57. The strategic direction of this organization is clear to me.
- Goals & Objectives**
19. We continuously track our progress against our stated goals.
34. The leaders of this organization set goals that are ambitious, but realistic.
45. There is widespread agreement about the goals of this organization.
47. The leadership of this organization has “gone on record” about the objectives we are trying to meet.
50. The people in this organization understand what needs to be done for us to succeed in the long run.
- Vision**
1. We are able to meet short-term demands without compromising our long-term.
2. Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees.
5. We have a shared vision of what this organization will be like in the future.
22. Short-term thinking seldom compromises our long-term vision.
37. The leaders in this organization have a long-term orientation.
-

APPENDIX G: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OBSERVATION ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

During the interview and observation on-site visits, note the following:

Characteristics of Organization Employees, Managers, Customers (Individually, Group)

- Gender, age, dress, appearance, ethnicity
- Attitude toward organization, others, self
- Skill and knowledge levels
- Sentiments about commitments, values, changes to be made

Interactions

- Level of participation, interest
- Power relationships, decision-making, current issues
- General climate for working, problem-solving
- Levels of support, cooperation, conflict

Nonverbal Behavior

- Facial expressions, gestures, postures
- Interest and commitment—initial impacts

Physical Surroundings

- Rooms—space, comfort, suitability
- Amenities—beverages, food, etc.
- Working arrangements—functionality, appearance

Write up your observations. Place observations under each of the following 12 themes to support your survey and interview findings.

- Empowerment
- Team Orientation
- Capability Development
- Core Values
- Agreement
- Coordination and Integration
- Creating Change
- Customer Focus
- Organizational Learning
- Strategic Direction & Intent
- Goals & Objectives
- Vision

APPENDIX H: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ANALYSIS PRESENTATION EVALUATION

It is important to also give written feedback in the “comments” column and/or on the back of this form, including your reaction to the presentation, questions that you still have about the topic, and suggestions for how you would improve the presentation. This is generally much more helpful than a point score.

Team Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Team Members _____

Rating scale				
Excellent = 5	Good = 4	Fair = 3	Poor = 2	Terrible = 1

	Comments	Points
Organization		
Introduction is helpful and tells what to expect and focus on		
Main points made clearly		
Presentation logically structured		
Material pertinent to subject (not rambling or excessive)		
Presentation neither too long or too short		
Content		
Clear language—Technical terms explained simply		
Well researched—Presentation uses course concepts to evaluate performance		
Good <i>range</i> of information included (not too obvious or too specialized)		
Clear <i>explanations</i> of main points using data and comparative analysis		
Helpful competitive examples used to illustrate points		
Communication skills		
Interesting and engaging manner		
Appropriate expressions (avoids “um,” “like,” “stuff,” cursing, etc.)		
Did not read excessively from notes		
Professional manner, poise, and posture		
Helpful handouts, visual aids, and/or multimedia		
Questions and discussion		
Sufficient time left for questions and discussion		
Team responded knowledgeably to questions		
Responsive attitude towards questions and comments		
Questions answered appropriately and completely		
Good management of discussion		
Total points:		

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