

Examination of Organisational Culture: Case Study of an
Irish SME

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A Research Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
for the Degree of Masters in Management of the National
College of Ireland.

National College of Ireland

2016

Abstract

This research examines how organisational culture has changed over a two-year period in an Irish SME. The culture within the SME is reviewed in the context of the four divisions operating within it. The concept of organisational culture is explored in the literature review in order to define the dimensions that culture can be measured against. For the purpose of this research, the Denison Organisational Culture Survey is used to define the culture of the SME in 2014. To establish what changes, if any, have occurred over a two-year period, both quantitative and qualitative research is carried out in 2016. The results of the research indicate that culture did indeed change over time and that the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods gave a more holistic view of the culture. Furthermore, the results of the research indicate that whilst progress has been made in the SME in reframing its culture, it will continue to change overtime as it is an ever evolving process which involves input from everyone to make it a success.

Statement

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Master of Science in Management is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Philip McGovern for his guidance and assistance in getting this research completed.

My fellow classmates that shared their information and inspirations with me for the last two years, I wish them all the best for their futures.

My colleagues and friends at work, for their understanding and indeed their support for without it this research would not have been possible.

My family and friends and for their continued support over the last 2 years.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Organisational culture is an important part of how organisations operate. This research focuses on the changing culture in an Irish SME over a two-year period. To ensure anonymity the name of the company has not been included in the research, it is only ever referred to as Company X. Company X has had and continues to undergo a culture change. A new strategy was launched by Company X in 2016 and the research aims to find what impact, if any, this has had on the culture.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The overall purpose of any research is to ascertain the answers to questions, through the application of various methodologies, that are currently unanswered (Kothari, 2004). The main objective of the research is to find out “has the culture in Company X, an Irish SME, changed over time?” in order to answer this the following research sub-objective have been formulated:

- What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
- What culture exists in the organisation in 2016?
- How has the culture changed since 2014?

1.3 Overview of the Chapters

Following the introduction, Chapter two reviews the literature on the dimensions of organisational culture and takes into account various academic views of this including Hofstede (1991), Handy (2000), Schein (2004), and Denison Organisational Culture Survey (DOCS) model first used by Denison in the 1980’s. The role of culture within organisations is examined whilst also reviewing changing culture in an organisation. As the changing of culture can have an impact on the performance of a company its role in strategy is also reviewed. taking into account the changing culture

Chapter three describes the conceptual framework used by the researcher to carry out this research. The question being addressed by this research is “How has Organisational Culture in an Irish SME changed over time?” What is known from the literature is that there are various views on what organisational culture is (Lundberg, 1990; Hofstede, 1991; Handy, 2000; Schein, 2006; Denison, 2009; Muscalu, 2014) and as a result there are many different models used to define culture (Hofstede, 1991; Handy, 2000; Schein, 2006; Denison, 2009). In order to identify how has the culture changed in the organisation, the conceptual framework takes into account what the culture was and what the culture is. The use of the DOCS carried out by Company X in 2014 is used to define what the culture was in 2014 and follow up surveys and face-to-face interviews are completed by the researcher in 2016.

Chapter four describes the methodology used in this research. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies are compared and contrasted in order to ascertain the most appropriate approach for this research. The use of both quantitative and qualitative research is identified as appropriate and an explanation as to why this is is provided. Details of the both research methods are given within the chapter. The approach was taken to give a holistic view of the culture in the company (Johnson, 2012). Identification of the DOCS as the quantitative is explained along with the semi-structured interviews. The limitations of the approach taken are highlighted within the chapter also.

Chapter five identifies the findings of the DOCS in 2014, the outcome of the 2016 questionnaires and the face-face interviews from 2016 are illustrated in this chapter. The data from the DOCS gives a baseline for what culture existed in the company in 2014. A follow up questionnaire was issued to nine employees of Company X in order to ascertain if changes had occurred since 2014. For the purpose of the research, the company was divided into four divisions: Managers - Senior Managers in Company X based Head Office; On-site Employees - Employees working in Company X Head Office; Off-site Employees Client site (C) - Employees based on a client’s site 365

days/year and Off-site Employees Mobile (M) – Employees who work remotely and carry out audits on various client's sites. The findings review the culture within the four divisions. To ensure anonymity names of the nine employees have not been included in the research. In line with the DOCS model, the research reviews the culture in Company X in the context of the four key traits of the model: Mission, Consistency, Adaptability and Involvement.

Chapter six reviews the outcome of the research findings and discusses these in the context of the literature. The findings indicate that there are four different cultures present in Company X. Furthermore, communication and consistency of communication were found to be lacking. Management and employees of Company X are all aware that there is a new strategy for the organisation but following the qualitative and quantitative research it is clear that not everyone is aware of what the revised strategy is. However, following the qualitative research employees noted that there were changes made at organisational level to improve culture.

Chapter seven concludes the findings of the research. It was found that there is a clear difference in the culture for each division in 2014 and that whilst a change in culture occurred, the existence of one consistent culture across the four divisions was not found. Also, the one consistency observed was the inconsistency in culture across the four divisions in 2016. Interviewees noted changes at organisational level that have had a positive impact on culture however, the lack of communication and consistency were also indicated with a lack of knowledge of the organisational values and the strategy being noted.

Furthermore, the findings from 2014 and 2016 indicate that there is an understating of the importance of employees in gaining competitive advantage but that the company does not reward this. The chapter also identifies further areas of research and makes recommendations for the company. It is noted that there is a lack of research on organisational culture in SMEs in Ireland and further research could be carried out on this.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

Towards the end of the 1970's and into the early 1980's, the term organisational culture was introduced as part of organisational analysis. By the 1990's it was recognised as one of the most important elements for organisational success (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). However, despite being a recognised term for over four decades, there is no single definition of the term organisational culture; for this reason, various definitions of culture in the context of the organisation are reviewed as part of this research.

Kummerow, Ying & Kirby (2014) identify that academics have different views on what organisational culture is and the various aspects associated with it. This is in line with the views of many researchers and professionals (Line, 1999; Handy, 2000; Schein, 2006; Mullins, 2007; Sanford, 2010; Denison, 2013) who have each identified varying definitions and models of cultures. In order to understand what is meant by organisational culture, in the context of this research, it is important to first review these varying definitions.

According to Mullins (2007 p. 565) the internal culture of the organisation can be seen by many as “*how things are done around here*” which is similar to the view of Jacques (1951) but his definition was more comprehensive. Jacques (1951) identified organisational culture as:

“The customary or traditional ways of thinking and doing things, which are shared to a greater or lesser extent by all members of the organization and which new members must learn and at least partially accept in order to be accepted into the service of the firm”. (Jacques, 1951, p. 251)

Similarly, Schein (2006) defined culture as:

“A pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group has 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 those problems.” (Schein, 2006, p. 17)

As identified by Schein (2006), for the researcher looking at culture in different organisations there is a challenge as *“different organizations will have different paradigms with different core assumptions”* Schein (2006, p. 21). According to Line (1999), all organisations will have their own culture even if they don't recognise it and this culture plays a major role in how everyone in the organisation behaves. Alvesson (2002) argues that culture is important in order to understand behaviour in an organisation and this culture is not just in the mind of the individuals but is a collective of groups of people's thoughts and attitudes.

Muscalua (2014) notes there is a link between culture and behaviour as he identifies it as one of three key elements: beliefs, behaviours and attitudes which is similar to the views of Handy (2000), Schein (2004) and Denison (2013). Similarly, French & Bell (1999) note that culture is the foundation for behaviour in any organisation.

Reviewing the culture in any organisation is important but Stanford (2010) identifies that unless there is a clearly expressed, well understood and good reason for attempting to measure the organisation's culture it is pointless to do so.

The author's research will review the culture in an Irish SME, hereafter referred to as Company X, for the purpose of:

1. What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
2. What culture exists in the organisation in 2016?

3. How has the culture changed since 2014?
4. What steps were taken to reframe the culture
5. Making recommendations for future culture improvements

In 2014, Company X completed the Denison Organisational Culture Survey (DOCS) in 2014 and a sufficient period of time has elapsed to allow for a full investigation into the culture changes that have occurred. Many academics and researchers such as Jacques (1951), Alvesson et al. (2015) note that organisational culture undergoes continuous change depending on the various influences and new ideas that are brought to the organisation by its employees and management.

Analysis will be carried out on how the cultural change has occurred for Company X and to ascertain if these changes were as a result of conscious or unconscious organisational actions. Recommendations for future actions are also made by the researcher.

2.2 What is Organisational Culture

There is no one clear definition of what organisational culture is. Alvesson (2002) sees organisational culture as one of the major issues in academic research and education as well as in management practices. Alvesson (2002) believes that this is due to culture being central to all aspects of an organisations life. Lundberg (1990) is also of a similar view as he notes that in order to manage change in an organisation that culture will be a key determining factor in deciding what can be done.

The initiation of culture change in any organisation can be a challenge (Denning, 2011; Guidroz, Luce and Denison, 2010). Furthermore, culture change often happens in conjunction with other organisational changes e.g. leadership, strategy, planning. Guidroz et al. (2010) note that changing culture in any organisation can be a challenge especially if other changes are also being made within the organisation. In order to ensure success, coordination, collaboration and cooperation from employees is key.

Guidroz et al. (2010) similar to Denison et al. (2012) note that communication is an important factor for the success of culture change in the organisation and all employees must be kept informed of what is happening. By involving employees at an early stage the success of culture change can be achieved. The success of any organisation can be hindered by its culture. This was identified in a 2010 study by Cranfield University (Supply Chain Strategy in the Boardroom) of 181 organisations where many barriers to success were identified but one of the main ones was the organisation's culture. (Cranfield University School of Management, 2010)

Despite the recognised importance of culture in organisations, researchers such as Schein (2006) have recognised that organisational culture only became part of management vocabulary in the 1980s following the publication of *'In Search of Excellence'* by Peters and Waterman (1982). Since then there have been developments in the area of organisational culture. Schein (2006) indicates that there were many arguments on how it should be defined, measured and if it would be useful as a construct theory or as a method of comparing organisational performance (Denison, Hooijberg, Lane & Lief, 2012).

2.3 Dimensions of Organisational Culture

Cacciattolo (2014) was of the view that organisations will have various sub-cultures rather than one overriding culture and these may overlap and appear to conflict with each other. Indeed, Golea and Balogh (2015) are in agreement with Cacciattolo as well as Jacques (1951) and Schein (2006) they say:

“Organisational culture is made up of essential elements such as the set of beliefs, values and behavioural norms which stand for the main foundation regarding employees' perception on what happens within the organization, what is wanted and accepted and what may pose a threat.” (Golea & Balogh, 2015, p. 104)

2.3.1 Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture

In order to understand the elements that make up organisational culture as referenced by Golea et al. (2015), there must be a method to analyse them. Academics have designed various tools to analyse the dimensions of organisational culture over the decades. According to Geert Hofstede's (1991), the various cultural dimensions include Power Distance; Uncertainty Avoidance; Individualism vs. Collectivism and Masculinity vs. Femininity. Table 2.1 illustrates the purpose of each:

Cultural Dimension	Details
Power Distance	the extent to which differences regarding power levels are present within an organisation
Uncertainty Avoidance	the extent to which the organisation accepts uncertainty and risk
Individualism vs. Collectivism	refers to the degree to which the members of an organisation act for themselves or as part of the group
Masculinity vs. Femininity	Refers to the values which are traditionally associated with women and men respectively

(Golea & Balogh, 2015, p. 104)

Table 2.1: Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture

2.3.2 Handy's Categories of Culture

Handy (2000) identifies that there are four types of organisational culture and take into account the type of structure that exists within the organisation. These are illustrated in Table 2.2 overleaf.

Culture Category	Details
Power Culture	According to Handy (2000), in some organisations, the power remains in the hands of a few and whilst these decision makers enjoys varying privileges in the organisation employees are not afforded the same.
Task Culture	This category is associated with an organisation that forms teams to problem solve and get the job done. Generally, every team member should contribute equally as the most appropriate resources are selected to work on the task. Key to accomplishing the task is teamwork so where that fails, so does the task.
Person Culture	This organisational culture type can be problematic as the employee feels that he/she is more important than the organisation. With this type of culture an organisation will suffer as the employee is not concerned about the needs/expectations of the organisation.
Role culture	This culture type bases its approach on defining the role/job to be done and not around personalities. It assumes logic but is often associated with bureaucracy as those with power stay at the top.

Table 2.2: Handy’s Categories of Culture

2.3.2.1 Power Culture

As illustrated, Handy (2000) is of the view that power in some organisations remains in the hands of a few and that those operating at the higher level of power have more privileges than others in the organisation meaning there isn’t a level playing field for all. However, not all organisations recognise this power culture. As noted by Kummerow, Ying & Kirby (2014) both power and politics can be underplayed in many organisations when looking at culture.

2.3.2.2 Task Culture

Handy (2000) notes that some organisations have a task culture where every team member should contribute equally to get the task completed – in this culture environment teamwork is important. According to Ahmed, Siantonas & Siantonas (2008) teams have become an obsession for managers, who are now striving to set up efficient teamwork procedures in their organisations.

2.3.2.3 Person Culture

In contrast to the task culture where teamwork is important, organisations can have a person culture where the employee feels that he/she is more important than the organisation. Vincent and Manos (2012) detail that culture is about shared and common principles, practices, and behaviours that will ultimately determine outcome - if this is lacking due to a person centred culture the success of the organisation will be affected.

2.3.3.4 Role Culture

Handy (2000) notes role culture as the final category of culture. This culture type bases its approach on defining the job that needs to be done and not around personal. It assumes logic but has been associated with bureaucracy as those with power stay at the top. Muscalu (2004) states that organisations require specific roles of social actors involved in it, namely compliance behaviours that cannot be understood and explained outside it.

2.3.3 Schein's Categories of Culture

Similar to Handy (2000), Schein (2004) also believes that culture can be analysed at different levels. In contrast however to Handy (2000), Schein (2004), as illustrated in Table 2.3 below, identifies three levels, each associated with the organisational culture is visible to the observer: “*Artifacts; Espoused Beliefs and Values and Underlying Assumptions*” (Schein, 2004, pp. 25-37).

Culture Category	Details
Artifacts	At this level, the organisations characteristics can be easily observed by everyone. It takes into account the dress code of all employees, their behaviours as well as the organisations strategy in the form of the mission and vision.
Espoused Beliefs and Values	According to Schein (2004) this level is about the values and beliefs of the organisations employees. The organisation's culture will be influenced by the values of the individuals employed in the organisation and these in turn influence the overall operation of the organisation.
Underlying assumptions	According to Schein (2004), the third level is the underlying assumptions that are not actually measurable as they exist, at an unconscious level.

Table 2.3: Schein's Categories of Culture

2.3.3.1 Artifacts

Hoogervorst, van de Flier and Koopman (2004) also states that the organisation's performance, for the most part, will be determined by employee behaviour and believes that this is affected by communication and how those receive information. Studies carried out by Hoogervorst et al. (2004) confirmed that due to the close relationship between culture and behaviour, consistency when communicating in the organisation was very important. Inconsistency in communication creates a high likelihood of organisational inertia which will result in poor performance and prevent the organisational goals being met.

Pillay and Cardenas (2015) note that poor performance may be caused within an organisation due to unconscious actions within the organisation but that being conscious of decisions and how they are made and communicated can positively impact the employees and the overall organisational performance. In general, people can be conscious or unconscious when it comes looking at

achieving goals achieve a specific goal. Being conscious ensures that the most appropriate and strategic way of achieving the goal/ objective is attained and alternatives can also be identified. On the other hand, making unconscious decisions to achieve a goal means that it is not always the most effective method that gets chosen as no alternatives are sought out (Laran, Janiszewski and Salerno, 2016).

2.3.3.2 Espoused Beliefs and Values

Lafferty and Hult (2001) also hold the view that culture goes beyond both the formal and informal processes within an organisation and that it relates to the way people do things in an organisation. (Kasper, 2002). This level is linked to the views of Hofstede's (1991) Individual Vs Collectivism as it looks at how employees act within the organisation. Similarly, Armstrong, (2006) is of the view that organisational culture is formed through the unconscious values, norms, beliefs, attitudes and assumptions of the people and demonstrates how employees believe things get done.

2.3.3.3 Underlying Assumptions

According to Mullins (2007), when a resolution is found to a problem and it works repeatedly it becomes the norm and is taken for granted. Such assumptions drive behaviour and indicate how employees will perceive, think and feel about things. Lundberg (1990) is of this view as he identifies that at its core, organisational culture is typically invisible and it is ultimately formed from deeply buried values and assumptions.

According to Cacciattolo (2014), Handy (2000) identified that employees who are successful in one organisation, with a particular type of culture may not be as successful in another organisation. In contrast Cacciattolo (2014) noted that Schein (2006) was of the view that culture could not be measured, studied or even changed.

2.3.4 Denison Organizational Culture Model

Another method of defining the dimensions of culture is through the Denison Organisational Culture Model. This model was first used by Denison in the 1980s. The original survey was carried out on 34 organisations and found that organisations with a culture of inclusivity, engagement and involvement as well as being organised, demonstrated greater performance than those that did not. As illustrated in Table 2.4, the Denison Organisational Culture Model consists of four essential traits – Adaptability, Mission, Involvement and Consistency.

Dynamic Tensions	Essential Traits	Elements associated with the trait
External/ Flexible	Adaptability	Creating change, Customer Focus and Organisational Learning
External/ Stable	Mission	Strategic direction & Intent, Goals & Objectives and Vision
Internal/ Flexible	Involvement	Empowerment, Team Orientation and Capability Development
Internal/Stable	Consistency	Core values, Agreement and Coordination and Integration

Denison (2009)

Table 2.4: Denison Organizational Culture Model

2.3.4.1 Adaptability

This relates to the organisational ability to create change, meet changing needs of the customer and being proactive with regards to new opportunities. Change cannot come about unless the organisation and its employees are going to be adaptable therefore, this is an important area for assessment for the purpose of this research which is looking at the reframing of the culture of Company X.

Furthermore, as Company X is a service industry, the ability of its employees to be adaptable to its customer needs and in turn to be customer focused is hugely important in order for the organisation to continue to grow.

2.3.4.2 Mission

According to Denison et al. (2012) the organisations that do not have a clear understanding of where they are going will usually not be successful. It is the organisations that have a clear mission, vision and purpose who know where they want to be in the future that will be successful.

The mission defines the long-term direction of the organisation and takes into account the strategic direction, goals and objectives and the vision of the organisation. If an organisation and its employees do not understand what the mission of the organisation is, it will be difficult to drive organisational goals (Laran et al., 2016), furthermore, Schein (2004), is of the belief that individual employees can influence the values in an organisation. If the mission is not clear an organisation may end up with individual values driving the culture.

In contrast, McCarthy (2015), similar to the views of French et al. (1999), Handy (2000) and Schein (2006), is of the view that culture is not defined by the values and mission statement of the organisation that it is in fact defined by the behaviours within the organisation. McCarthy (2015) defines culture as *“the behaviours encouraged throughout the organisation, by the structures, systems, technologies and skills/qualities that leaders employ to generate performance”* (McCarthy, 2015, p. 28). McCarthy (2015) notes that often the behaviours may be in contrast to the ‘ideal’ values of the mission statement.

2.3.4.3 Involvement

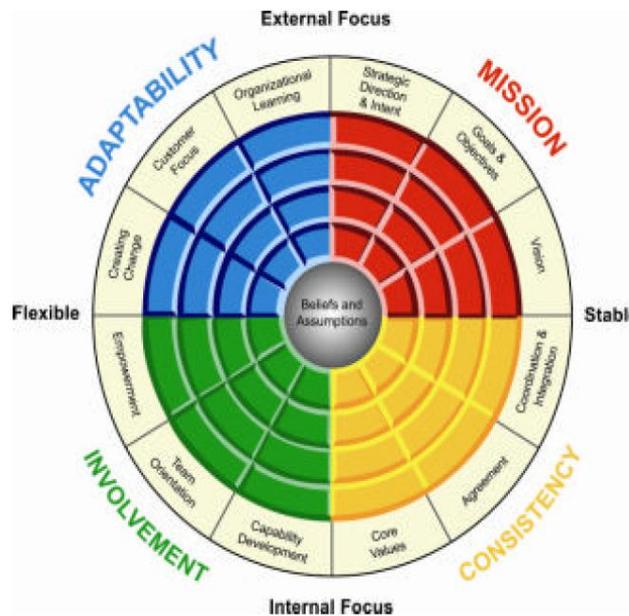
This is similar to Handy (2000) task and role cultures as it takes into account teams, empowerment and capability development. By fostering teams that are empowered to develop creative ideas it gives responsibility to individuals to meet the on-going needs of the organisation. Furthermore, this is in line with Hofstede’s (1991) cultural dimensions: Power Distance and Individualism Vs Collectivism.

