



The Effect of Organizational Culture on Faculty Performance: An Analytical Study of A Sample of Lecturers at Some Colleges in The Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Received: 5/9/2025

Accepted: 12/10/2025

Published: 1/12/2025



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Abstract:

The research problem of this study is to determine the connection between organizational culture and faculty performance in higher education, specifically, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which consists of the public universities. Using the organizational culture theory and performance management models, the study explores three dimensions of culture, such as cooperation and communication, innovation and development, and appreciation and rewards, and their effects on the performance of the faculty in terms of academics, research, and administration/service. Quantitative approach was adopted through a structured questionnaire that was issued to faculty members working in different fields. The conceptual model of the research involves organizational culture as the independent variable and faculty performance as the dependent variable in the study, and hypotheses have been developed to test the correlations and effects between both variables. The research came to several main conclusions, such as the findings of the revealed that high efficiency and productivity are attained by faculty members who operate in the supportive, cooperative and inventive cultural setting. The research made several recommendations that would not only be theoretical, but also practical, to the policymakers and university administrators to promote supportive organizational cultures that contribute to improved faculty performance.

Keywords: Organizational culture; Faculty performance; Higher education; Kurdistan; Academic management

1. Introduction:

It is a well-known fact that organizational culture is a highly important determinant of institutional effectiveness that dictates organizational behaviors, values, and performance results. Organizational culture significantly influences aspects of higher education, such as teaching, research, and faculty services. Universities are not simply places for knowledge transfer; they are complex entities in which shared values, communication methods, and recognition systems determine the productivity and motivation of academic staff. An organizational culture that promotes teamwork, creativity, and respect can then become a standard of success in institutions. The institutions of higher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are increasingly being challenged to improve performance of their faculties to attain international standards in teaching and research. Although there has been major investment in developing higher education sector, there are still concerns about faculty engagement, the productivity of research and the general quality of academic services. These issues bring to focus the necessity of investigating the role of organizational culture as a tool to enhance the performance of the faculty and the long-term growth of the institution.

The Objectives of the Study, to investigate the overall relationship between organizational culture and the faculty performance within institutions of higher learning, to test how each of the dimensions of organization culture, to be used namely, cooperation and communication, innovation and development, appreciation and rewards, influence faculty performance. This researched work is significant because it can be used to harmonies the organizational culture with the faculty output. When a culture of collaboration, open dialogue, creativity, and appreciation is promoted, the faculty members have an increased chance of showing better academic results, increased research input, and elevated service activities. This alignment is especially important to understand in developing regions, when the institutions are still in the process of their development, and resources might be limited. Despite extensive literature on organizational culture in the West, there is a dearth of empirical studies in Middle Eastern higher education systems with regard to the subject. The Kurdistan Region provides a unique set up in which universities are experiencing a fast change but lacking systematic analysis that interrelates organizational culture with faculty performance. The process of filling this research gap will not only have a theoretical contribution to the field but also offer practical advice to the university leaders. Based on this, the following research objectives are outlined in this study: (1) to investigate the general correlation between organizational culture and faculty performance at higher educational institutions; (2) to determine the relationship between cultural dimensions, namely cooperation and communication, innovation and development, appreciation and rewards, and faculty performance; (3) to identify the influence of organizational culture on the faculty performance, and (4) to evaluate the individual effect of each cultural dimension on academic, research and service performance. Judging by these goals, there are four hypotheses created to check connections between organizational culture and faculty outcomes.

This paper is organized in the following way. Section 1 goes through the relevant literature and formulates the hypotheses of the study. Section 2 describes the research method, data collection, measuring of variables, and the research model. The analysis results are reported in Section 3 and the discussions of the results in context of existing literature and implication in practice are discussed in Section 4. Lastly, Section 5 is used to conclude the study with a summary of what was done, the limitations, and future research.

2. Literature review and Hypothesis Development:

2.1. Theoretical Foundations: Organizational Culture and Performance:

Organizational culture- a set of values, beliefs, and norms is the critical factor which determines organizational performance. Recent empirical research published in open access emphasizes that the role of culture is indirect and has been shown to operate through mediating factors of leadership behavior, motivation and communication. As an example, (Jameel, 2022) examined

telecommunication companies in Erbil and discovered that the organizational culture had a positive impact on job performance, and organizational commitment mediated that impact.

In the same way, (Bukhari & Mehmood, 2022) analyzed hotel performance against organization culture, structure, and strategy. They found that the direct influence of organizational culture on the organizational performance is large, and their finding partially supported the influence of effective organizational communication as one of the mediators (Bukhari & Mehmood, 2022). This highlights the importance of the internal communication channels in the transfer of the cultural influence.

More supporting the mediating effect of the leadership and the culture, (Nguyen et al., 2025) examined manufacturing organizations in Kurdistan and revealed that organizational culture intermediates the connection between the leadership styles (transformational & supportive) and employee engagement. Although the mediation was small in terms of transformational leadership and moderate in terms of supportive leadership, the results confirm the important role of culture in promoting engagement as a major aspect of performance.

These studies demonstrate that organizational culture does not lead to improved performance alone. Rather, its impact depends on other mechanisms such as organizational commitment, communication, and participation, which are enhanced by effective leadership. This is consistent with theoretical frameworks that view culture as a driving force behind internal processes, which in turn influence performance. Therefore, in this study, organizational culture is not an end, but rather a motivating factor that improves performance through intermediary factors.

2.2. Global and Regional Studies (2019–2024):

New literature highlights that the organizational culture remains a major factor in institutional performance in a wide range of settings around the world. To illustrate the point, (Alves et al., 2025) have studied the European context of higher education and workplaces, stating that collaborative and development cultures were more effective in promoting health and the institutional performance of the academic environment of institutions. In a similar manner, (Wiese et al., n.d.-a) confirmed the interconnection of cultural adaptability and performance in the organization, and showed that developmental cultures contribute greatly to the uptake of advanced digital technologies in higher educational institutions and industries.

In the Middle East, research on interrelation between governance, culture, and performance in higher education is growing. The results of the study carried out by (Abdulkhaliq et al., 2024) revealed that an inspirational organizational culture at the level of the Kurdistan universities in privacy enhanced strategic agility and institutional responsiveness. Similarly, (Salman Khudhair et al., 2021) has also affirmed that organizational culture serves as an intermediary between justice based management practices and faculty performance in Iraqi universities, where cultural alignment has the potential to enhance the efficiency of the reward and compensation mechanisms.

On a more regional level, (Ahmed et al., 2024) conducted a survey of the scholars in all the public universities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, whereby cultural and institutional barriers were found to have a significant influence on the research productivity and faculty motivation. their results are similar to the position of (Awashreh, n.d.), who believed that academic empowerment of the staff of the Arab higher educational institutions is impossible without deconstructing the cultural impediments to the sharing of knowledge. On the same note, (Jamal & Hussein, n.d.) revealed that the more successful universities in Palestine had entrepreneurial organizational cultures in promoting innovation and institutional resilience.

These perspectives are also enhanced by international comparative perspectives. Speaking of which, (Amin, 2024) have observed that educational institutions of the Middle East have been struggling with similar issues of integrating quality assurance practices into the existing cultural frameworks, which highlights the significance of the organizational culture on the regional scale.

(Jafar & Eskander, 2024) also emphasized the social aspect of institutional culture in liberal arts universities of Kurdistan and indicated that cultural orientations played an important role in the faculty engagement and community integration.

Taken together, these international and regional studies between 2019 and 2024 confirm that organizational culture is not a performance driver only, but rather a contextual determinant of organizational performance caused by governance, resources, and socio-political conditions. However, in the Middle East and the Kurdistan Region in particular, research focus on faculty performance is still sparse, so more specific studies like the current one can be conducted.

2.3 Cultural Dimensions: Cooperation & Communication; Innovation & Development; Appreciation & Rewards

a. Cooperation & Communication: Recent evidence is showing the importance of cooperation and open communication as key elements involved in the promotion of effective organizational cultures within the higher education context. The study by (Osman & Yatam, 2024) showed that the presence of cooperative and transparent communication frameworks in the Gulf universities reinforced the trust and the organization citizenship behavior, which, in the end, improved the faculty performance. These results confirm that communication is a mechanism of culture as well as a performance facilitator.