McCathy (2015) also identifies the importance of employee involvement he notes that success in organisational culture change can be driven by empowering employees to come up with the solutions.

2.3.4.4 Consistency

Denison, Ko, Kotrba and Nieminen (2013) identify that consistency can enhance innovation through cross-functional collaboration, support alignment and coordination throughout the innovation process. The elements associated with consistency are: Core Values; Agreement and Coordination and Integration. According to Handy (2000) and Vincent et al. (2012) culture is about shared and common principles if these are lacking due to inconsistency then the success of the organisation will be affected.

Figure 2.1 below illustrates the DOCS model with the four categories: Adaptability (Blue), Mission (Red), Involvement (Green) and Consistency (Yellow).



(Denison, 2009)

Figure 2.1: Illustration of the Denison Organisational Culture Survey

According to the Denison model, there are various tensions illustrated in an organisation and these are demonstrated in Figure 2.1. and further explained in Table 2.5 below.

Dynamic Tensions	Traits	Strength in this area means the Organisations:
Flexible	Adaptability & Involvement	Can change quickly if needed and tend to be innovative and ensure customer satisfaction
Stable	Mission & Consistency	Can be predictable – tend to create alignment which ensures more efficient and profitable performance
External Focus	Adaptability & Mission	Can adapt to the changing needs of the market and have the ability to grow
Internal Focus	Involvement & Consistency	Focus on alignment of internal systems and resources – tend to be efficient with higher levels of quality and employee satisfaction
Top-down Bottom-up Alignment	Mission & Involvement	Have effective two-way communication between management and employees resulting in an engaged and focused workforce.
Customer value Chain	Adaptability & Consistency	Can adapt to the market needs with systems that ensure execution of high quality consistent service

(Denison, 2009)⁵

Table 2.5: Dynamic Tensions of Denison Organisational Culture Model

2.4 Role of Organisational Culture

Whilst defining culture is important, the role culture plays in an organisation must also be reviewed. Handy (2000) indicates that the management of organisations is not an exact discipline but it is much more about the creativity and the political process in a certain place and time. According to Handy (2000), organisations are like tribes and families as they have their own way of doing things some of which will work and some which won't. In order to be effective they need to be treated correctly.

Leon (2014) identifies the importance of culture in order for any business to be successful, indeed, French and Bell (1999) also identify the importance of culture for any organisation:

“organisation development is a long-term effort, led and supported by top management, to improve an organisation’s visioning, empowerment, learning and problem solving processes, through an on-going, collaborative management of organisation culture – with special emphasis on the culture of intact work teams and other team configurations – utilizing the consultant-facilitator role and the theory and technology of applied behavioural science, including action research” (French & Bell, 1999, pp. 25-26)

Denison et al. (2012), like Handy (2000), notes that employees, similar to people in a family, make the organisation. Denison et al. (2012) notes that over the past three decades their research has shown that an organisation’s culture, which is influenced by its people, has an impact on business performance in four main ways which is illustrated in Figure 2.2 below:



(Denison et al., 2012)

Figure 2.2: Impact of Organisational Culture on Business Performance

Indeed, Sultana (2015) notes that the profitability of any organisation can be enhanced through the creation of a culture of engagement. Similarly, Edwards & Kleiner (1988) see culture as essential for the development of an organisation in terms of competitiveness of the organisation.

According to Rizescu (2011),

“the theoretical concerns and the pragmatic approaches to organizational culture reflect the new vision of modern organization and performance, in terms of the new type of management involved. Simultaneously, however, organizational culture, through its scope and its implications, develops beyond the organization management sphere” (Rizescu, 2011, p. 75).

Furthermore, Chatterjaee (2009) indicates that an organisation’s culture can have an impact on staff retention. To ensure staff retention organisations must give due importance to the organisation's culture and work environment. What is more, managers must understand the current culture in an organisation in order to retain staff. For Company X, which operates in the service industry, the retention of staff is important in order for the organisation to continue to grow. Chatman (1991) identifies that employees tend to have greater job satisfaction and will stay longer with the organisation if they ‘fit’ the organisational culture.

2.5 Changing Culture in an Organisation

For any organisation seeking to continue to grow and develop, researchers and academics (Chen, Suen, Lin, Shieh, 2010; Halkos 2012) have identified the need for organisational change. Culture can be viewed as a key issue to be changed or something that is fundamental and needs to be addressed so that the appropriate adjustments can be made (Alvesson et al. 2015).

Many researchers and academics of change such as Hoogervorst et al. 2004; Balogun and Johnson 2004 and Denison et al. 2012 are of the view that change fails due to the consistent and frequent neglect of aspects of organisational culture.

According to Denison (2000), there are two contradictory images of organisational culture – the first view sees cultures as *“the glue that holds the*

organization together” (Denison 2000, p. 347), the other view is that “*culture is a word used to explain what happened when we don’t really know what happened*” (Denison 2000, p. 347). Given the contradictory nature of the two images of culture, Denison (2000) conceptualised organisational culture so that it could be used as leverage by managers and leaders during a change process.

Academics, including Muscalu (2014), Lundberg (1990) and Edwards & Kleiner (1988), note that organisational culture is modifiable, but not easily so as it takes time, indeed it can take years to change the culture in an organisation regardless of the organisational size (Ryan, 2014). Cultural change in any organisation can be influenced by both internal and external factors. As identified by Jacques (1951), culture goes through continuous change within an organisation as new ideas and concepts are identified. The need for organisations to change their culture comes from the need to preserve itself.

Research carried out by Smith (2003) suggests that culture change in an organisation is common but that it often occurs in conjunction with other changes in the organisation and therefore it can be extremely complex. Muscalu (2014) notes that it is not enough for an organisation to identify a new vision and how this will be achieved as some employees may resist the changes needed. To limit the resistance, communication is key as it is synonymous with the changing attitudes in any organisation. This links back to the DOCS model (1999) which identifies the three key areas of consistency as core values, agreement and coordination and integration. By engaging with employees and getting agreement it is more likely that change will happen.

Rashid, Sambasivan and Rahman (2004) carried out studies to investigate the influence of organisational culture on the attitudes to organisational change and found that different types of organisational culture have different levels of acceptance on attitudes toward organisational change. One major

implication of their findings was that organisational culture has an effect in the organizational change process.

“For organizations that do manage change effectively, change itself becomes the driving force that perpetuates future success and growth. For these organisations, every change becomes welcomed as an opportunity for increasing efficiency and building new organisational success” (Hamlin, Keep and Ash, 2001 p. 13).

Hamlin et al. (2001) reiterates the importance of adaptability identified by Denison (2000) within the organisation. The key areas are creating change, customer focus and organisational learning. Each of these elements encourage change and enhance the business opportunities and are an important part of culture change in any organisation.

Griffin, Philips and Stanley (2015) note that strong cultures are not always better than weak ones - whilst strong cultures create stable and consistent employee values and behaviours they can be resistant to change. If a company needs to change its culture to adapt to changing competition or a new business strategy, as is the case for Company X, Griffin et al. (2015) note that strong culture can create difficulty to evolve. A weaker culture should be more quickly able to adapt to different circumstances (Griffin et al., 2015).

As identified by Muscalu (2014) organisational culture is an important part of modern approaches related to human capital in organisations. Furthermore, Mullins (2007) identifies that organisations can have both covert and overt cultures which can influence behaviour in an organisation. There can exist, according to Mullins (2007), a culture behind the culture.

2.6 Organisational Culture & Strategy

According to Edwards et al. (1988), management researchers agree that changing an organisation’s culture can make a company more competitive and thus more profitable. They noted that the strategy for carrying out change

was dependant on the culture that existed in the organisation, the phase of the business development and the expected change that was required.

According to Joyce (2001), organisational culture change may not succeed if the organisation focuses more on the operations and less on the people. When discussing the importance of culture, Peter Drucker, a business management guru, is noted as saying the infamous line "culture eats strategy for breakfast". Other versions are "Culture beats strategy" or "Culture trumps strategy" - each version has the same message: Whilst the strategy is important and it may define the vision and mission of the organisation, if the culture is not right the organisation will not succeed.

Schein (2006) also noted that for many employees, the strategy is limited by the culture of the organisation. MDT Training (2010) notes that strategic thinking can be seen as the culture in an organisation if three actions are taken:

What to do	How to do it
Model it	Be a role model for strategic thinking by demonstrating it in one's own actions
Expect it	Ensure strategic thinking is expected from every employee
Reward it	Rewarding strategic thinking will establish it as a norm

MDT Training (2010)

Table 2.6: How to Enhance Strategic Thinking

Indeed, studies carried out by Pattnaik and Tripathy (2014) concluded that apparent support from an organisation can impact the level of commitment given by employees to the organisation. By initiating procedures, work practices and fair reward systems it indicated to employees that the organisation cares about their wellbeing and values his/her contributions which in turn enhances the organisational culture, the success of the strategy and the overall culture of the company (Pattnaik et al., 2014).

If the strategy of an organisation is not aligned with the changing culture or if it is not known or understood by the employees of the organisation, cultural change may not succeed (Hoogervorst et al., 2004; Denison et al., 2012). Georgiadis & Pitelis (2012) note that:

“more profitable SMEs combine a highly skilled workforce with technological and know-how-based firm differentiation strategies, and/or product differentiation strategies, which are based on quality of service and personal attention to customers, alongside generous compensation and attention to employee development” (Georgiadis & Pitelis, 2012, p. 808).

Furthermore, Chatman (1991) noted that employees that have greater job satisfaction will stay longer with the organisation.

2.7 Conclusion

As noted by many academics such as Jacques (1951) and Alvesson et al. (2015) culture undergoes continuous modification. For this reason, the research will seek to identify what changes have occurred with regards to organisational culture in Company X since 2014.

The researcher notes that there is no one clear definition of culture but what is constant throughout the literature is that there is a shared thinking that organisational culture is seen as a shared way of thinking or the more practical “how things are done around her” and it remains a powerful driving force behind any organisations success (Jacques, 1951; Mullins, 2002; Schein, 2006).

Although researchers such as Hofstede (1991), Handy (2000), Schein (2004) and Denison et al. (2012) approach organisational culture from different dimensions and historical stances, it is worth noting that similar language and concepts remain constant e.g. Guidroz et al. (2010) view of the value of the 3

C's: Coordination, Collaboration and Cooperation, chimes with Denison et al. (2012): Core values, Agreement and Coordination.

From the literature, it is clear that whilst culture can be defined as the 'bedrock' of organisational culture (French et al., 1999), an organisation's culture is far from being a sedentary, immovable object, rather it is an ever changing and evolving (Jacques, 1951; Alvesson et al., 2015). Furthermore, the culture of a company can have an impact on its strategy. To achieve the strategy of an organisation and to enhance culture, organisations can implement encourage positive performances (MDT Training, 2010; Pattnaik et al., 2014).

Finally, the researcher notes that these is that there is much literature and research around the defining or organisational culture (Jacques, 1951; Schein, 2006; Mullins, 2007; Alvesson, 2002; Denison et al., 2012) however, research on the changing of organisational culture in an SME in Ireland was lacking.

Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The question being addressed by this research is “How has Organisational Culture in an Irish SME changed over time?” Chapter 2 of this research reviewed the literature on dimensions of organisational culture, changing organisational culture and the role of organisational culture in organisational strategy.

What is known from the literature is that there are various views on what organisational culture is and as a result there are many different models used to define culture. A consistent trait of organisational culture is its link between it and the behaviour of individuals (Handy, 2000; Schein, 2004; Denison, 2013 and Muscalua, 2014).

Sanford (2010) identifies that unless there is a good reason for measuring the organisation’s culture it is pointless to do so. The purpose of this research is to inquire if the organisational culture of Company X has changed over time following the Denison survey which was completed by 38 employees of Company X in 2014.

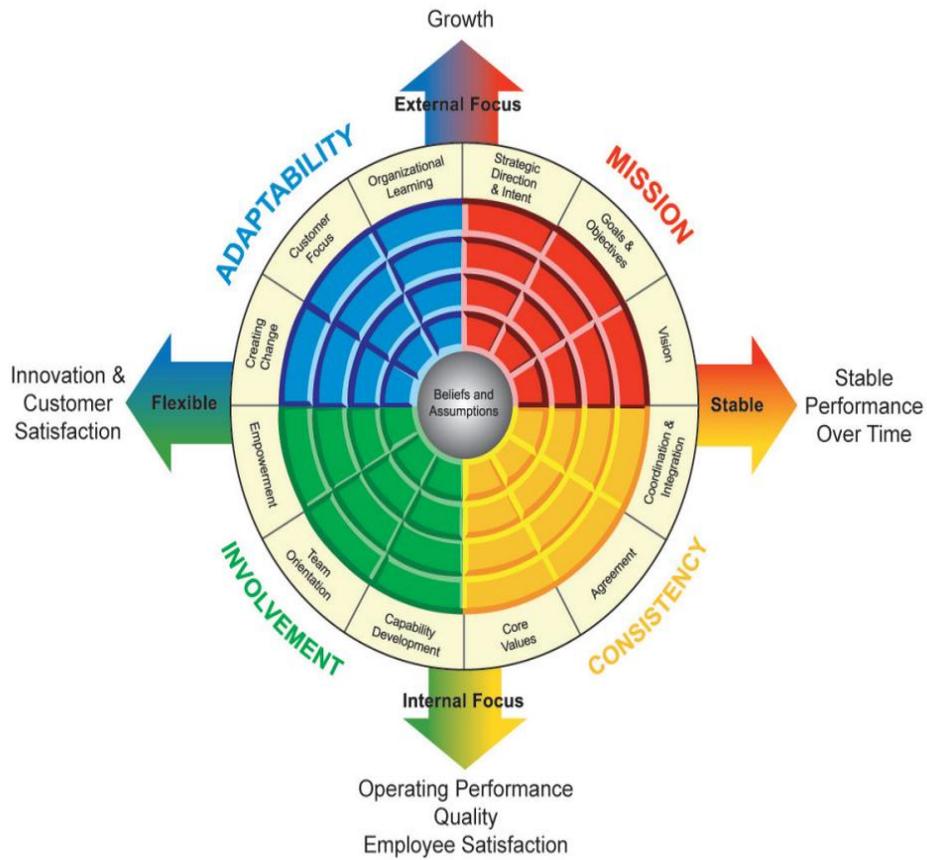
Jacques (1951) and Alvesson et al. (2015) note that organisational culture undergoes continuous change depending on the various influences and new ideas that are brought to the organisation by its employees and management. Indeed, academics, including Edwards & Kleiner (1988), Lundberg (1990) and Muscalu (2014) note that organisational culture is modifiable, but not easily so as it takes time for change to happen. It is important to get the culture right as Schein (2006) notes that the success of an organisation can be limited if the culture is not right.

The researcher did not find any research on changing organisational culture in SMEs in Ireland. As Company X is an SME in Ireland, this research seeks to find out if organisational culture in an SME changes over time.

3.2 Development of a Conceptual Framework

The literature review provided insight into dimensions of culture as defined by many academics such as Hofstede (1991), Handy (2000) and Schein (2004). Another dimension for defining culture is the Denison model. As detailed in Chapter 2, the Denison Organisational Culture Survey (DOCS) was completed by Company X in 2014. The survey consists of 60 questions and is designed to measure the underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions that are held by members of an organisation, as well as the practices and behaviours that evidence and reinforce them. (Denison, 2009)

According to Denison, the model captures the characteristics that are most likely to impact an organisations performance: Consistency, involvement, adaptability and mission. In accordance with the model and as illustrated in Figure 3.1 overleaf, if an organisation has high levels of involvement and consistency it is said to have a strong internal culture which may mean the company cannot grow quickly. On the other hand, innovative organisations that score high in adaptability and involvement can be said to be innovative. In contrast, those organisations that score highly in mission and consistency will have steady performance over time (Xuejun, 2008).



(Xuejun, 2008).

Figure 3.1: Relationship between performance and culture according to the Denison Model

As many academics note, it takes time to change organisational culture, (Jacques, 1951; Edwards et al., 1988; Lundberg, 1990; Schein, 2006 and Muscalu, 2014) therefore the results of Company X’s Denison survey 2014 are used to define the organisational culture in 2014. These results set a baseline for analysing changes in Company X culture over a period of almost 2 years.

The objective of this research is to examine if organisational culture in Company X, an SME in Ireland has changed over time. In order to explore this the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
2. What culture exists in Company X in 2016?
3. How has the culture of Company X has changed since 2014?

3..2.1 What was the culture of Company X

As noted by Muscalu (2014), Lundberg (1990) and Edwards & Kleiner (1988) organisational culture is modifiable but it takes time for change to happen. For this reason, the outcome of the Denison survey is used by the researcher to define what the culture of Company X was 2 years ago.

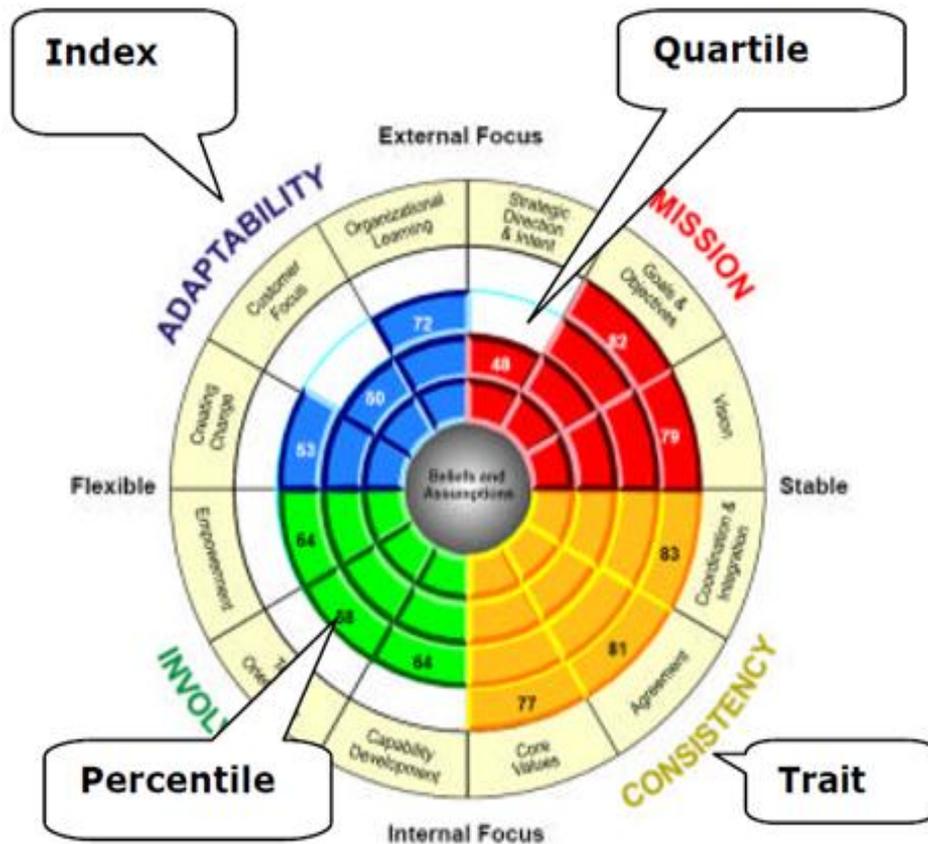
As detailed in Chapter 2 and illustrated in Table 3.1 below, the essential traits used to define the 2014 culture include adaptability, mission, involvement and consistency. Each trait is associated with a dynamic tension: internal/external or flexible/stable.

Dynamic Tensions	Organisational Trait	Measurable Index
External/ Flexible	Adaptability	Creating Change
		Customer Focus
		Organisational Learning
External/ Stable	Mission	Strategic Direction & Intent
		Goals and Objectives
		Vision
Internal/ Flexible	Involvement	Empowerment
		Team Orientation
		Capability Development
Internal/ Stable	Consistency	Core Values
		Agreement
		Coordination & Integration

(Denison, 2009)

Table 3.1: Denison Organisational Culture

Figure 3.2 below illustrates how the Denison survey results are displayed. Each result is given for the four traits which are further broken down into measurable indices. The scores for the DOCS are displayed as percentiles (%iles) to allow for comparison with other organisations in the Denison Global database (Denison, 2009).



(Denison, 2009)

Figure 3.2: Illustration of how the DOCS results are displayed

3.2.2 What is the Organisational Culture of Company X

The use of the Denison survey results for Company X in 2014 allow this researcher to have a benchmark for the culture that existed in Company X at that time. In order to ascertain what changes, if any, were made from 2014 to 2016 interviews are carried out with a representative number of employees. The purpose of the interviews was to research if changes were made to organisational culture over the 2-year period and to define the culture that now exists.

3.2 The Conceptual Framework

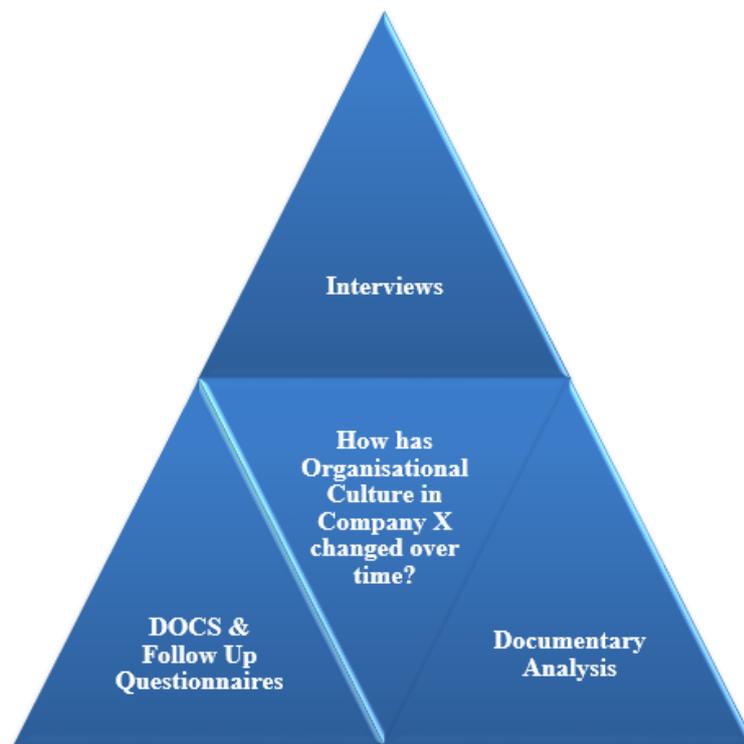
The literature provided many insights into the dimensions of organisational culture and the importance of it in company performance (Denison et al., 2012; Barclay, 2015). In order to define what culture exists in Company X and to investigate if it has changed over time the research relies on the

outcome of the survey completed in 2014 by Company X to provide a reference point for culture. The measurable indices examined as part of the Denison survey are identified in Table 3.1 above and are illustrated in Figure 3.2.

These measurable indices are taken into account by the researcher when exploring the culture that exists in Company X in 2016. The framework provides the researcher the opportunity to answer the following questions:

1. What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
2. What culture exists in the organisation in 2016?
3. How has the culture of Company X changed since 2014?

The conceptual framework to answer these questions and to achieve the research objective is illustrated below in Figure 3.3.



Adapted from McGovern (2009)

Figure 3.3: Conceptual Framework

This model was adapted from McGovern (2009) and identifies that the method used to gather the data in order to achieve the objectives set out above. The conceptual framework takes into account the DOCS 2014, follow up

questionnaires 2016 and the face-to-face interviews which are used to explore the responses to the questionnaires and to ask key questions around culture. Finally, analysis and comparison of the results from 2014 and 2016 will be carried out.

3.3 Conclusion

The question being addressed by this research is “How has Organisational Culture in an Irish SME changed over time?” What is known from the literature is that there are various views on what organisational culture is and as a result there are many different models used to define culture.

Measuring culture, according to Sanford (2010), must be for a good reason. The purpose of this research is to enquire if the organisational culture of Company X has changed over time following the DOCS, completed by 38 employees in 2014. According to a number of academics (Jacques, 1951; Alvesson et al., 2015) organisational culture undergoes continuous change depending on the various influences and new ideas that are brought to the organisation by its employees and management. Indeed, Edwards & Kleiner (1988), Lundberg (1990) and Muscalu (2014) note that changing organisational culture takes time.

The researcher did not find any research on changing organisational culture in SMEs in Ireland. As Company X is an SME in Ireland, this research seeks to find out if organisational culture in an SME changes overtime. In order to answer the research question, the researcher choose a conceptual framework that adapted from McGovern (2009) to gather the data and answer the research question. The DOCS 2014, follow up questionnaires 2016, one-to-one interviews to explore the responses to the questionnaires and to ask key questions around culture and finally analysis and comparison of the results for 2014 and 2016.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details how the research was undertaken for this thesis and outlines the key elements of the research framework and identifies the research questions to be answered. Chapter 2 identified the importance of organisational culture; that culture undergoes continuous change within any organisation and that organisational change happens over a period of time.

The overall purpose of any research is to ascertain the answers to questions, through the application of various methodologies, that are currently unanswered (Kothari, 2004). As noted in Chapter 2, no studies were found relating to changing culture in an SME in Ireland. The objective of this research is to examine the changing organisational culture in Company X, an SME in Ireland. In order to explore the change in the organisational culture in Company X, the following research questions have been formulated in response to the objective:

1. What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
2. What culture exists in the organisation in 2016?
3. How has the culture of Company X has changed since 2014?

As identified in Chapter 2, organisational culture change happens over time, this research focused on the results of a questionnaire completed by 38 employees of Company X in 2014. (See Appendix A)

In order to identify changes to the culture, a range of semi-structured interviews were carried out with a representative number of employees that completed the original Denison Organisational Culture Survey (DOCS) 2014. The interviewees included personnel from different divisions of the organisation including different hierarchical positions and locations. By

having a range of interviewees the results give a holistic view of the organisation.

Where possible, during the monthly team meetings held by each division, employees were invited to take part on the interviews. For employees based off-site, an email was sent to their direct line managers asking if any employees would be available to take part in the process.

This chapter sets out the focus of the research and intends to review the methodologies available, evaluate the methodologies and identify the methods chosen. The limitations of the methodologies are also identified.

4.2 The Problem of Bias

To ensure that the research being carried out is valid, the researcher notes the problem of bias. In order to ensure that the responses were honest and unbiased the following approach was taken:

- The follow up questionnaire 2016 was based on the original DOCS 2014
- Face-to-face interviews were carried out with the interviewees to gain a more holistic view of the responses
- Each interviewee was guaranteed anonymity with no identification as to who stated what being identified in the research

4.3 Research Question

The objective of this research is to examine “Has Organisational Culture in an Irish SME changed over time?”. In order to explore changes to the organisational culture in Company X, the following research questions have been formulated in response to the objective:

1. What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
2. What culture exists in the organisation in 2016?
3. How has the culture of Company X has changed since 2014?

4.4 Appropriate Research Methods

There are generally three research methodologies available to any researcher: quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

According to Long (2014), in carrying out quantitative analysis, researchers make the assumption that knowledge is definite and impartial and that its existence is not reliant on the application of a particular theory. Quantitative research is based on data and as a result, researchers aim to find facts that can be applied to the various variables being analysed and researched.

In relation to qualitative research, Long (2014) notes that researchers assume that knowledge is both individual and subjective. Either way, wither quantitative or qualitative research methods are used the researcher sees themselves as having to interpret the research in a unique way.

Many researches, such as Ghauri, and Grønhaug (2005) and Neuman (2005) have compared both quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, Johnson (2012) states that multiple forms of research methods, i.e. a mix or combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, can result in a win-win solution as the researcher looks at many different ways to find a solution.

Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) note that because quantitative and qualitative research looks at different concepts they cannot be combined; they do note however, that it can be complimentary when carrying out research, to mix the two. Researchers, such as Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2012), have reviewed the rationale in carrying out mixed methods research and in doing so have noted that the quality of the research is important in order to validate it.

Researchers note that there are many combinations of research that can be used e.g. the use of quantitative and qualitative research in parallel, the use of quantitative and qualitative research in sequence or concurrent quantitative

and qualitative research (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Clark and Creswell, 2008; Collins, Onwegbuzie, and Johnson, 2012 and Long, 2014).

4.5 Choosing a research method

In choosing the methodology, the author of this research is aware that it is not solely the quality of the research that is important (Onwegbuzie et al., 2006; Teddlie et al., 2012), knowing what needs to be researched is equally as important (Holden and Lynch, 2004).

As previously detailed, quantitative is based on data and statistics. The quality and validity of any research, including quantitative research, is important (Onwegbuzie et al., 2006; Teddlie et al., 2012). According to Denison Consulting (2011), validity relates to the accuracy of a given measure. The DOCS correlates a number of factors in order to measure the adaptability, mission, involvement and consistency within an organisation. The results from each company that takes the Denison survey are benchmarked against each other whilst also taking into account the uniqueness of the individual company (Denison, 2000).

In 2014, all employees in Company X were invited to complete the DOCS. The researcher used the results from this survey to identify and define the organisational culture in Company X at that time.

In order to achieve the objective of this research i.e. to investigate how has the organisational culture of Company X changed over time, the researcher has chosen to complete coherent quantitative and qualitative research through the use of semi-structured interviews. The research objectives rely heavily on how has the organisational changed over time. The use of a semi-structured interview with a questionnaire element was tailored to assist the research objectives and answer the key research questions.

4.6 The Research Process

The results of the DOCS 2014 were used by the researcher to define the culture of Company X at that time and subsequent to this, in 2016, the researcher carried out interviews with nine employees, a representative number of the organisation, who had completed the original survey. Given that organisational change occurs over time and is continuously evolving (Jacques, 1951; Edwards et al., 1988; Lundberg, 1990 and Muscalu, 2014) the researcher is of the view that a sufficient time has been given since the DOCS was completed for analysis to be carried out to see how the culture has changed.

Stanford (2010) notes that, in order to assess culture, the best way is to use a combination of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Such an approach starts to provide a broader and more unified understanding of the research area (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki and Nummela, 2006; Stanford, 2010 and Azorín and Cameron, 2010). Both quantitative and qualitative research was used then by the author to achieve the objective of this research.

4.6.1 Data Collection Methods

As noted, stages of data collection were used for this research:

- Outcome of DOCS to define the culture in 2014
- Follow up Questionnaires – Quantitative method
- Interviews – Qualitative method

4.6.1.1 Questionnaires

Tucker, McCoy and Evans (1990) state that questionnaires help to provide preliminary information in order to attempt to diagnose situations and solve problems concerning existing organisational cultures. The Denison survey is said to identify important traits for organisational performance: Adaptability; Involvement; Mission and Consistency. According to Denison et al. (2012), the survey is designed to assess an organisations strengths and weaknesses as they apply to organisational performance by assessing specific aspects of the organisation's culture.

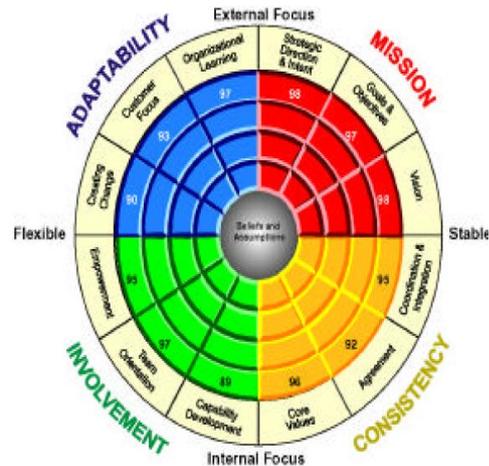
Denison et al. (2013) notes that organisations whom achieve high scores in the survey illustrate a high level of both clarity and alignment of the organisation’s culture whereas lower scores indicate that cultural competencies in the organisation were not well developed.

The DOCS, consisting of 60 questions as detailed in Appendix D, is designed to quantify the views, beliefs and behaviours of employees in an organisation. Overall the survey focuses on the aspects of the organisation’s culture that have a direct link to business performance (Denison, 2009). Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below illustrate low performing and high performing organisations according to the Denison model.



(Denison, 2009)

Figure 4.1: Low Performing Organisations



(Denison, 2009)

Figure 4.2: High Performing Organisations

Tucker et al. (1990) found that questionnaires can provide important data that can aid in developing an appropriate culture change by managers and leaders in a manner that is structured and not haphazard. As detailed in Chapter 3, the scores for the Denison survey are displayed as %iles to allow for comparison with other organisations in the Denison Global database. The researcher used the questions from the DOCS to quantify the culture that employees believe currently exist in Company X in 2016.

By using quantitative measures to identify culture it isolated for the author certain dimensions and gave an indication of what to expect, it didn't however give an impression of the employee's individual experience (Stanford, 2010).

Furthermore, Stanford (2010) notes other limitations such as the survey being a snapshot in time and not necessarily the current reality. For this reason, in conjunction with the quantitative research, the researcher completed qualitative research in the form of interviews, as part of the research methodology. The questions that formed part of the quantitative research were defined using the DOCS model so that a comparison could be made between the organisational culture in 2014 and the culture of the organisation in 2016. Appendix B illustrates the email that was sent to all nine interviewees in advance of the qualitative research.

In total, 60 questions were given to the interviewees in advance of the interviews. Interviewees were asked to answer the questions as 'True' or 'Untrue' in advance of the interview and the researcher explored the answers further during the semi-structured interview. The questionnaire is illustrated in Appendix D.

4.6.1.2 Interviews

According to Stanford (2010), qualitative methods aim to build a richness and depth to the assessment through the use of narrative, storytelling, personal example and imagery. By using personal interviews, it gave the author of this research a holistic picture of the organisation's culture.

Representation, as illustrated in Table 4.1 below, was obtained from all functional areas of the organisation. Duncan (1989) indicates that personal interviews make it possible to construct a holistic view of the organisation's culture that will help management manage it better.

Selection Area	Division Explanation	No. Interviewees
Managers	Senior Managers in Company X based Head Office	2
On-site Employees	Employees working in Company X Head Office	2
Off-site Employees Client (C) Site	Employees based on a client's site 365 days/year	3
Off-site Employees (M) Mobile	Employees who work remotely and carry out audits at various client's sites	2

Table 4.1: Details of Interviewee selection

During monthly team meetings held by each division, employees who had completed the DOCS 2014 were invited to take part in the interviews. Once a representative number of interviewees were identified, an email as illustrated in Appendix B was sent to all interviewees. Each interviewee was bcc'd on the mail to protect his/her identity. Furthermore, instructions on how to complete the pre-interview questionnaire were given.

A date, time and location was then agreed by telephone with each interviewee. In order to gain an understanding of the organisational culture of Company X, open ended questions, as illustrated in Table 4.2 were used during the qualitative element of the research.

No.	Question
1	What does organisational culture mean to you?
2	What do you believe the culture of the Company is?
3	Do you know what the values of the Company are?
4	Do you recall the outcome of the Denison survey in 2014?
5	Exploration of the responses to the questionnaire
6	Have changes been made at organisational level to improve the culture of the Company in recent times?
7	How do you think the company's culture could be further improved?
8	What can you do to improve the company's culture?
9	Any other comments?

Table 4.2. Interview Questions

It is the view of the researcher, similar to that of many academics (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki et al., 2006; Sanford, 2010; Azorín et al., 2010) that by combining the two methods of research i.e. quantitative and qualitative that the results have greater validity and through the use of interviews the researcher is able to explore what the interviewees own thoughts are.

As illustrated in Table 4.2 above, the researcher notes that a total of 9 interviews took place as part of the qualitative analysis. As illustrated below, Company X has been divided into 4 areas of – Management team, On-site Employees, Off-site Employees (Client) and Off-site Employees (Mobile). In drafting the interview questions, the researcher noted that behaviours in any organisation are encouraged by its leaders (McCarthy, 2015) and for this reason the researcher has chosen to ask the management representatives the same questions as the other interviewees.

4.7 Limitations

As detailed, mixed methods of research are used for this research as it the view of the author and many researchers (Sanford, 2010; Long, 2014; Collins et al., 2012; Clark et al., 2008 and Creswell et al., 2007) to be the most thorough; however, there are still limitations and these are illustrated in Table 4.2 overleaf.

Furthermore, Schein (1986) notes that whilst understanding the organisations strengths and weaknesses are beneficial, if the basic assumptions are wrong an incorrect analysis of the organisational culture can be drawn.

Quantitative Limitations	Qualitative Limitations
One reality	Searches for patterns
The aim is to generalise	Soft data: basic elements of analysis are words/ideas that are difficult to see patterns across or compare
Mechanistic: the parts equal the whole	Develops a story, often with a timeline
Snapshot in time	

(Stanford, 2010)

Table 4.3: Quantitative and Qualitative Limitations

If Company X is not ready to receive the feedback about the culture or if the organisation is made vulnerable through having its culture revealed to outsiders, it can have a negative impact on the organisation. For this reason, throughout the research the organisation is only ever identified as identified as “Company X” an SME in Ireland. Also, employees interviewed are not identified in the research only the researcher is aware of what employees have taken part in the research.

In addition, the researcher notes that whilst there are equal representations across all functional areas that with qualitative research it is very much about the employee perspective. Furthermore, the Denison survey 2014, which is used to define the organisational culture in Company X at that time, benchmarks participants against other organisations. The 2016 questionnaires and the face-to-face interviews, focus solely on the perspective of the interviewees and does not draw comparison with other organisations.

4.8 Conclusion

As noted by Jacques, 1951; Muscalu, 2014; Lundberg, 1990 and Edwards et al., 1988, change does not occur over night, it takes time. For this reason, the

researcher has chosen to define the culture of Company X using the outcome of the DOCS 2014 and a follow up questionnaire in 2016 with face-to-face interviews are carried out to ascertain how the culture of Company X has changed over a 2-year period. The face-to-face interviews gives the researcher a more holistic view of the culture of Company X (Stanford, 2010; Duncan, 1989).

Chapter 5

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter details the results from the various data collection methods outlined in Chapter 4:

- Outcome of Denison Organisation Culture Survey (DOCS) 2014
- Follow up questionnaires in 2016 with nine employees of Company X
- Face-to-face interviews undertaken with nine employees of Company X in 2016

5.2 Denison Organisational Culture Survey 2014

The Denison Organisational Culture Survey (DOCS) in 2014, completed by 38 employees of Company X, indicated that the company, as a whole, was highly adaptable with high levels of consistency when compared with other organisations on the Denison global database of over 1,000 organizations.

The scores illustrated in Figure 5.1 below give the results for Company X in the form of percentile (%ile) scores. The results allow for the culture of Company X to be benchmarked against other global organisations on the Denison global database. The results indicate that Company X is stable with scores being balanced in the areas of Mission (red) and Consistency (yellow). The scores illustrated in Figures 5.1 to Figure 5.7 below illustrate the results for Company X in the form of %iles which have been averaged for each of the measurable indexes identified in Appendix D.

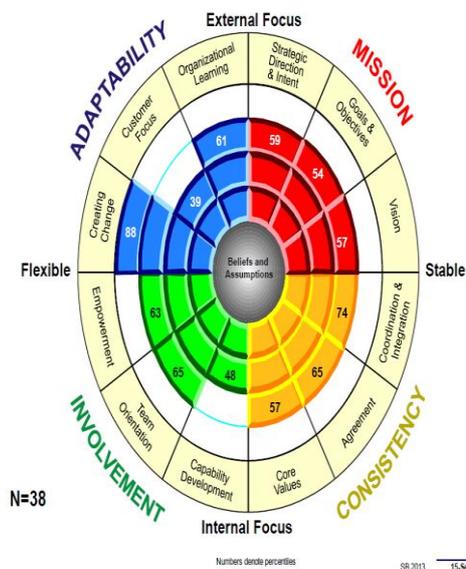


Figure 5.1: Company X Results for DOCS 2014

95	Attempts to create change usually meet with resistance.*
91	The way things are done is very flexible and easy to change.
91	There is a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.
88	Our approach is very consistent and predictable.
84	It is easy to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.

Figure 5.2: Highest Scores, DOCS 2014

5	There is continuous investment in the skills of employees.
19	There is an ethical code that guides our behaviour and tells us right from wrong.
20	Customer input directly influences our decisions.
25	Ignoring core values will get you in trouble.
27	Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees

Figure 5.3: Lowest Scores, DOCS 2014

The highest scores, illustrated in Figure 5.2 give further evidence that the organisational culture in Company X in 2014 was also one of adaptability with high levels of consistency when compared with other organisations on the Denison global database. The lowest scores illustrated in Figure 5.3 do not indicate any one area, it captures low scores in all the essential skill trait areas: Mission, Consistency, Involvement and Adaptability.