b. Innovation & Development: The cultures of innovation and development have become critical sources of flexibility in the fast-evolving educational settings. It has been proven by (Wiese et al., n.d.-b) that developmental cultures directly determine the willingness of universities to adopt digital technologies and demonstrated that adaptability and continuous learning were key factors of institutional resilience. Similarly, (Jamal & Hussein, n.d.) documented that institutions of higher learning in Palestine that developed entrepreneurial and innovative culture realized better results in organizational entrepreneurship and transfer of knowledge. These results highlight the importance of innovation-oriented cultures in achieving an ability of the institutions to not only react to external forces but also increase faculty involvement in research and teaching.

c. Appreciation & Rewards: Cultural elements such as recognition, appreciation, and reward systems are key elements that influence the performance of the faculty and are directly related to their motivation. (Salman Khudhair et al., 2021) affirmed that organizational justice and just payment policies enhanced the performance of the faculty in Iraqi universities when the culture of appreciation is strongly upheld. According to a study by (Ahmed et al., 2024), the recognition and reward mechanisms for scientific research in public universities in the Kurdistan Region contributed to motivating faculty members and significantly increasing their research production. Together, these studies portray that reward-based cultural practices help to promote commitment, turnover intentions, and a longer-term academic performance in the resource-limited higher education systems. Collectively, these cultural dimensions, including cooperation and communication, innovation and development and appreciation and rewards, are the pillars of efficient organizational cultures within the field of higher education. They develop a culture in which faculty feel inspired, creative and involved to improve the institutions overall performance.

2.4. The hypothetical research model:

First Hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between organizational culture and faculty performance at the 0.05 significance level.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant correlation between each dimension of organizational culture (cooperation & communication, innovation & development, appreciation & rewards) and faculty performance at the 0.05 significance level.

Third Hypothesis: Organizational culture has a significant positive impact on faculty performance at the 0.05 significance level.

Fourth Hypothesis: Each dimension of organizational culture has a significant positive impact on faculty performance at the 0.05 significance level.

3. Research Methodology:

The analysis of the results was based on the descriptive and analytical research method in which data were collected through the completion of a questionnaire in the target sample of teachers in the University of Kurdistan Region-Iraq with the purpose of retrieving the results:

A. Methods Used: qualitative data analysis using SPSS program to analyze questionnaires and test hypotheses.

B. Research Community & sample: The number of individuals in the research community is (10,000) lecturers in (16) public and (17) private universities in the Kurdistan Region - Iraq, but (484) participants and respondents randomly in the questionnaire form, Of these, (396) participated in public universities and (88) in private universities.

C. Reliability Statistics for Independent and Dependent Variables

Reliability Statistics for Independent and dependent variables show in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Culture on Faculty

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|---|------------------|-----------------|
| Organizational Culture (Independent Variable) | 0.89 | 15 |
| Faculty Performance (Dependent Variable) | 0.823 | 15 |

Source: Prepared by researcher

Reliability Statistics that were carried out show that independent and dependent variables had good internal stability. The 15-item measure of organizational culture demonstrated an alpha value of Cronbach of 0.890 which was good reliability. The performance of the faculty which is also assessed using 15 items, an alpha of Cronbach of 0.823 which is a good measure of reliability.

D. Research Design: Quantitative.

E. Data Collection: This study relied on a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, which was distributed to faculty members at 33 universities located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. A total of 484 complete and valid responses were collected using Google Forms.

F. Measurement of Variables: Independent variable (organizational culture, dimensions' 3), Dependent variable (faculty performance, dimensions' 3), use to by Likert scale fives.

G. Analytical Approach: Descriptive statistics, correlation regression, hypothesis testing

H. Alternative Methods Considered: Qualitative interviews, quantitative and qualitative methodology.

I. Research Model:

Relations between the variables of study and the work environment under study have been indicated using the Organizational Culture as an independent variable and Faculty Performance as dependent variable as indicated in Figure No. (1), to show how far the two variables relate to each other and the relationship of the two variables to the work environment under discussion.

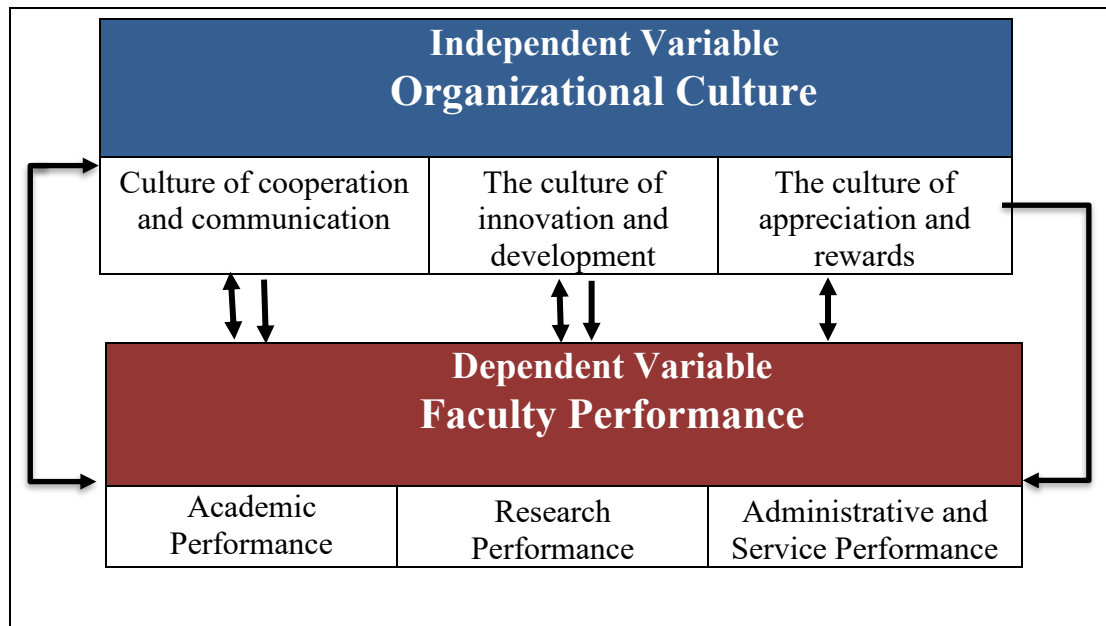


Figure1: The hypothetical diagram of the research

Source: Prepared by researcher

4. Results:

Based on a quantitative approach, the study conducted a comprehensive analysis of data characteristics to assess the impact of organizational culture on faculty performance at higher education institutions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Of the 490 questionnaires distributed to the research sample, 486 valid questionnaires were collected. The cleaning process rendered (484) valid records suitable for analysis. Multiple statistical features in SPSS allowed the evaluation of participant opinions together with the analysis of key variable relationships. The study relied on multiple statistical methodologies consisting of descriptive statistics which employed mean and standard deviation calculations together with reliability testing measured by Cronbach's alpha resulted in correlation analysis relying on Pearson's correlation coefficient followed by linear regression. Each response was measured based on a five-point Likert scale which participants used.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic information gathered for this study Organizational Culture on Faculty Performance in Higher Education within universities appears in Table 2.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

| Variable | Category | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gender | Male | 316 | 65.3 |
| | Female | 168 | 34.7 |
| Age | Under 30 | 8 | 1.7 |
| | 30–39 | 100 | 20.7 |
| | 40–49 | 240 | 49.6 |
| | 50 and above | 136 | 28.1 |
| Academic Rank | Assistant Lecturer | 116 | 24 |
| | Lecturer | 128 | 26.4 |
| | Assistant Professor | 172 | 35.5 |
| | Professor | 68 | 14 |
| Years of Experience in Academia | Less than 5 years | 56 | 11.6 |
| | 5–10 years | 76 | 15.7 |
| | 11–15 years | 112 | 23.1 |
| | More than 15 years | 240 | 49.6 |
| Type of University | Public | 468 | 96.7 |
| | Private | 16 | 3.3 |
| Total | | 484 | 100.0 |

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Table 2 demonstrates that most of them were male (65.3%), females were 34.7%. In terms of age, the majority of surveyed individuals belonged to the 40-49 years (49.6%), 50 and above (28.1%), had passed the age of 30-39 (20.7%), and only a few had passed the age of less than 30 (1.7%). The assistant lecturers (24%), the largest population of 35.5% assistants followed by 26.4 lecturers, and 14% professors were the ones that added up to 100 percent, as far as the academic ranking is concerned. Approximately half (49.6) of the academic experience had about 15 years (15-16), 11-15 years (23.1), 5-10 years (15.7) and less than 5 years (11.6). Lastly, high percentage of the respondents was also linked to the public universities (96.7%), and only 3.3% were at the private universities.