As identified previously in Table 4.1, Company X, for the purpose of this research is divided into four divisions:

- Managers - Senior Managers in Company X based Head Office
- On-site Employees - Employees working in Company X Head Office
- Off-site Employees Client (C) site - Employees based on a client's site 365 days/year
- Off-site Employees Mobile (M) – Employees who work remotely and carry out audits at various client's sites

To understand the culture in the context of these divisions, the outcome of the DOCS in 2014 is further illustrated in Figures 5.4 to 5.7 below.

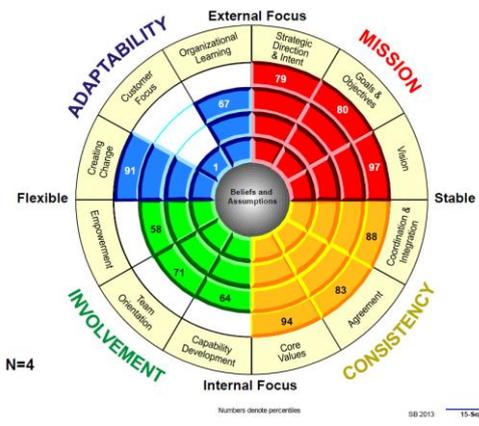


Figure 5.4: Manager's Response DOCS 2014

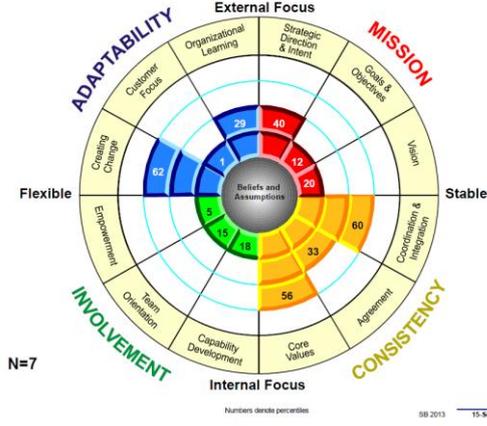


Figure 5.5: On-site Employee response DOCS 2014

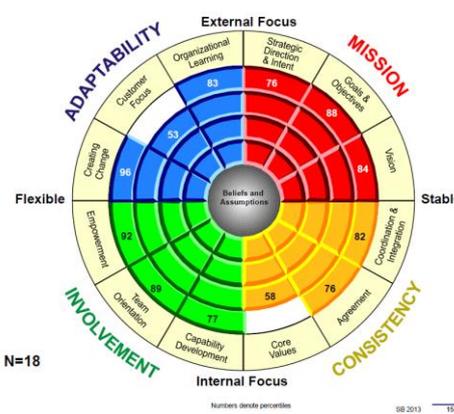


Figure 5.6: Off-site Employee Response Client site (C) DOCS 2014

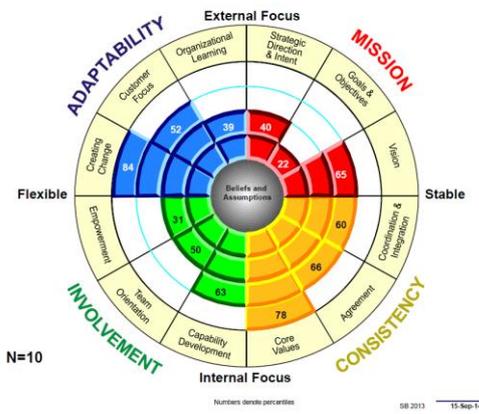


Figure 5.7: Off-site Employee Response Mobile team (M) DOCS 2014

As demonstrated, there is a variance in the overall results when they are broken down by division. The Managers and the off-site employees (C) are strong in Mission and Consistency unlike the on-site employees and the off-site employees (M). The strongest culture exists in the off-site employees (C) as illustrated by the amount of colour in Figure 5.6. To understand the culture of Company X in 2014, the essential traits of the DOCS are further analysed below.

5.2.1 Mission

According to the overall Denison model, results when benchmarked against other organisations, the Mission of Company X was found to be in the 54-59 %iles. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 97 to a low of 12 %iles.

There is a clear difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisation's mission as illustrated by the presence or lack of red in the Figures 5.4 to Figure 5.7. The Managers and the off-site employees (C) rank high against other organisations with:

- Strategic direction & Intent at 59 %iles collectively; 79 %iles for the managers; 76 %iles for the off-site employees (C)
- Goals and objectives at 54 %iles collectively; 80 %iles for the managers; 88 %iles for the off-site employees (C)
- Vision at 57 %iles collectively; 97 %iles for the managers; 84 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 65 %iles for the off-site employees (M)

In contrast the on-site employees and the off-site employees (M) rank much lower against other organisations with:

- Strategic direction & Intent at a low of 40 %iles for the on-site employees; 40 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Goals and objectives at a low of 12 %iles for the on-site employees; 22 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Vision at a low of 20 %iles for the on-site employees

Overall the managers and the off-site employees (C) score much higher than the other divisions when they are benchmarked against other organisations globally.

5.2.2 Consistency

According to the overall DOCS results, when benchmarked against other organisations, the consistency of Company X was found to be in the 57-74 %iles. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 94 to a low of 33 %iles.

There is a difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations consistency as illustrated by the presence or lack of yellow in the Figures 5.4 to Figure 5.7. Some of the highest scores obtained in the DOCS 2014 were in

the area of consistency as illustrated in Figure 5.2. When ranked against other organisations, the highest scores were found to vary across the four divisions:

- Core Values at 57 %iles collectively; 94 %iles for the managers; 78 %iles for the off-site employees (M); 58 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 56 %iles for the on-site employees
- Agreement at 65 %iles collectively; 83 %iles for the managers; 76 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 66 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Coordination & Integration at 74 %iles collectively; 88 %iles for the managers; 82 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 60 %iles for the on-site employees and the off-site employees (M)

In contrast the on-site employees rank agreement much lower when benchmarked against other organisations:

- Core Values - none of the division were found to be below 50 %iles
- Agreement at a low of 33 %iles for the on-site employees
- Coordination & Integration - none of the division were found to be below 50 %iles

Overall the four division scored highly when they are benchmarked against other organisations globally with the exception of the on-site employees, who score a low of 33 %iles for the measurable index of agreement.

5.2.3 Adaptability

According to the overall DOCS results when benchmarked against other organisations, the adaptability of Company X was found to be in the 39-88 %iles. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 96 to a low of 1%ile.

There is a difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations adaptability as illustrated by the presence or lack of blue in the Figures 5.4 to Figure 5.7. Some of the highest scores obtained in the DOCS 2014 were in the area of adaptability as illustrated in Figure 5.2 however, one of the lowest scores was also in adaptability as illustrated in Figure 5.3. When ranked

against other organisations, the highest scores were found to vary across the four divisions:

- Creating Change at 88 %iles collectively; 91 %iles for the managers; 62 %iles for the on-site employees; 96 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 84 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Customer focus at 53 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 52 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Organisational learning at 61%iles collectively; 67 %iles for the managers; 83 %iles for the off-site employees (C)

In contrast the lowest scores were found as follows:

- Creating Change - none of the division were found to be below 50 %iles
- Customer focus at 39 %iles collectively; 1 %ile for the managers; 1 %ile for the on-site employees
- Organisational learning at 29 %iles for the on-site employees; 39 %iles for the off-site employees (M)

Overall all divisions scored highly in the area of adaptability, however customer focus, an essential trait of adaptability, was found to be extremely low for both the managers and the on-site employees at just 1 %ile.

5.2.4 Involvement

According to the overall DOCS results when benchmarked against other organisations, the involvement of Company X was found to be in the 48-65 %iles. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 92 to a low of 5 %iles.

There is a difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations involvement as illustrated by the presence or lack of green in the Figures 5.4 to Figure 5.7. One of the lowest scores, obtained by Company X, was in the area of involvement as illustrated in Figure 5.3. When ranked against other organisations, the highest scores were found to vary across the four divisions:

- Capability development at 64 %iles for the managers; 77 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 63 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Team orientation at 65 %iles collectively; 71 %iles for the managers; 89 %iles for the off-site employees (C); 50 %iles for the off-site employees (M)
- Empowerment at 58 %iles for the managers and 92 %iles for the off-site employees (C)

In contrast the lowest scores were found as follows:

- Capability development at 18 %iles for the on-site employees
- Team orientation at 15 %iles for the on-site employees
- Empowerment at 5 %iles for the on-site employees and 31 %iles for the off-site employees (M)

Overall the managers, the off-site employees (C) and the off-site employees (M) score much higher than the on-site employees who score very low in all three of the measurable indexes of involvement.

5.2.5 Additional Comments

As part of the DOCS 2014, participants were asked to make additional comments on the organisation and its culture. Four of the participants noted that the people of the organisation were great to work with and were a real asset to the organisation:

- *“Great people to work with. People are willing to work hard and have accepted changes in the last year”*
- *“We have a highly experienced team of people with a broad range of skills”*
- *“Relatively young, energetic workforce, but with great levels of experience for bringing along less experienced workers”*

Participants also felt that retaining people would be a problem for the organisation *“As more employment opportunities are becoming available*

staff retention is the biggest challenge facing the organisation” and that the availability of resources and future planning should be addressed.

Furthermore, communication was noted as being a challenge for the organisation moving forward within the organisation with some respondents noting that *“Internal communications and helping staff understand where their role and contribution fits within the overall vision for the company”* could be a challenge whilst others noted that *“Communication is sometimes poor, people are unsure of the strategy of the company and where they are heading.”*

Furthermore, it was noted that *“meeting the needs of employees”* could be a challenge and that *“reward measures need to be put in place and training”* to help the employees.

5.3 Questionnaires

In order to review the current culture in the Company X, the same questions that were asked as part of the DOCS in 2014 were given to nine employees of Company X to complete as part of this research. (Appendix D). In contrast to the DOCS 2014 outcome, these results are expressed as percentages of the total sample group as opposed to representations of %iles against the Denison global database.

As detailed, the scores illustrated in Figure 5.8 below illustrate the results for Company X in the form of percentages which have been averaged for each of the measurable indexes identified in Appendix D. Participants were asked to rate the statements associated with the essential traits as either “True” or “Untrue”.

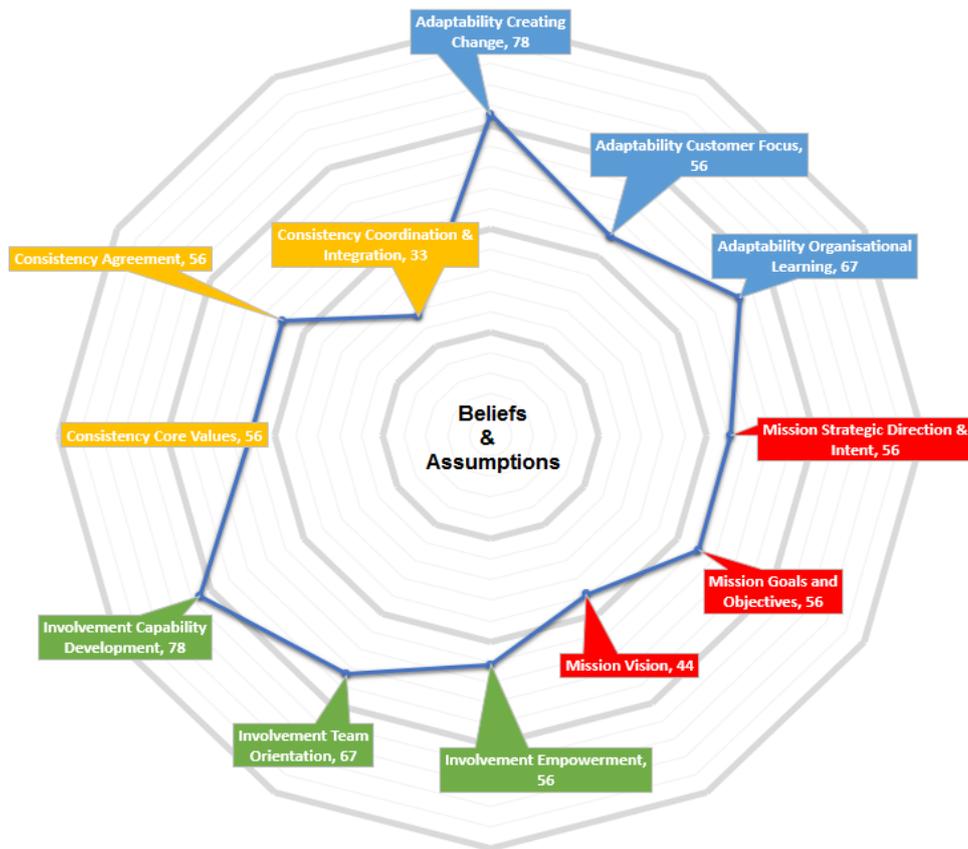


Figure 5.8: Company X, Questionnaire 2016 (% True)

100	Most employees are highly involved in their work.
100	We encourage direct contact with customers by our people.
100	Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.
89	Business planning is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.
89	There is continuous investment in the skills of employees.
89	New and improved ways to do work are continually adopted.
89	Attempts to create change usually meet with resistance.*
89	There is a long-term purpose and direction.
89	Leaders have a long-term viewpoint.

Figure 5.9: Highest Scores, Questionnaire 2016 (% True)

11	Ignoring core values will get you in trouble
11	People from different parts of the organization share a common perspective.
11	There is good alignment of goals across levels.
33	Innovation and risk taking are encouraged and rewarded.
33	Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they compete in the industry.
33	There is widespread agreement about goals.
33	We have a shared vision of what the organization will be like in the future.
33	Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees.

Figure 5.10: Lowest Scores Questionnaire 2016, (% True)

The highest scores, illustrated in Figure 5.9 indicate that the organisational culture in Company X in 2016 is one of adaptability with high levels of involvement. 100% of participants believe employees are highly involved in their work and that the organisation is adaptable encouraging direct contact with the clients. The lowest scores, illustrated in Figure 5.10, indicate that there is a perceived lack of consistency in the organisation with a lack of understanding of the organisational mission.

As previously identified in Table 4.1, Company X, for the purpose of this research is divided into four divisions:

- Managers - Senior Managers in Company X based Head Office
- On-site Employees - Employees working in Company X Head Office
- Off-site Employees Client site (C) - Employees based on a client's site 365 days/year
- Off-site Employees Mobile (M) – Employees who work remotely and carry out audits on various client's sites

The results illustrated below in Figures 5.11 – 5.14 are indications of the average % participants believed the statements detailed in Appendix D to be “true”. The results indicate that the organisation is perceived to be flexible by the nine participants as the areas of Adaptability (Blue) and Involvement (Green) scored highest on average over the four divisions.

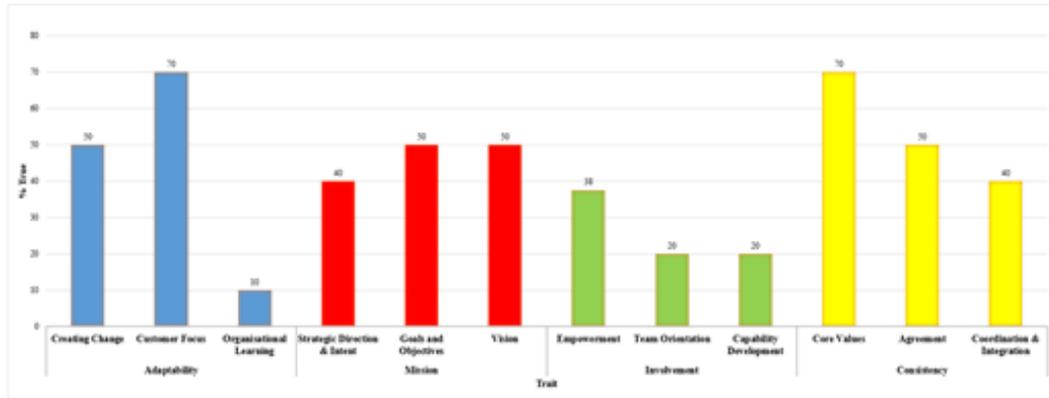


Figure 5.10: Manager Results for Questionnaire 2016, (% True)

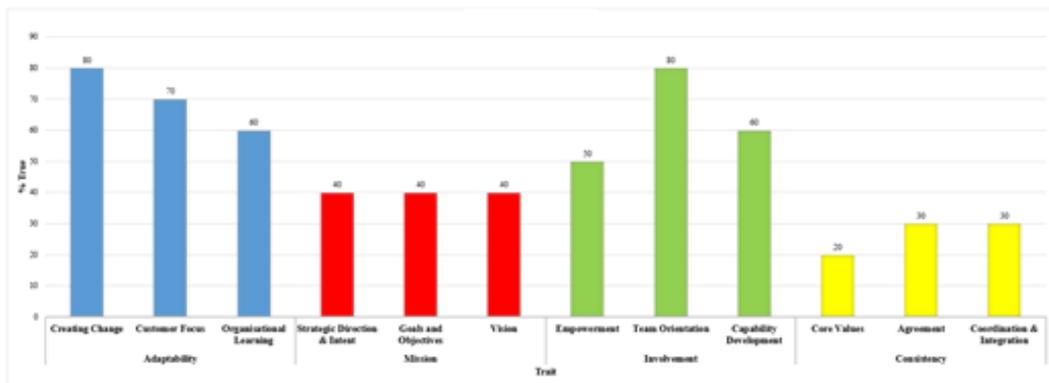


Figure 5.11: On-site Employees Results for Questionnaire 2016, (% True)

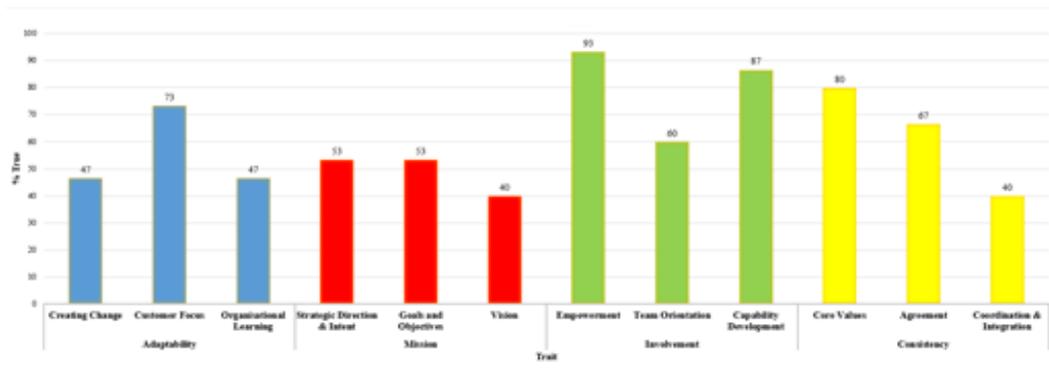


Figure 5.12: Off-site Employees (C) Results for Questionnaire 2016, (% True)

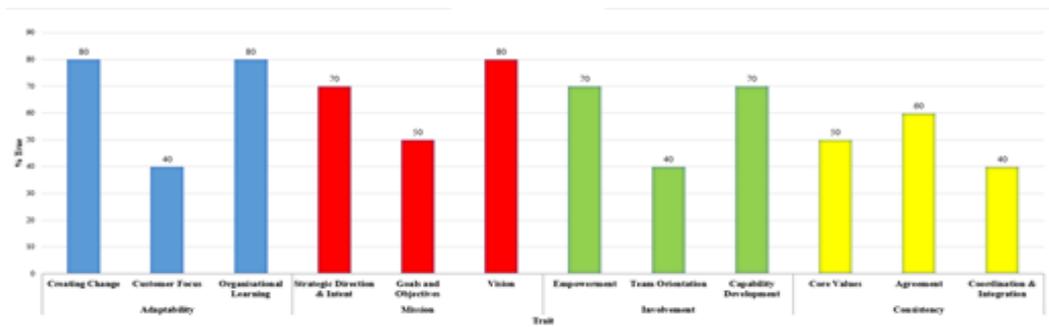


Figure 5.13: Off-site Employees (M) Results for Questionnaire 2016, (% True)

As demonstrated, there is a variance in the overall results when they are broken down by division. The Managers, on-site employees and off-site employees (C) are strong in Involvement (Green) with all three indicating respective high levels of Mission (Red), Adaptability (Blue) and Consistency (Yellow).

The results suggest that the strongest culture exists in the managers and the off-site employees (C) as illustrated by results in Figures 5.11 and 5.13 above. To understand the culture of Company X in 2016, the essential traits of the DOCS identified in the 2014 survey are further analysed in the context of the follow up questionnaire of 2016.

5.3.1 Mission

According to the questionnaire results, the measurable indexes associated with the essential trait Mission for Company X were found to be on average 44-56% true. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 70% to a low of 20% true.

There is a clear difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations mission:

- Strategic direction & Intent – 56% true collectively, 60% true for managers, 53% true for off-site employees (C) and 70% true for the off-site employees (M)
- Goals and objectives – 56% true collectively, 60% true for managers, 53% true for off-site employees (C) and 50% true for the off-site employees (M)
- Vision – 60% true for managers

In contrast the on-site employees and the off-site employees (M) rank mission much lower and the vision is very low across three of the divisions:

- Strategic direction & Intent – 40% true for on-site employees
- Goals and objectives – 40% true for on-site employees

- Vision – 44% true collectively, 40% true for on-site employees and off-site employees (C), 20% true for off-site employees (M)

5.3.2 Consistency

According to the questionnaire results, the measurable indexes associated with the essential trait Consistency for Company X were found to be on average 33-56% true. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 80% to a low of 30% true.

There is a clear difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations consistency:

- Core Values – 56% true collectively, 80% true for off-site employees (C) and 50% true for the off-site employees (M)
- Agreement – 56% true collectively, 60% true for managers, 67% true for off-site employees (C)
- Coordination & integration – 60% true for off-site employees (M)

In contrast the managers, the on-site employees and the off-site employees (M) rank consistency much lower:

- Core Values – 30% true for managers; 20% true for on-site employees
- Agreement – 30% true for on-site employees; 40% true for off-site employees (M)
- Coordination & integration – 33% true collectively; 40% true for managers; 30% true for on-site employees; 40% true for off-site employees (M)

On average, overall the off-site employees (C) and the off-site employees (M) score consistency much higher than the other two divisions in Company X which are based in head office.

5.3.3 Adaptability

According to the questionnaire results, the measurable indexes associated with the essential trait Adaptability for Company X were found to be on average 56-78% true. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 80% to a low of 40% true.

There is a clear difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisation's adaptability:

- Creating change – 78% true collectively, 70% true for managers; 80% true for on-site employees; 80% true for the off-site employees (M)
- Customer focus – 56% true collectively, 70% true for on-site employees; 73% true for on-site employees (C)
- Organisational learning – 60% true collectively, 70% true for managers; 60% true for on-site employees; 80% true for off-site employees (M)

There are contrasting views throughout the divisions of adaptability:

- Creating change – 47% true for the off-site employees (C)
- Customer focus – 40% true for managers; 40% true for off-site employees (M)
- Organisational learning – 47% true for off-site employees (C)

On average, overall the managers, on-site employees and off-site employees (M) and the off-site employees (M) score adaptability much higher than the off-site employees (M) in Company X.

5.3.4 Involvement

According to the questionnaire results, the measurable indexes associated with the essential trait Involvement for Company X were found to be on average 56-78% true. However, when broken down by division, the results range from a high of 87% to a low of 30% true.

There is a clear difference in the views of the four divisions of the organisations adaptability:

- Empowerment – 56% true collectively, 70% true for managers; 50% true for on-site employees; 93% true for the off-site employees (M)
- Team orientation – 67% true collectively, 70% true for managers; 80% true for on-site employees; 60% true for on-site employees (C); 60% true for on-site employees (M)
- Capability development – 78% true collectively, 78% true for managers; 60% true for on-site employees; 87% true for off-site employees (M)

There are contrasting views throughout of involvement between the divisions:

- Empowerment – 30% true for the off-site employees (C)
- Team orientation – all divisions scored team orientation above 60%
- Capability development – 30% true for off-site employees (C)

On average, overall the score the managers, on-site employees and off-site employees (M) and the off-site employees (M) score involvement much higher than the off-site employees (M) in Company X.

5.4 Interviews

In order to identify changes to the culture, a range of semi-structured interviews were carried out with the nine participants. As illustrated in Table 4.1, the interviewees included personnel from the four divisions of the organisation including different hierarchical positions and locations. By having a range of interviewees the results give a holistic view of the organisation.

According to Stanford (2010), qualitative methods aim to build a richness and depth to the assessment through the use of narrative, storytelling, personal example and imagery. By using personal interviews, it gave the researcher a holistic picture of the organisation's culture. Duncan (1989) indicates that

personal interviews make it possible to construct a holistic view of the organisation's culture that will help management manage it better.

Open ended questions, as illustrated in Table 4.2, were used by the researcher during the qualitative element of the research in order to gain an understanding of the organisational culture and to see if there is a shared interpretation of what culture is and what culture exists in Company X.

In addition to the open ended questions, the researcher explored the responses to the questionnaires and the interviewee responses are identified in this section.

5.4.1 What does organisational culture mean to you?

When the interviewees were asked this question, there were varying answers given six of the nine respondents were of the view that organisational culture meant how things are done around an organisation:

- *“I think organisational culture is about how we do things - it is about what is acceptable behaviour for everyone. It is about leading by example”.*
- *“I think it means how the company should do business - the culture is how we do business and how we treat our customers and employees. So in some companies it's all about bottom line and in other its make profit and give back so its wither you think your resources are dispensable or not or the clients are dispensable or not”*
- *“I would say how they do things”*
- *“...means the way we go about day to day- doing our job day to day and the manner in which we do that. Not so much what are the procedures but what are considered the norms amongst ourselves”*
- *“the way things are done around here... the company ethos - the method of how things are done”*
- *“organisation's values, shared beliefs and guiding principles which collectively embody the way the organisation does business”*

The need for consistency when thinking about organisational culture was also noted by two of interviewees:

- *“respect and consistency”*
- *“Fairness - same rules apply to all - brings a level of consistency”*

In addition, the need for a positive attitude, team work and respect was also noted by two of interviewees:

- *“[it] is all about attitude- positive people with right attitude no matter what business... you need the people who are supportive and have the right attitude and have bought into it... people with right attitude and understanding of the business and getting things done. by right I mean good”.*
- *“Across the organisation there should be team-work. For the internal and external stakeholders there must be professionalism at all times. Respect for clients, each other and all stakeholders & colleagues”*

5.4.2 What do you believe the culture of Company X is?

There was no common understanding on what the culture of Company X was with any of the respondents. The existence of various divisions i.e. on-site team in head office and two off-site teams – one on a client site and one mobile with a lot of lone working meant that there was a view that there were *“different cultures present in different parts of the organisation”* making it *“difficult to have one overarching culture present”* also *“because people who work independently [they] can become lone workers in how they think and operate and [as a result] are not part of an organisation’s culture.”*

Overall, four of the interviewees believed there was no consistency in how things were done in Company X with respondents noting that *“we haven’t been consistent”* in how things are done in the company. Indeed, four of interviewees also noted that the culture was *“evolving”* and Company X is *“trying to have a positive culture”*.

Two interviewees were of the view that “trying to grow and increase market share” to “make money” was the culture of Company X. Furthermore, two interviewees were of the view that “hard working dedicated people not always acknowledged”

It was noted that there was a move to improve culture in the organisation but that it was “*disjointed*” although “*the intention and recognition is there*” to improve the organisational culture it was felt Company X is not there just yet. “*It’s an evolving culture. It takes time to become involved with a company’s culture and I believe we are still evolving and finding what the culture is*”. There was a sense of “*inclusion*” and “*transparency*” noted by one interviewee.

5.4.3 Do you know what the values of the Company are?

Five interviewees did not know what the company values were or did but “*cannot remember them*”. One interviewee noted that they were aware the company values were in the “*company strategy*” but believed that most people would not be “*aware of what the values of the company are*”. Two of interviewees noted that the values would have been mentioned at the Company day each January but could not recall what they were.

Another interviewee noted that they believed the values “*are related to the core competencies*” of the company but did not elaborate further on these. Being more profitable was also noted as being the company value although “*it’s not what we say it is but that’s what I believe it is*”.

One interviewee noted that the company “*have good values based on the mission statement to provide an excellent service whilst still making a difference to the local community ... to be the best*”.

5.4.4 Do you recall the outcome of the Denison survey in 2014?

Five interviewees recalled the outcome of the DOCS 2014. The researcher went through the results from the previous report with all interviewees in advance of exploring the responses to the same questions as part of the 2016 questionnaire.

5.4.4 Exploration of questionnaire responses

5.4.4.1 Mission

The mission aspect looks at three measurable indexes: strategic direction and intent; goals and objectives; vision - during the interviews, interviewees were invited to make additional comments on their answers for each of the indexes:

- Strategic direction & Intent – One respondent noted that because of the company day in January “*people understand the basic core values of the company*” however, four interviewees noted they were aware that there was a strategy but they “*haven’t seen it*”.
- Goals and objectives – for one employees it was noted that the goals and objectives are clear when working with the client as there is an annual plan which is drilled down to monthly targets so it is very clear and transparent - “*it’s not that there isn’t there [for the company], it’s just not clear, it’s murky*”.
- Vision – there was a view that there was a lack of consistency between management and employees on the company vision - “*lack of communication*” of this. Also, for employees based off site (C) it was noted that “*being in contract work... it’s hard to have the same vision and think long-term*” for the company.

5.4.4.2 Consistency

The consistency aspect looks at three measurable indexes: core values; agreement; coordination and integration - during the interviews, interviewees

were invited to make additional comments on their answers for each of the indexes:

- Core Values – with regards to core values, seven of the interviewees believed that you would not get in trouble for ignoring core values. Only one interviewee believed you would get in trouble if you ignored them and another interviewee did not answer this question as they did not know what the values were.

Three of the interviewees changed their answer from “untrue” to “true” on this question when it was revisited with the researcher as the original response was based on getting in trouble in a business sense and not within the organisation.

- Agreement – Three interviewees noted that this section was answered based on their own day-to-day work off-site (C) and not on the organisation overall as “it is hard to say what happens outside of here”. Furthermore, it was noted that not everyone knows what everyone else’s work entails and therefore decision making can be difficult.
- Coordination & integration – there was a common view that because each of the divisions do different work that it is most likely each would have “*a different perspective*”.

5.4.4.3 Adaptability

The adaptability aspect looks at three measurable indexes: creating change; customer focus; organisational learning - during the interviews, interviewees were invited to make additional comments on their answers for each of the indexes:

- Creating change – it was noted by two interviewees that company X is “sometimes slow to change” but that it “is getting better at this”. A lack of communication around changes was noted. Also, for interviewees based off site it was noted that changes are dictated by

the client and not the company when it comes to their day to day work making change difficult.

- Customer focus – it was stated by one interviewee that “*we say we are customer focused but decisions are made that do not take the customer into account*”, furthermore, one interviewee believed that because of the type of work they did that the customers could not influence the decisions being made.
- Organisational learning – there was a general feeling that because of the different work each division does it was difficult to be sure what the other parts of the organisation were doing.

5.4.4.4 Involvement

The involvement aspect looks three measurable indexes: empowerment; team orientation; capability development - during the interviews, interviewees were invited to make additional comments on their answers for each of the indexes:

- Empowerment – interviewees were mostly positive above empowerment in company X, however only four believed information was widely shared so that everyone could get the information he or she needs when it's needed. Comments noted were “*in theory yes, in practice not*” and “*I think we are getting better at this but we have not been consistent in our communication*”. In addition, one interviewee, who believed the statement to be true, noted however that it was “*somewhat untrue*”.
- Team orientation – it was generally felt that at a local level there was high team orientation but that “cross cooperation” was not actively encouraged. All interviewees were of the view that there are clearly different divisions in the organisation and that as a result the day to day activities were different. One respondent noted that the summer

company day that is based around team building should focus on team building within the divisions as opposed to team building across the organisation. Furthermore, the opportunity to cross train team members, in particular between the two off-site teams was noted.

- Capability development – eight interviewees were of the view that there is continuous investment in the skills of our employees however during interview the following statements were made:
 - *“there is investment in training but it is not specific - its random. The training is random; not sure it is the optimum training for the majority of people”*
 - *“I think we are very good at this but I think we need to look at the requirements of the employees and ensure that we are providing relevant courses”*
 - *“not enough training & CPD done here - work needed here - soft skills courses are useful but not the whole picture”*

Furthermore, seven interviewees believed the capabilities of people were viewed as an important source of competitive advantage but during the interviews the following statements were made:

- *“No reward for those who ensure competitive advantage”*
- *“true that it is viewed this way but it is not shown back to our teams or the people who provide competitive advantage”*
- *“Yes, this is true but I don't think we reward people accordingly”*
- *“Agree but there is no reward system for those that ensure competitive advantage”*
- *“the competitive advantage is known- we are all replaceable the knowledge and experience can be gotten elsewhere. Company does not put any values on the people to ensure we do not lose that”*

5.4.5 Have changes been made at organisational level to improve the culture of the Company in recent times?

When the interviewees were asked this question all nine interviewees were of the view that changes were being made at organisational level to improve the culture:

- *“yes, the Great Place To Work initiative, monthly meeting and information sharing... all those things happening..... The company is driving this...”*
- *“yes- many improvements have taken place such as the soft skills training programmes, the introduction of weekly fruit baskets, lunches and payday breakfasts. The company handbook was updated recently”*
- *Yes - I am thinking of the Great Place To Work initiative - we are making changes. There was team leaders, extra annual leave. This all has to improve the culture. I am not aware of any at organisational level. I don't know of any major changes. The organisational structure has changed. There are benefits from the change to organisational structure - team leader”*
- *“there have been changes to improve but there are some that have had the opposite effect”*
- *“The lunches, the flexi-time- people are happier”*
- *“changes have been made - if they are right or wrong I don't know. On a positive the Great Place To Work initiative... But losing a key person was a big change and this was down to poor management, also decisions made around people leaving have had an impact, communication is not good”*
- *“ya, the Great Place To Work initiative, the CSR team”*

One interviewee noted that there is *“evidence that the Company is learning from the past, from best practice and sharing learning experiences with other similar size organisations... enterprise Ireland”* but updates on these was through casual conversations rather than formal updates.

5.4.6 How do you think the company's culture could be further improved?

When the interviewees were asked this question, there were varying answers given. Four interviewees believed communication needed to be improved:

- *“we need to ensure that we are consistent in how we deal with day-to-day activities, how we communicate, what we communicate. I think everyone needs to be clear on what is acceptable and not acceptable - we need to ensure that it is the same for everyone”*
- *“greater, consistent leadership. Communication to be improved. Consistency and fairness on how you are treating people”*
- *“communication is the big one. Communication of management view of where the company is going. The transparency that used to exist - it's not that they aren't transparent but it should be offered as opposed to being sought out e.g. Company Financial health used to be given at the company days but hasn't been over the last 2 years. Would like to see the figures. We need consistency in communication”*
- *“Get rid of the fluff - just talk straight to people”*

Three interviewees believed that looking after the people was an important change:

- *“rewarding the right people: if people go above and beyond they should be rewarded for longer hours, more intensive work they should be rewarded - this goes back to fairness”*
- *“employees could be seen as the company's only asset - we are the only asset”*
- *“Providing benefits to employee's - pension, other options - doesn't have to be all but proof that the company are thinking of the employees in the long-term - are investing in them”*

One interviewee noted that feedback from company events should be sought out and responded to. The company summer day was seen as a positive but noted that *“the social element should be mixed and the team building should be kept to those teams that work together”*.

Three interviewees believed that culture should be more natural:

- *“I think it needs to be more spontaneous rather than organised”*
- *“making culture part of what we do and how we do things and less forced and visible”*
- *“would like less organised fun - when you are there you always have a good time but the simpler the better - you can do more talking with people that you don't always see”*

Furthermore, two interviewees believed that encouraging knowledge sharing across the organisation would improve culture:

- *“We could explore ways of getting people in different sides of the organisation in what their role is or what their experience.”*
- *“clarity of goals, cascading of goals through performance management and cross learning initiatives”*

5.4.7 What can you do to improve the company's culture?

When the interviewees were asked this question, there were varying answers given. Five interviewees believed being positive was a way they could improve the company culture:

- *“Bring positivity and mentoring”*
- *“getting people working together”*
- *“Be positive, be approachable”*
- *“bring positivity.... Less negativity - If I could see consistency throughout the company, I would be more positive and productive”*

- *“I could try and get across the importance of the people in the company. I can try to influence the decision makers but not sure that works”*

Four interviewees believe that ensuring consistency and fairness was a way to improve the company culture:

- *“maybe involving the newer members. Maintain personal pride in myself in relation to fairness, professionalism respect and guidance”*
- *“deal with people in a fair and honest way - the same way I would want someone to deal with me. Making sure they have the opportunities to develop themselves”*
- *“be consistent in my approach. Ensure respect for all employees. Ensure that I follow the company values and instil these in others”*
- *“Walk the walk when it comes to accepting the vision. It comes back to the culture being what we are all about and if you don't fit in you don't fit into the company”*

Getting involved in the promotion of *“cross learning activity”* was also noted by an interviewee.

5.4.8 Additional comments

Interviewees were invited to make additional comments and these are detailed here. One interviewee noted that *“culture previously it was more organics and mature but now there is more planning... it has the rough edges cut off”* indeed, another interviewee noted that the staff handbook was useful but *“dictatorial... need to keep open relationships”*. In contrast one response stated that *“we need to define our culture and not be taking the culture off someone new - the culture from their previous employment to incorporate it into ours”*.

The need for consistent communication was noted and employee recognition was identified:

- *“recognise the importance of consistent communication. Also, as a service industry our employees are our greatest asset - without them we do not have a business - I think we need to recognise this and look after our people”*
- *the “payday breakfast, company days, Christmas parties do not make the company a great place to work” if you feel undervalued.*
- *“All the extras - payday breakfast, lunches, parties, company days are great but I think people would prefer to see the money that is being spent could be put into the long-term investment for people.”*
- *“not knowing when next salary rise is- is it 5 years away. Some guidance where we are going to be. The older you get the more important this is. With the job not having a pension or health care it is important for mortgages and other outgoings. Just some forecast - if you knew you were going to go up – it’s communication again. At the moment salary is our only ‘benefit’”.*

Also, *“the longer goals could be more realistic”* with clear guidance on what the company is up against were noted so that the company can *“prepare for eventualities... someone might leave; we wait for the problem to arrive... as a result we firefight”* instead of being proactive.

5.5 Conclusion

For the purpose of the research, Company X was divided into four divisions: managers, on-site employees, off-site employees (C) and off-site employees (M). The Denison survey results in 2014 demonstrate that there is a clear difference in the culture for each division at that time.

The managers and off-site employees (C) are strong in mission and consistency as illustrated in Figures 5.5 to 5.7 unlike the on-site employees and off-site employees (M). The strongest culture in 2014 was demonstrated by the off-site employees (C), as demonstrated by the large amount of colour in the survey results in Figure 5.6. The questionnaire results in 2016, illustrated in Figures 5.11 – 5.14, indicate that the organisation is perceived to be flexible by the nine participants as the areas of adaptability and involvement scored highest on average over the four divisions.

Interviews carried out in 2016 with nine employees indicate that there is a lack of understanding of what the values of Company X are. Furthermore, four believe that there is a lack of consistency in how things are done in Company X with four also believing that the culture could be improved if communication was improved.

Chapter 6

Research Outcome - Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the important outcomes of the research. The objective of this research is to examine if organisational culture in Company X, an SME in Ireland has changed over time. In order to explore this the following research questions, need to be addressed in this chapter:

- What culture existed in the organisation in 2014?
- What is the current Culture of Company X?
- How has the culture of Company X has changed since 2014?

Within this chapter each of these will be discussed. Sections 6.2 and 6.3 will review the culture of Company X in 2014 and 2016 in the context of the Denison Organisational Culture model whilst Section 6.4 will review what has changed.

6.2 What Culture Existed in Company X in 2014?

According to the Denison model, the stronger stable side of Company X's organisational culture as illustrated by Figure 5.1 suggests that decisions in the organisation are made at the 'top' without appropriate information. The lower adaptability scores indicate that the external views, in particular from the customer, are not valued. In addition, the low scores in capability development suggests that there is a lack of focus on development of employees.

When the four division are reviewed however, there are very distinct organisational cultures in each of the divisions which differ from the overall company culture.

6.2.1 Managers

As indicated in Figure 5.4 there was a strong mission and consistency suggesting that the managers see the organisation as being focused and stable (Denison, 2009). They understand where the organisation is going and they know how to get there. In contrast the low adaptability scores suggest that there is a lack of focus on the external needs of the clients. The lower scores in the areas of adaptability and involvement suggest there may be a lack of flexibility when looking after the client's needs. Furthermore, a lack of involvement according to McCathy (2015) may affect the success of organisational culture change.