Correlation Between Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance

The Correlation Between Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance appears in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Between Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance

| Variables | | Organizational Culture | Faculty Performance |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Organizational Culture | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .301** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 |
| | N | 484 | 484 |
| Faculty Performance | Pearson Correlation | .301** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | |
| | N | 484 | 484 |

Source: Prepared by the researchers

According to the results in Table 3, overall organizational culture and the faculty performance are statistically correlated positively ($r = 0.301$, $p < 0.01$) with 484 respondents. This means that the better the organizational culture, the better is the faculty performance, which proves the first hypothesis (H1).

Correlations Between Dimensions of Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance

The Correlations Between Dimensions of Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance appears in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlations Between Dimensions of Organizational Culture and Faculty Performance

| Variables | | Culture of cooperation and communication | The culture of innovation and development | The culture of appreciation and rewards | Faculty Performance |
|---|---------------------|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Culture of cooperation and communication | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .648** | .475** | .275** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | 484 | 484 | 484 | 484 |
| The culture of innovation and development | Pearson Correlation | .648** | 1 | .651** | .273** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | 484 | 484 | 484 | 484 |
| The culture of appreciation and rewards | Pearson Correlation | .475** | .651** | 1 | .226** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | | 0.000 |
| | N | 484 | 484 | 484 | 484 |
| Faculty Performance | Pearson Correlation | .275** | .273** | .226** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | |
| | N | 484 | 484 | 484 | 484 |

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Table 4 indicates that culture of cooperation and communication ($r = 0.275$, $p < 0.01$), the culture of innovation and development ($r = 0.273$, $p < 0.01$), the culture of appreciation and rewards ($r = 0.226$, $p < 0.01$) and others exhibited significantly and positively correlated with culture at the level of 0.01. The second hypothesis H2 was supported.

Regression Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Culture on Faculty Performance

Regression Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Culture on Faculty Performance appears in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Analysis of the Impact of Organizational Culture on Faculty Performance

| Predictor | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. | F | Sig. | R Square |
|------------------------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|----------|
| (Constant) | 3.171 | 0.098 | — | 32.442 | 0.000 | 48.164 | 0.000 | 0.091 |
| Organizational Culture | 0.218 | 0.031 | 0.301 | 6.94 | 0.000 | | | |

Source: Prepared by the researchers

Table 5 revealed that there is a significant positive influence of organizational culture on faculty performance. The unstandardized coefficient of organizational culture = 0.218 (se = 0.031) and the standardized coefficient (beta) = 0.301 with $T = 6.94$ and $p = 0.001$. The overall model was statistically significant ($f = 48,164$, $p < 0.001$) and r square 0.091. The findings confirm the third hypothesis (H3) according to which organizational culture is a significantly positive influence on faculty performance.

Regression Analysis of the Individual Effects of Organizational Culture Dimensions on Faculty Performance

Regression Analysis of the Individual Effects of Organizational Culture Dimensions on Faculty Performance appears in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression Analysis of the Individual Effects of Organizational Culture Dimensions on Faculty Performance

| Predictor | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. | F | Sig. | R Square |
|---|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|----------|
| (Constant) | 3.245 | 0.096 | - | 33.773 | 0.000 | 39.516 | 0.000 | 0.076 |
| Culture of cooperation and communication | 0.180 | 0.029 | 0.275 | 6.286 | 0.000 | | | |
| (Constant) | 3.342 | 0.082 | | 40.805 | 0.000 | 38.688 | 0.000 | 0.074 |
| The culture of innovation and development | 0.165 | 0.027 | 0.273 | 6.220 | 0.000 | | | |
| (Constant) | 3.448 | 0.079 | | 43.826 | 0.000 | 25.892 | 0.000 | 0.051 |
| The culture of appreciation and rewards | 0.135 | 0.027 | 0.226 | 5.088 | 0.000 | | | |

Source: Prepared by the researchers

The three cultural dimensions as shown in Table 6 have an overall significant and positive impact on the performance of the faculty. The most significant effect ($B = 0.180$, $t = 6.286$, $p < 0.001$), innovation and development culture ($B = 0.165$, $t = 6.220$, $p < 0.001$), culture of appreciation and rewards ($B = 0.135$, $t = 5.088$, $p < 0.001$), and the culture of collaboration and communication are reflected. The findings highlight the importance of collaboration, innovation, and recognition in organizational culture in enhancing the performance of the faculty, and the most powerful factors that come out are collaboration and innovation. These results are in favor of the third hypothesis (H3).