6.2.2 On-site

As indicated in Figure 5.5 there are low scores across all areas for the on-site employees when benchmarked against the Denison global database. The low mission and consistency suggests a lack of knowledge about where the organisation is going and the lack of tools to get there. In addition, the low adaptability scores suggest that there is a lack of focus on the external needs of the clients. The lower scores in the areas of adaptability and involvement suggest there may be a lack of flexibility when looking after the client's needs. According to Denison et al. (2012) the organisations that do not have a clear understanding of where they are going will usually not be successful.

6.2.3 Off-site (C)

As indicated in Figure 5.6 there is a strong well balanced culture within this division. According to Denison (2009) the balance between the Involvement and Mission traits indicate that that information flows freely across the division. Furthermore, the balance between Involvement and Adaptability suggest that risk taking and innovation is encouraged. McCathy (2015) identifies the importance of employee involvement and notes that success in organisational culture change can be driven by empowering employees to come up with the solutions. Overall this division is responsive to the client's needs, talent management is encouraged and everyone is clear on what the

goals of the division are in order to achieve the strategy. There is strong communication between management and the employees (Denison, 2009).

6.2.4 Off-site (M)

As indicated in Figure 5.7 there are low scores across all the areas of mission and involvement for the off-site (M) when benchmarked against the Denison global database. As noted by McCathy (2015) employee involvement is important as organisational culture change can be driven by empowering employees to come up with the solutions. Furthermore, the low mission and involvement suggests a lack of communication from management to employees meaning operations are less effective. According to Handy (2000) and Vincent et al. (2012) if shared common principles are lacking due to inconsistency the success of any organisation will be affected.

6.3 What is the culture of Company in 2016?

Using the Denison model theory, the stronger flexible side of Company X organisational culture as illustrated by Figure 5.8 suggests that the company can respond quickly to change and is innovative. The lower mission and consistency scores indicate that the organisation is less stable with a lack of alignment for where the organisation is going and how it will get there.

When the four divisions are reviewed however, there are very distinct organisational cultures in each of the divisions which differ from the overall company culture.

6.3.1 Managers

As indicated in Figure 5.11 there is strong mission and involvement suggesting that from the managers' point of view there is an alignment of the mission and involvement which indicates two-way communication between management and the employees. The lower adaptability scores suggest that there is a lack of focus on the external needs of the clients. Furthermore, the lower scores in the areas of adaptability and consistency suggest there may be a lack of focus on the client's needs and the internal processes. Denison et

at. (2013) identify that consistency can improve innovation through cross-functional teamwork and support alignment and coordination throughout the process.

6.3.2 On-site

Similar to the overall company, Figure 5.12 suggests that the on-site employees believe that the company can respond quickly to change and it is innovative. According to Denison (2009) this type of organisation “*tends to be successful at being innovative and satisfying their customers*” (Denison, 2009 P. 8). The lower mission and consistency scores indicate that the on-site employees perceive the organisation to be less stable with a lack of alignment for where the organisation is going and how it will get there.

6.3.3 Off-site (C)

As indicated in Figure 5.13 there is strong involvement and consistency suggesting that from the off-site employees (C) point of view there is a strong focus within this team. According to Denison (2009) “*high scores in internal focus typically predict efficient operating performance, higher levels of quality and increased employee satisfaction*” (Denison, 2009 P. 8).

6.3.4 Off-site (M)

As indicated in Figure 5.13 there is strong adaptability and mission suggesting that from the off-site employees (M) point of view there is a strong external focus on the client’s needs. According to Denison (2009) this allows an organisation to “*grow as they meet the current and future needs of the marketplace*” (Denison, 2009 P. 8).

6.4 How has the culture of Company X changed since 2014?

A number of interviewees had similar views to many academics such as Schein (2006) Mullins (2007) that culture is “how things are done around here”. This is similar to the views of other academics such as Lafferty et al. (2001), Kasper (2002), Armstrong (2006) and Hofstede (1991) who believe that culture is linked to the value, norms and beliefs yet the findings illustrate

that over 80% of interviewees did not know what the values of Company X were or if they did could not think of them at the time of interview.

Schein (2006) notes that “different organizations will have different paradigms with different assumptions” (Schein, 2006 p.21) while this research focused on the culture within one company it is clear from the findings that different culture existed and continue to exist within Company X as illustrated in Tables 6.1 – 6.5 below.

Year	2014	2016
Dynamic Tension	Adaptability & Consistency	Adaptability & Involvement
Focus	Customer	Flexible

Table 6.1: Comparison of Company X culture 2014 to 2016

Year	2014	2016
Dynamic Tension	Mission Consistency	Mission Involvement
Focus	Flexible & Stable	Top-down, bottom up alignment

Table 6.2: Culture comparison Managers

Year	2014	2016
Dynamic Tension	Consistency Adaptability	Adaptability Involvement
Focus	Customer	Flexible

Table 6.3: Culture comparison on-site employees

Year	2014	2016
Dynamic Tension	Mission Consistency Involvement Adaptability	Involvement Consistency
Focus	Well rounded profile	Internal focus

Table 6.4: Culture comparison off-site employees (C)

Year	2014	2016
Dynamic Tension	Consistency Adaptability	Adaptability Mission
Focus	Customer	External focus

Table 6.5: Culture comparison off-site employees (M)

Hofstede (1991) noted that one of the dimensions of culture was individualism Vs Collectivism which refers to the degree to which the members of an organisation act for themselves or as part of the group. From the findings it is clear to the researcher that there are four individual groups operating within Company X. Indeed, Cacciattolo (2014) was of the view that

that organisations will have various sub-cultures rather than one overriding culture and these may overlap and appear to conflict with each other. Lafferty and Hult (2001) hold the view that culture goes beyond both the formal and informal processes within an organisation and that it relates to the way people do things in an organisation. (Kasper, 2002). Studies carried out by Hoogervorst et al. (2004) confirmed that due to the close relationship between culture and behaviour, consistency when communicating in the organisation was very important. Inconsistency in communication creates a high likelihood of organisational inertia which will result in poor performance and prevent the organisational goals being met.

Pillay and Cardenas (2015) note that poor performance may be caused within an organisation due to unconscious actions within the organisation but that being conscious of decisions and how they are made and communicated can positively impact the employees and the overall organisational performance. Furthermore, Guidroz et al. (2010) similar to Denison et al. (2012) note that communication is an important factor for the success of culture change in an organisation and all employees must be kept informed of what is happening. The findings indicate that communication and consistency of communication is lacking in Company X which could have an impact on the overall organisational success.

Furthermore, Chatterjee (2009) indicates that an organisation's culture can have an impact on staff retention. To ensure staff retention organisations must give due importance to the organisation's culture and work environment. Chatman (1991) identifies that employees tend to have greater job satisfaction and will stay longer with the organisation if they 'fit' the organisational culture. From the qualitative research it is clear that employees do not feel that the company values them and their input into the organisation as rewards are lacking for work well done – for people who go above and beyond.

The mission of Company X was clear to the managers in 2014 and again in 2016. This is also true for the off-site employees (M) in 2016. The other

divisions do not see the mission of Company X as being clear. According to Denison et al. (2012) the organisations that do not have a clear understanding of where they are going will usually not be successful. It is the organisations that have a clear mission, vision and purpose who know where they want to be in the future that will be successful. If an organisation and its employees do not understand what the mission of the organisation is, it will be difficult to drive organisational goals (Laran et al., 2016), furthermore, Schein (2004), is of the belief that individual employees can influence the values in an organisation. If the mission is not clear an organisation may end up with individual values driving the culture.

Management and employees of Company X are aware that there is a new Strategy for the organisation as it was announced during the January Company day in 2016 but following the qualitative and quantitative research it is clear that not everyone is aware of what the revised strategy is. Muscalu (2014) notes that it is not enough for an organisation to identify a new vision and how this will be achieved, communication is key as it is synonymous with the changing attitudes in any organisation.

Three of the divisions in 2016 believe involvement is high with Company X with only the off-site employees (M) not scoring this as high. Given that this team are mobile and perform lone work it may influence their involvement in the organisation. McCathy (2015) identifies the importance of employee involvement and notes that success in organisational culture change can be driven by empowering employees to come up with the solutions.

In 2014, the overall company, the managers and the off-site employees (C) rated consistency in Company X as high. However, in 2016 only the off-site employees (C) is of the view that there is high consistency in Company X. Denison et al. (2013) identify that consistency can improve innovation through cross-functional teamwork and support alignment and coordination throughout the process. The research has clearly indicated that there is a lack of alignment in the views of organisational culture across the four divisions

so it is therefore tied in with there being a lack of consistency across Company X. According to Handy (2000) and Vincent et al. (2012) culture is about shared and common principles if these are lacking due to inconsistency then the success of the organisation will be affected.

6.5 Conclusion

As illustrated in Tables 6.1 to 6.5 the culture of Company X has changed over the 2-year period. This change however has not been consistent across the four divisions. Schein (2006) notes that different organizations can have different assumptions but in the case of Company X, the findings indicate that there are four individual groups operating within Company X. Indeed, Cacciattolo (2014) was of the view that organisations will have various sub-cultures rather than one overriding culture and these may overlap and appear to conflict with each other.

The findings indicate that communication and consistency of communication is lacking in Company X which could have an impact on the overall organisational success. Studies carried out by Hoogervorst et al. (2004) confirmed that due to the close relationship between culture and behaviour, consistency when communicating in the organisation was very important. Inconsistency in communication creates a high likelihood of organisational inertia which will result in poor performance and prevent the organisational goals being met. Guidroz et al. (2010) similar to Denison et al. (2012) note that communication is an important factor for the success of culture change in an organisation and all employees must be kept informed of what is happening.

Furthermore, Chatterjee (2009) indicates that an organisation's culture can have an impact on staff retention. Chatman (1991) identifies that employees tend to have greater job satisfaction and will stay longer with the organisation if they 'fit' the organisational culture. From the qualitative research it is clear that employees do not feel that the company values them and their input into the organisation as rewards are lacking for work well done – for people who

go above and beyond. Studies carried out by Pattnaik et al. (2014) concluded that apparent support from an organisation can impact the level of commitment given by employees to the organisation. By initiating fair reward systems, it indicated his/her contributions were valued and important to the organisation (Pattnaik et al., 2014). This can in turn enhance the organisational culture, the success of the strategy and the overall culture of a company.

The mission of Company X, whilst clear to the managers, was not clear for the other divisions. According to Denison et al. (2012) the organisations that do not have a clear understanding of where they are going will usually not be successful. If an organisation and its employees do not understand what the mission of the organisation is, it will be difficult to drive organisational goals (Laran et al. 2016).

Management and employees of Company X are aware that there is a new strategy for Company X but not everyone is clear on what the strategy is. Muscalu (2014) notes that it is not enough for an organisation to identify a new vision and how this will be achieved, communication is key as it is synonymous with the changing attitudes in any organisation. The research has clearly indicated that there is a lack of alignment in the views of organisational culture across the four divisions so it is therefore tied in with there being a lack of consistency across Company X. According to Handy (2000) and Vincent et al. (2012) culture is about shared and common principles if these are lacking due to inconsistency then the success of the organisation will be affected.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Further Research

7.1 Conclusion

For the purpose of the research, Company X was divided into four divisions: managers, on-site employees, off-site employees (C) and off-site employees (M). The research found that there is no one clear culture in Company X, in fact there appears to be four distinct cultures in existence between the four divisions.

The Denison survey results in 2014 demonstrate that there is a clear difference in the culture for each division at that time. The strongest culture in 2014 was demonstrated by the off-site employees (C) and the results from the 2016 interviews and questionnaires demonstrated that this team have the highest level of employee satisfaction with strong involvement in their day-to-day work and high levels of consistency. However, this team, who are contracted on a client's site 365/year felt less alignment with the company and less involved in the overall company strategy.

When the interviewees were asked if changes were being made at organisational level to improve the culture, they all believed they were. Initiatives such as the Great Place to Work scheme, the introduction of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee along with pay day breakfast/lunches, weekly fruit baskets and additional annual leave were noted.

Interviews carried out in 2016 with nine employees of Company X indicate that there is a lack of understanding of what the core values of the company. This comes down to communication or lack thereof. Furthermore, a lack of consistency in how things are done in Company X was noted with employees believing that the culture could be improved if communication was improved. A lack of communication and consistency of same could have an impact on

the overall organisational success. The introduction of a new strategy in 2016 by Company X could be said to have had a negative impact on the organisation's culture as it has not been clearly communicated to employees of Company X.

Management and employees of Company X are aware that there is a new strategy for Company X but not everyone was clear on what the strategy is. It is not enough for Company X to identify a new vision and how this will be achieved; it must be communicated with everyone if the vision is to be successful.

Furthermore, the findings from 2014 and 2016 indicate that Company X and the employees recognises the importance of its employees in order to gain competitive advantage but following the interviewees it was clear that employees do not believe that their influence in gaining competitive advantage for the company is recognised or rewarded. This could have an impact on staff retention for Company X and its overall success in the future if it is not addressed.

When also asked how to improve organisational culture, five of the interviewees believed being positive was a way they could improve the company culture. Four of the interviewees believe that ensuring consistency and fairness was a way to improve the company culture

The research has clearly indicated that there is a lack of alignment in the views of organisational culture across the four divisions so it is therefore tied in with there being a lack of consistency across Company X.

7.2 Further Research

Following the one-to-one interviewees answers to sections of the questionnaire differed for four of the interviewees when they were explored by the researcher. It can be said that the interviews gave a more holistic view on the overall questionnaire responses. Further research should be carried out

to explore the contrast to responses when people are given a questionnaire and when the responses to these are further explored

In the context of organisational culture in SME's further research could be carried out to ascertain if the outcome of the four distinct organisational cultures across an SME with a number of divisions was a localised issue or is it an attribute of SMEs.

7.3 Recommendations

In order to continue the improvement of culture in Company X, the following should be reviewed:

- Implementation of a Communication Strategy to ensure consistency in communication. Any such strategy should take into account the communication of company values and overall strategy for Company X as these are unclear to the employees at present.
- Implementation of a Reward Strategy to improve employee motivation in particular, for those employees that go above and beyond. Further research would need to be carried out on this by Company X in order to ensure that any action taken does in fact motivate employees rather than having a negative impact on the overall business.
- Five of those interviewed indicated that they individually being positive would bring about an improved culture in the company. It's important for Company X to work with all employees to promote this.

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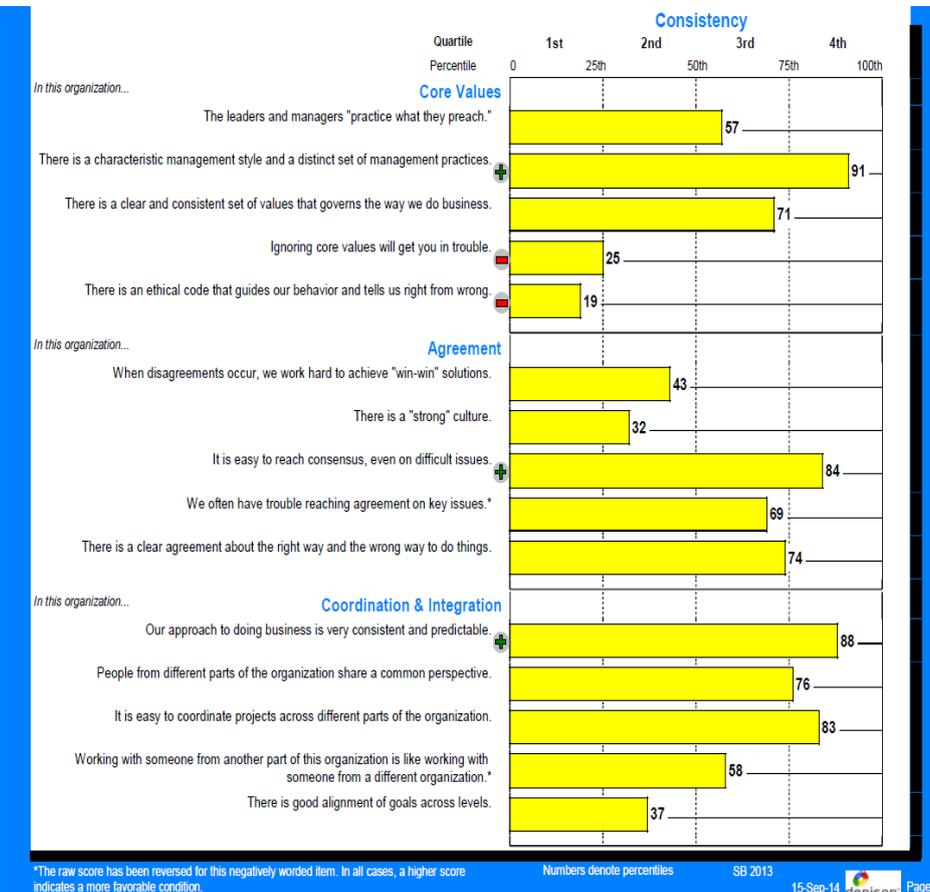
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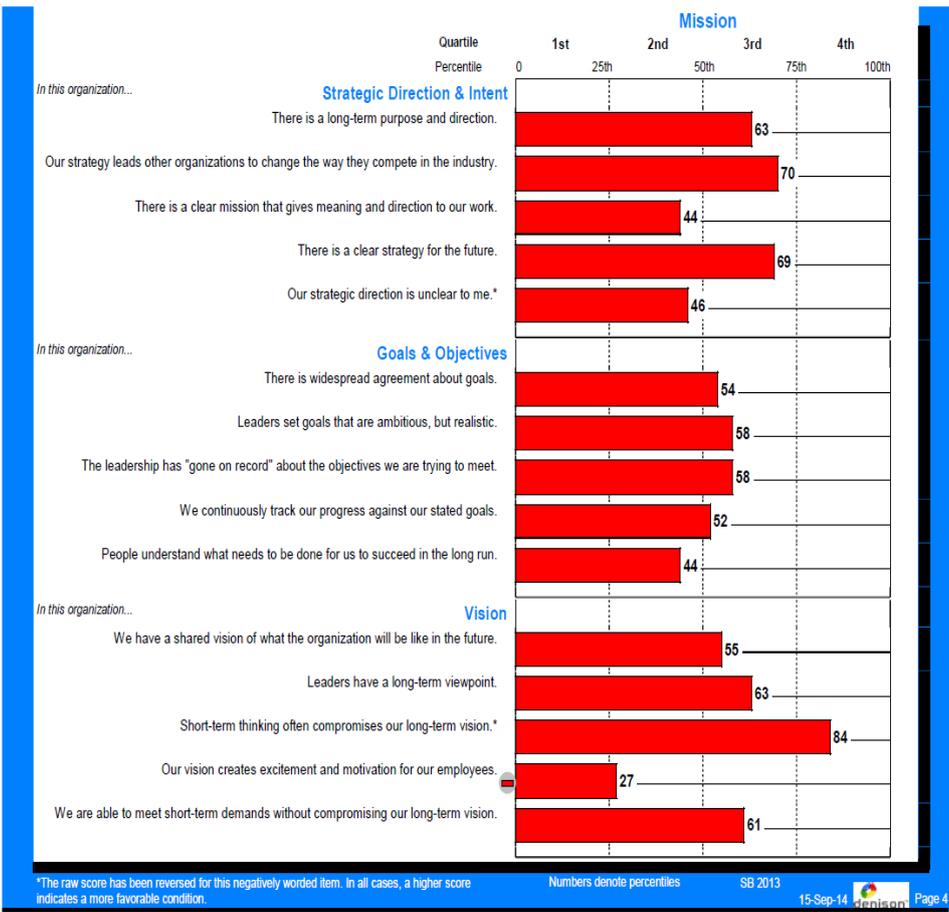
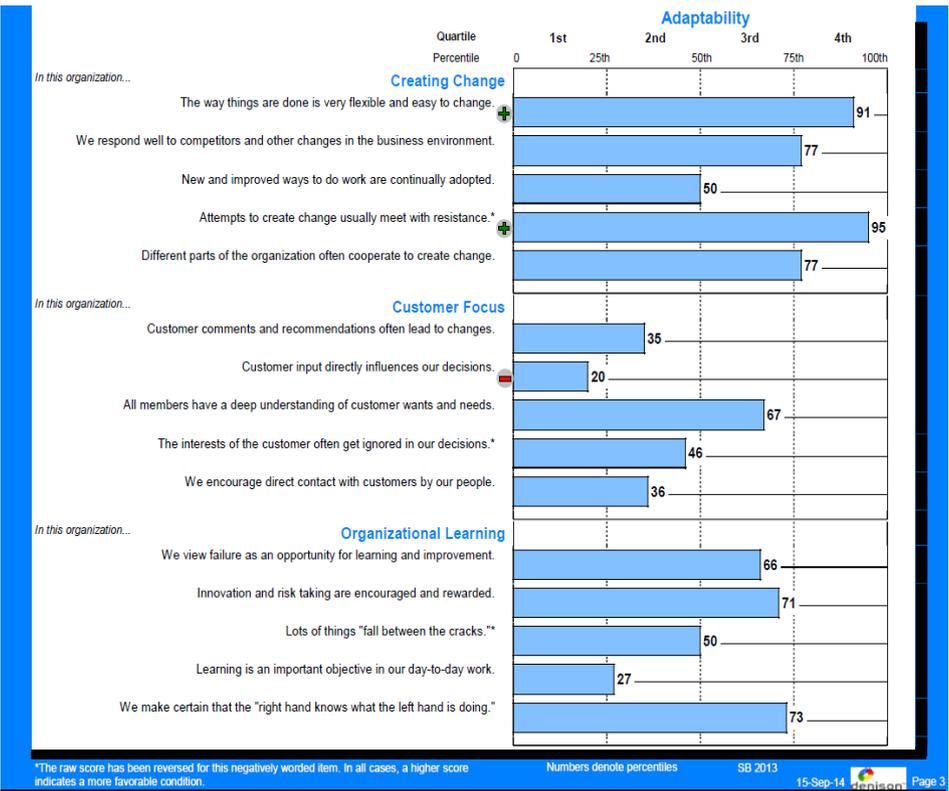
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Appendix A DOCS Report 2014





What do you think are the greatest strengths of this organization?

People
Service Offering
Flexibility

Individuals expertise and insights.

Vision and dedication to progressing the company over the coming years. The goals of the company are clear to staff.

The company ethos of wanting to 'work with' the clients on their journey to and throughout certification is very strongly reinforced continually by the management team and the wider team through their behaviours.

The team of people working within the company

Strong Board of Directors, Less Red Tape, Good Leadership,

The people.

Our sense of identity and of being different (and better) than the competition. A track record of success and pride within the organisation in what we have achieved.

The organisation is young, well educated and motivated

Great people to work with. People are willing to work hard and have accepted changes in the last year. Management are approachable and willing to resolve issues when they arise.

Its people and their desire to do a good job.

The people and their approach

The employees - We have a highly experienced team of people with a broad range of skills.

Unity in the Unit. We all try to help each other and not to get ahead of anybody. We work together to achieve goals. There is an ethic of work where we all stay at the same level and nobody is above others

I think that teamwork and the positive attitude are the greatest strengths of the organisation

Expertise
Flexibility to respond to changes in environment - because of our size
The People

Our ability to adapt to customer needs, via communication with sales and operations

- The resources (staff from office based to Auditors)
- Level of service provided to clients - the personal touch

The long term strategy

Ambition and eagerness to move into new areas

Its people



15-Sep-14

What do you think are the biggest challenges for this organization?

Uncertainty of future business, lack of staff development

Delegation

Competition, uncertainty about contracts

When day to day operations and tasks jeopardise the long term strategy.

- IT systems can be slow

developing new auditors to sustain the client base we have and also to allow us to gain a greater proportion of market share and thus profit.

The strength of the internal structures that growth will be dependent on - consistent dependable approaches to CRM, HR. Keeping a cohesive group that are in tune with the organisation as it grows.

High turnover of staff and keeping the staff happy could be a big challenge for the organisation

professional progression for employees. I do not see it clearly in our unit but I think is mainly due to the nature of the job itself not due to other personal issues

internal communication
understanding the needs of the employees

Management of Growth
Lack of resources (People)
Top management having to focus on operational issues due to lack of resources
Poor communication

Growing from a small company to a larger one. Management need to divest some of their control and trust middle management and staff with more responsibility.

Staying competitive

Internal communications and helping staff understand where their role and contribution fits within the overall vision for the company.

Meeting the needs of all employees.

As the company grows have we the infrastructure in place.

Communication

Availability of resources and planning. Lack of personal goals.

Spreading the word on the benefits of certification

As more employment opportunities are becoming available staff retention is the biggest challenge facing the organisation.

Communication is sometimes poor, people are unsure of the strategy of the company and where they are heading. Reward measures need to be put in place and training and development plans for employees.

the generation of revenue from new business ventures - we need to ensure we have the key personnel in place.
Retention of staff



15-Sep-14

Appendix B Email to Interviewee's



Wed 13/07/2016 10:41

Marese Feeney

Culture Interview

To

Bcc



Many thanks for agreeing to complete the attached and for doing an interview with me.

I want to reassure you that whilst information from the interviews will be used as part of the thesis and overall analysis of the organizational culture, individual names will not be identified.

In advance of our interview, can you complete the sections on:

1. Involvement
2. Consistency
3. Adaptability
4. Mission

There are a total of 60 questions in the four sections and each should be answered true/untrue. To make the selection a dropdown menu is available – this menu allows you select '1' for your chosen answer. These questions are the same as the survey questions in the Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS) carried out in 2014. The DOCS is designed to assess an organization's strengths and weaknesses as they apply to organizational performance. I want to assess the views of all interviewees in the 4 areas and I can explore each of the areas to include additional comments during your one-to-one interview which I hope will take no longer than 40mins.

Many thanks in advance for being part of this and giving me assistance with my thesis.

Regards,

Marese

Appendix C Interview Schedule

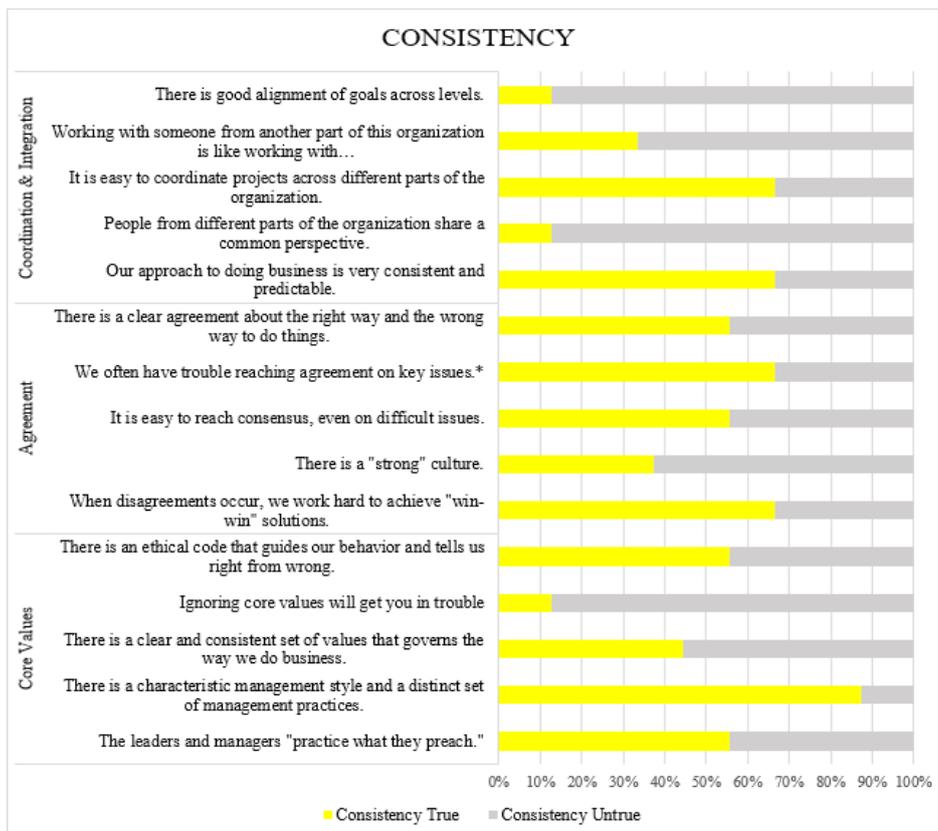
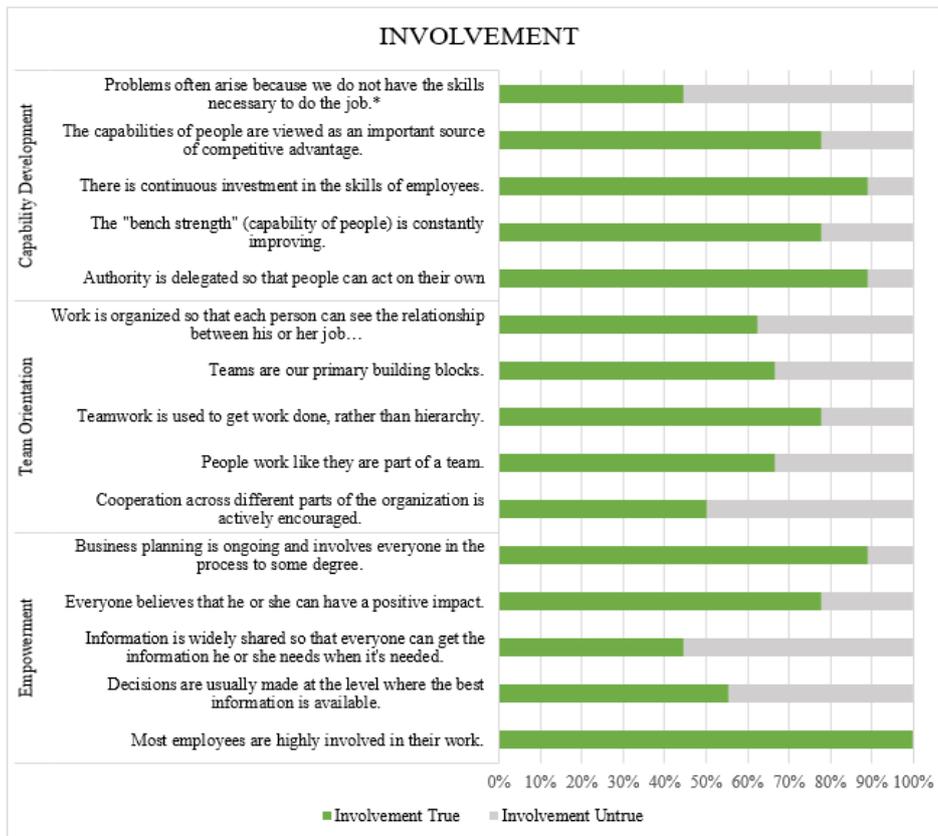
Interviewee	Questionnaire Date	Interview Date
Management	Jul-16	Jul-16
Management	Jul-16	Jul-16
On-site employee	Jul-16	Jul-16
On-site employee	Jul-16	Jul-16
Off-site employee – Client	Jul-16	Jul-16
Off-site employee – Client	Jul-16	Jul-16
Off-site employee – Client	Jul-16	Jul-16
Off-site employee - Mobile	Jul-16	Jul-16
Off-site employee - Mobile	Jul-16	Jul-16

Appendix D Questionnaire Template based on Denison Model

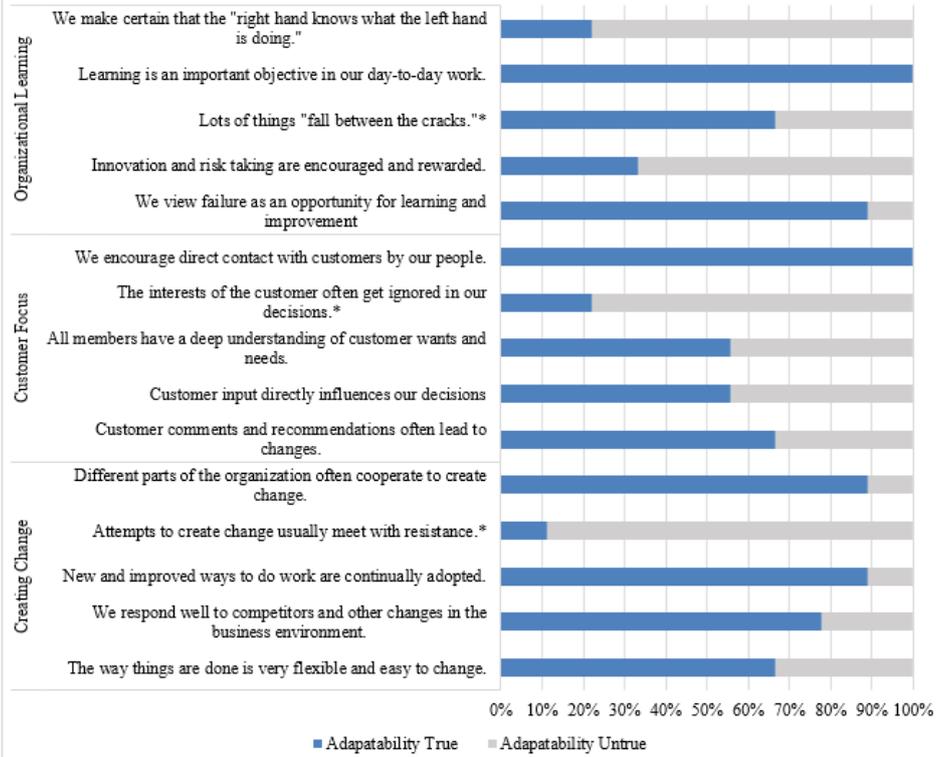
Organisational Performance Trait	Measurable Index	Questions	True	Untrue
INVOLVEMENT	Empowerment	Most employees are highly involved in their work.		
		Decisions are usually made at the level where the best information is available.		
		Information is widely shared so that everyone can get the information he or she needs when it's needed.		
		Everyone believes that he or she can have a positive impact.		
		Business planning is ongoing and involves everyone in the process to some degree.		
	Team Orientation	Cooperation across different parts of the organization is actively encouraged.		
		People work like they are part of a team.		
		Teamwork is used to get work done, rather than hierarchy.		
		Teams are our primary building blocks.		
		Work is organized so that each person can see the relationship between his or her job and the goals of the organization.		
	Capability Development	Authority is delegated so that people can act on their own		
		The "bench strength" (capability of people) is constantly improving.		
There is continuous investment in the skills of employees.				
The capabilities of people are viewed as an important source of competitive advantage.				
		Problems often arise because we do not have the skills necessary to do the job.*		
CONSISTENCY	Core Values	The leaders and managers "practice what they preach."		
		There is a characteristic management style and a distinct set of management practices.		
		There is a clear and consistent set of values that governs the way we do business.		
		Ignoring core values will get you in trouble		
		There is an ethical code that guides our behavior and tells us right from wrong.		
	Agreement	When disagreements occur, we work hard to achieve "win-win" solutions.		
		There is a "strong" culture.		
		It is easy to reach consensus, even on difficult issues.		
		We often have trouble reaching agreement on key issues.*		
		There is a clear agreement about the right way and the wrong way to do things.		
	Coordination & Integration	Our approach to doing business is very consistent and predictable.		
		People from different parts of the organization share a common perspective.		
		It is easy to coordinate projects across different parts of the organization.		
		Working with someone from another part of this organization is like working with someone from a different organization.*		
		There is good alignment of goals across levels.		
ADAPTABILITY	Creating Change	The way things are done is very flexible and easy to change.		
		We respond well to competitors and other changes in the business environment.		
		New and improved ways to do work are continually adopted.		
		Attempts to create change usually meet with resistance.*		
	Customer Focus	Different parts of the organization often cooperate to create change.		
		Customer comments and recommendations often lead to changes.		
		Customer input directly influences our decisions		
		All members have a deep understanding of customer wants and needs.		
	Organizational Learning	The interests of the customer often get ignored in our decisions.*		
		We encourage direct contact with customers by our people.		
		We view failure as an opportunity for learning and improvement		
		Innovation and risk taking are encouraged and rewarded.		
		Lots of things "fall between the cracks."*		
		Learning is an important objective in our day-to-day work.		
		We make certain that the "right hand knows what the left hand is doing."		
MISSION	Strategic Direction & Intent	There is a long-term purpose and direction.		
		Our strategy leads other organizations to change the way they compete in the industry.		
		There is a clear mission that gives meaning and direction to our work.		
		There is a clear strategy for the future.		
	Goals & Objectives	Our strategic direction is unclear to me.*		
		There is widespread agreement about goals.		
		Leaders set goals that are ambitious, but realistic.		
		The leadership has "gone on record" about the objectives we are trying to meet.		
	Vision	We continuously track our progress against our stated goals.		
		People understand what needs to be done for us to succeed in the long run.		
		We have a shared vision of what the organization will be like in the future.		
		Leaders have a long-term viewpoint.		
		Short-term thinking often compromises our long-term vision.*		
		Our vision creates excitement and motivation for our employees.		
		We are able to meet short-term demands without compromising our long-term vision.		

In accordance with the Denison Organisational Culture Survey Model carried out in 2014. *The raw score has been reversed for this negatively worded item. In all cases, a higher score indicates a more favorable condition.

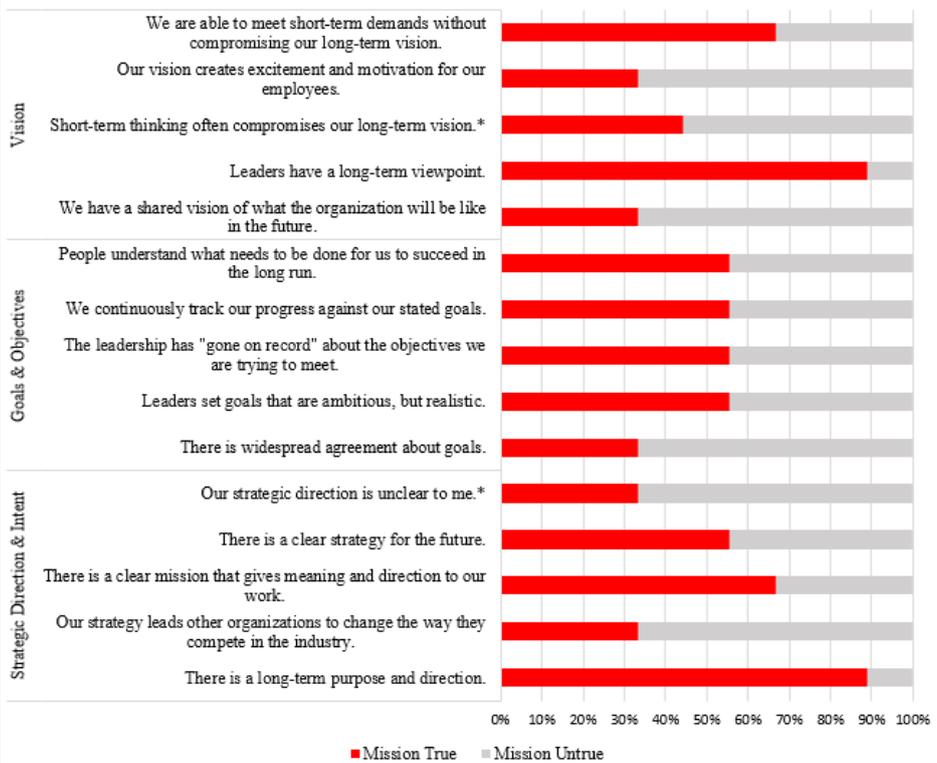
Appendix E Questionnaire Results 2016, ALL