5. Discussion of Results:

The paper at hand has explored how organizational culture plays in designing the performance of the faculty in institutions of higher learning. The results are clear and meaningful, as they indicate that the organizational culture faculty plays a positive role in efficiency and prove the idea that the aspect of institutional value, criteria, and practice play a significant role in the performance of academic staff. It is also correlated with the earlier research that stresses that the level of motivation, engagement, and overall productivity of the employees is highly dependent on the quality of the organizational culture (Iskamto, 2023).

Critical assessment of the size of the organizational culture implies that teamwork and communication, creativity and growth and appreciation and acknowledgment are especially essential to the achievement of the high standard performance of the faculty. These aspects show that there was a wide realization that the collaborative, creative, and recognition oriented culture does not only reinforce mutual conditions but also makes the working group in academics more active and prolific. The above view is supported by past researches, which indicate that open communication and team-based atmosphere enhance knowledge and teaching effectiveness (Zha et al., 2025). On the same note, research and development of novel practices and institutional support of teacher development has shown to boost faculty motivation and flexibility in an

evolving higher education context (Alkhodary, 2023). Regression analysis indicated that all the dimensions of organizational culture positively influenced the faculty performance with the strongest effect due to the culture of collaboration and communication. This observation is consistent with what the research studies have reported about the importance of the identified affiliated work environment that supports the involvement and performance of the staff. As an illustration, (Salamah Ali, 2021) study has revealed that organizational culture transparency enhances competition among the faculty members and this enhances their performance.

These findings demonstrate that organizational culture directly impacts performance. A culture of collaboration and interaction helps faculty members exchange and expand ideas, fostering a sense of belonging, which is critical in academic settings. Together, these mechanisms form what organizational theorists call the "soft infrastructure" that supports excellent long-term performance outcomes (N. P. Nguyen et al., 2023).

Even though the findings highlight the significance of the organizational culture, they also indicate that the Faculty of Culture is not the only determinant. The opportunity to design the results is also determined by the other factors like leadership style, workload management, business development and institution resources. Past research, such as that, has demonstrated that transformational leadership may magnify the beneficial impact of organizational culture in performance, and heavy administrative load can also undermine robust cultural practice (N. P. Nguyen et al., 2023). This implies that organizational culture is not to be considered as an independent element of institutional assistance but a component of the entire system.

In practical terms, it was concluded that the development and sustenance of a positive culture that facilitates cooperation, innovations, and appreciation should be the priority of the leaders of higher education. Institutions can reinforce a positive culture to the benefit of both the faculty members and the students by investing in faculty development programs, promoting participation decisions and clear-reward systems.

Also, in light of the ongoing globalization of higher education, strong organizational culture may be cultivated to enable the institution to be competitive and appealing to faculty and students (Ghundol & Muthanna, 2022).

Lastly, this research confirms the fact that the organizational culture plays an important role towards performance. Evidence to support this assertion is that by encouraging collaboration, creativity, and appreciation of efforts it is possible to design a favorable educational environment that boosts the participation, satisfaction and performance of the faculty. Simultaneously, the conclusions note that further studies of other factors, which work together with culture to determine performance, are necessary. In the future, the difference between culture, leadership and institutional resources can be identified to allow further studies to give a broad view of the efficiency of the faculty in higher education.

6. Conclusion:

This research affirms that organizational culture is significant in the establishment of the performance of the faculty in higher education. The findings showed that members of the faculty that operate within the auxiliary, collaborative, and innovative cultural setting attain elevated degrees of efficiency and productivity. The same was true of study, collaboration and communication, innovation and development of cultural dimensions, innovation and development, and prices: their contribution was significant but not equally powerful. These results confirm that organizational culture is not merely a secondary factor, but rather a direct driver of faculty performance. The study indicates that a strong and organized organizational culture enhances alignment between individual efforts and the organization's goals, leading to increased motivation, commitment, and improved learning. Although the impact of gratitude and rewards was limited compared to other aspects, their positive impact highlights the importance of appreciation in fostering teamwork and innovation.

Declarations:**Conflicts of Interest**

The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors' Declaration

We hereby confirm that all the figures and tables in the manuscript are our own. Besides, the figures and images that are not ours have been permitted for republication and are attached to the manuscript.

Ethical Clearance

The research was approved by the Local Ethical Committee at the University.

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