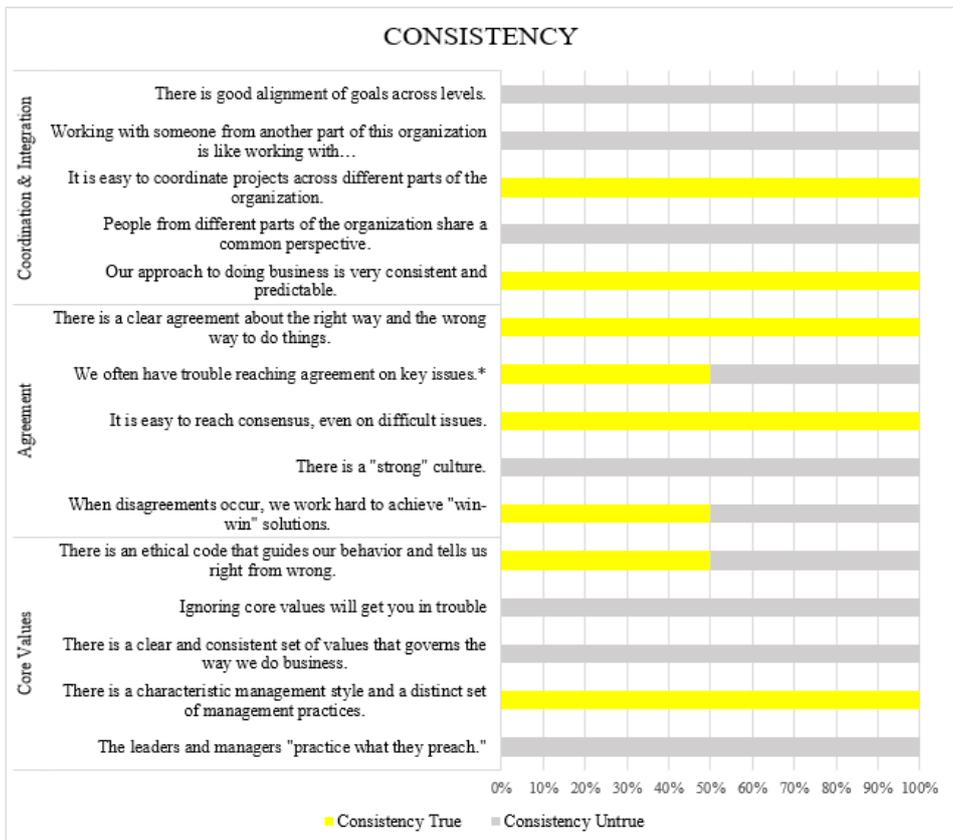
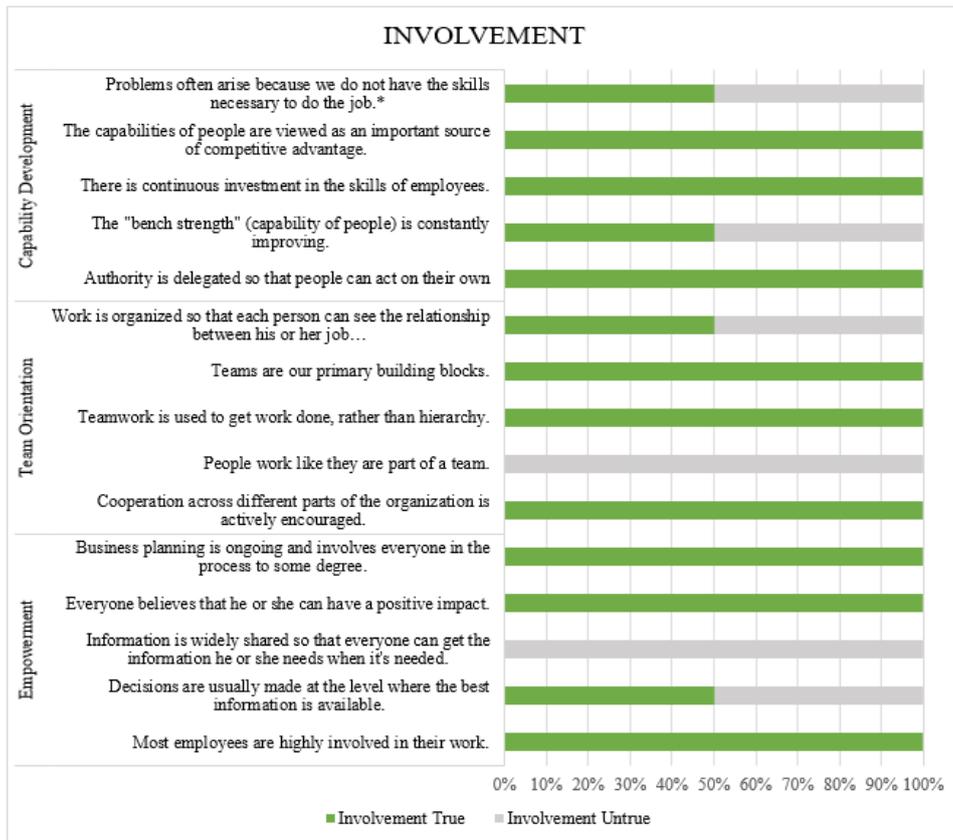
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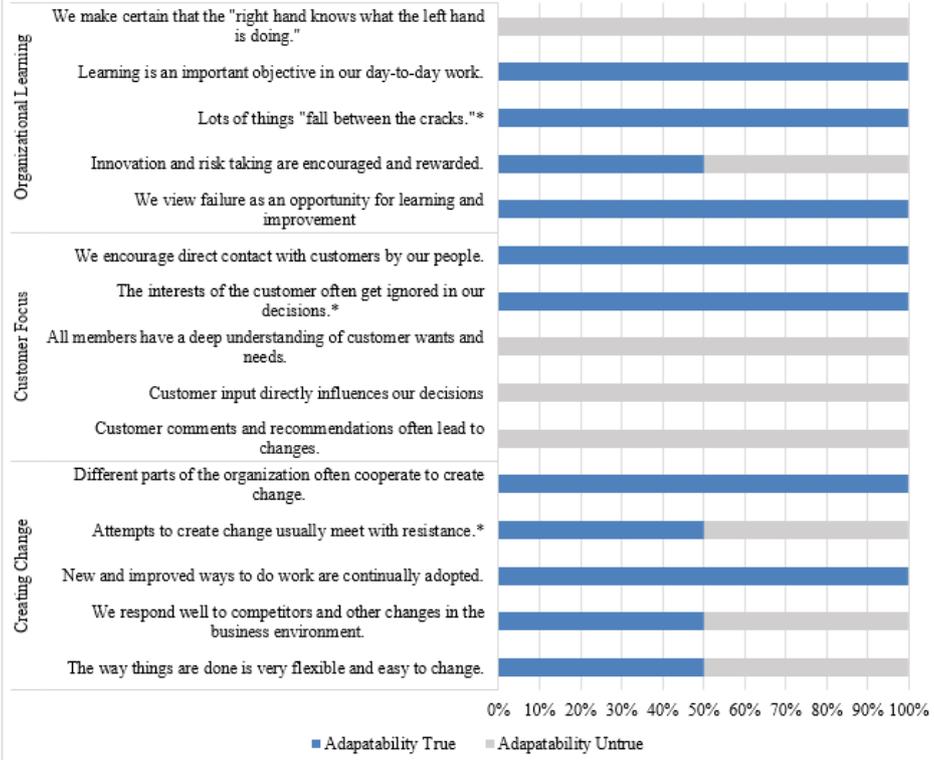
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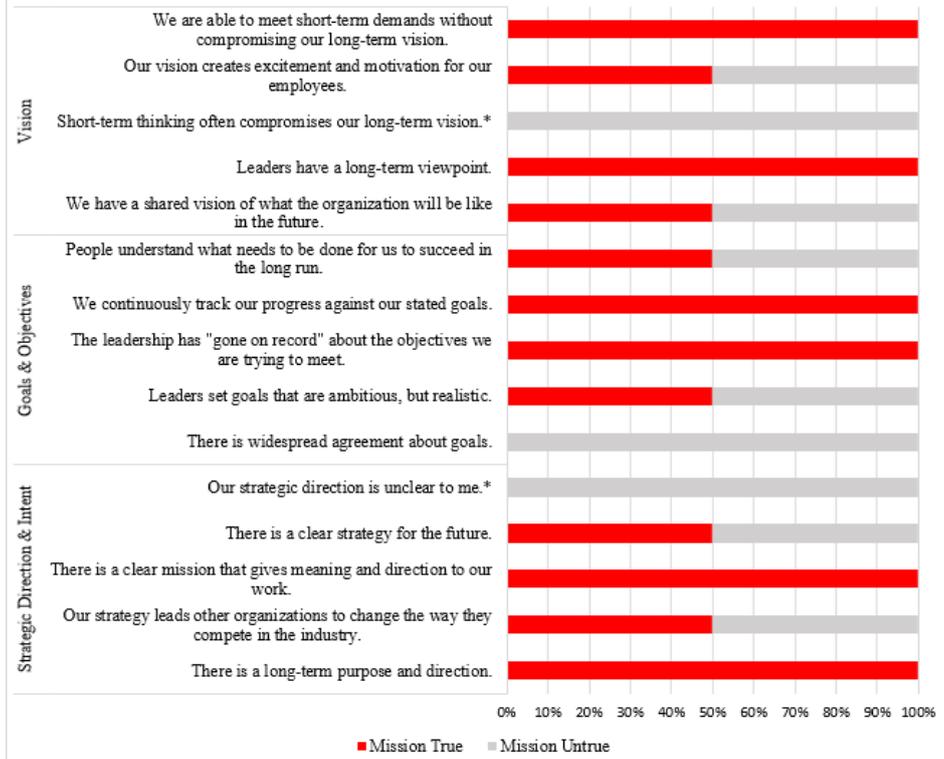
Appendix F Questionnaire Results 2016, Managers



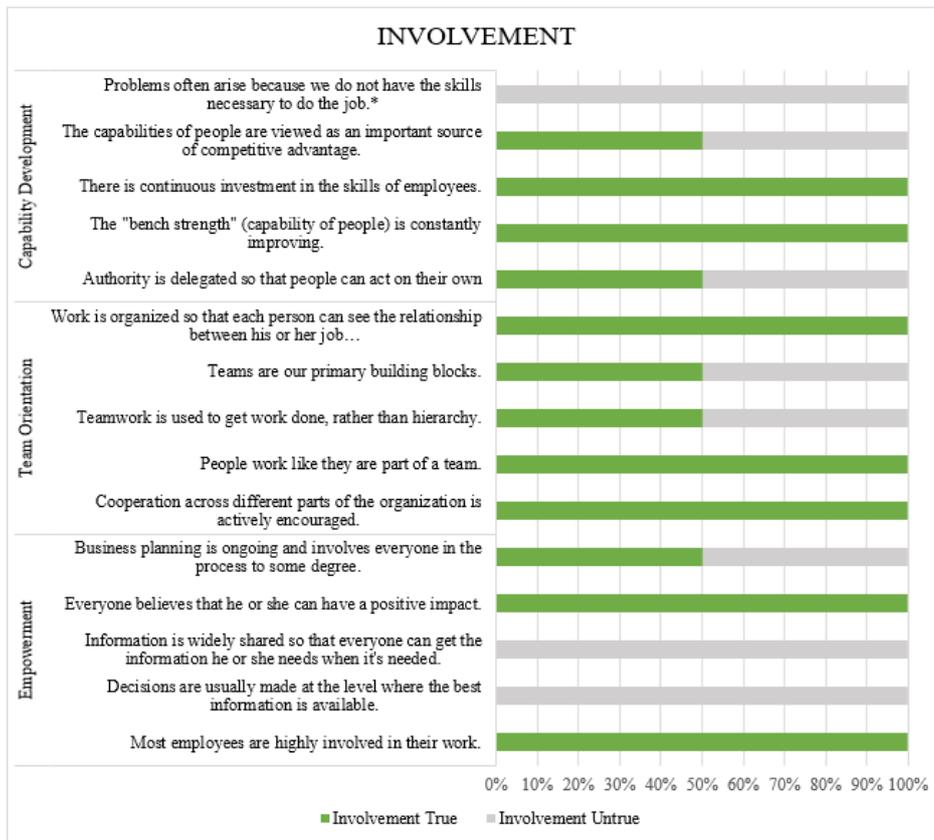
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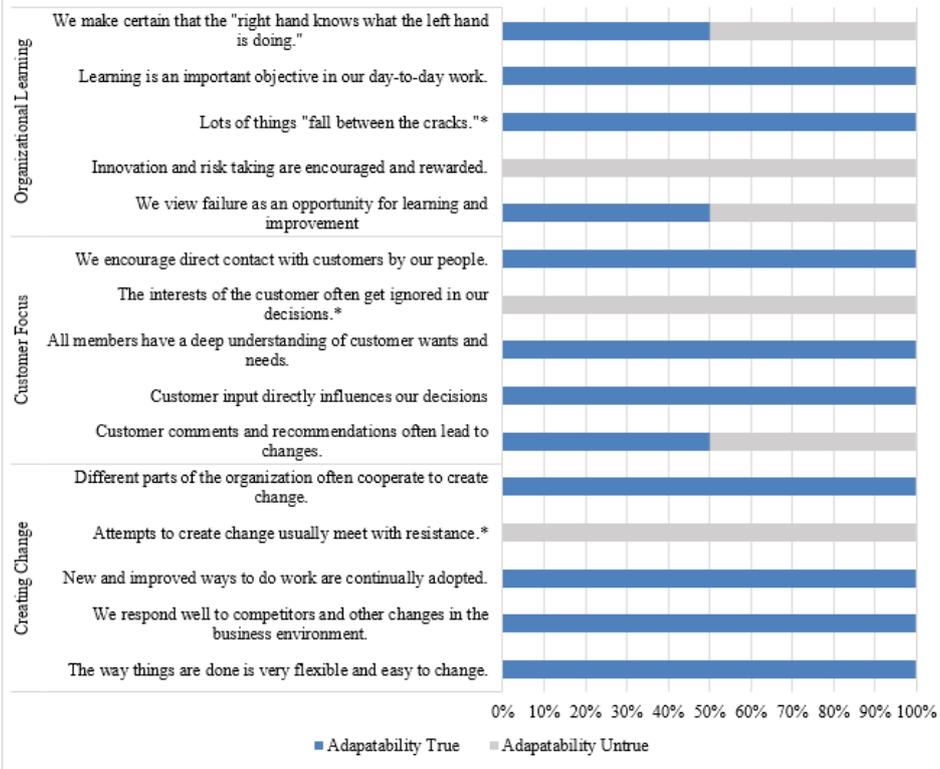
MISSION



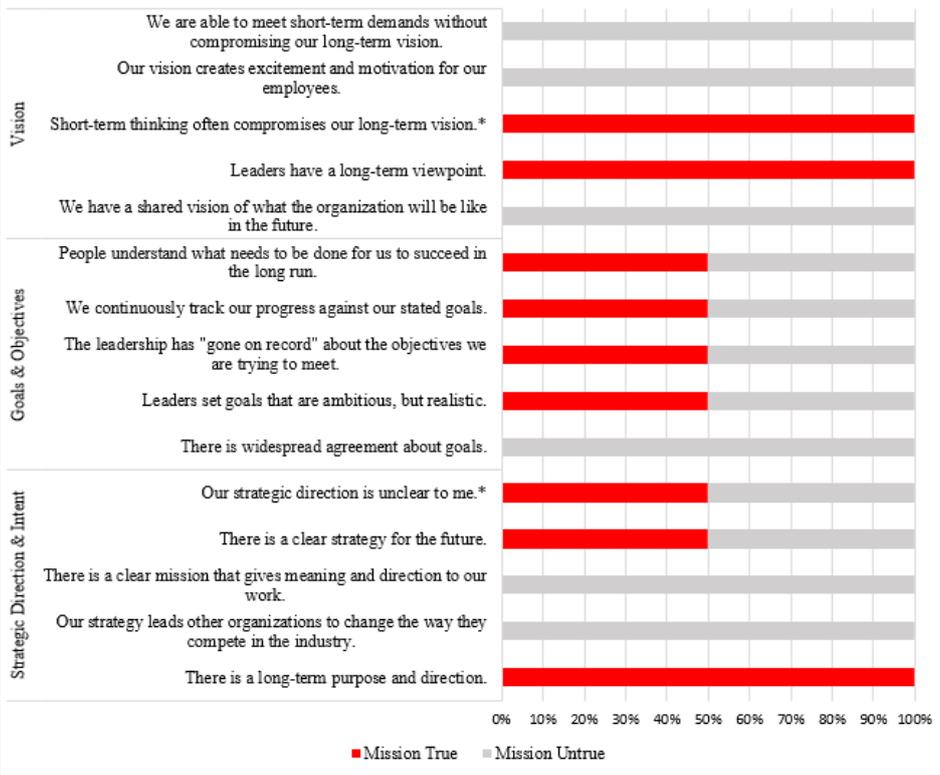
Appendix G Questionnaire Results 2016, On-site



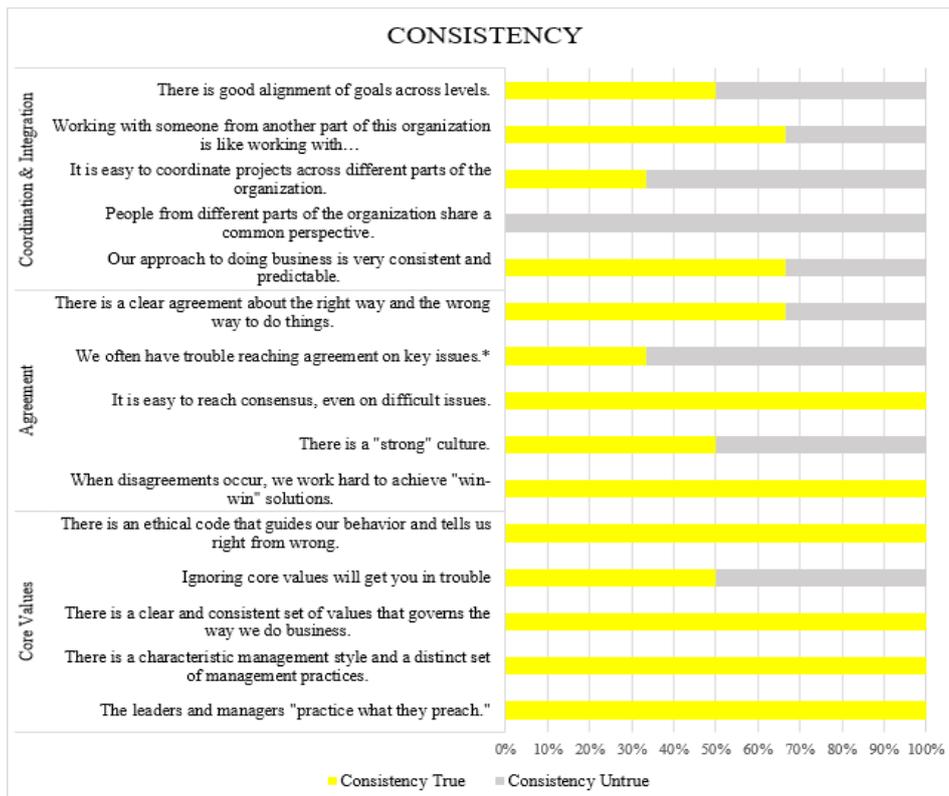
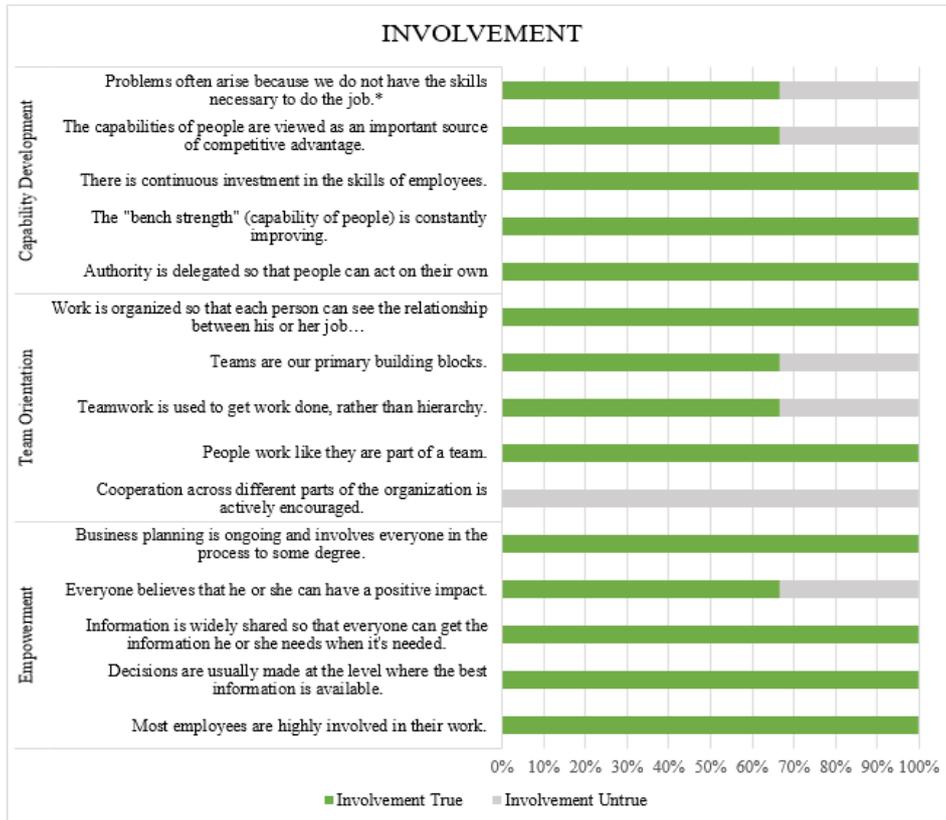
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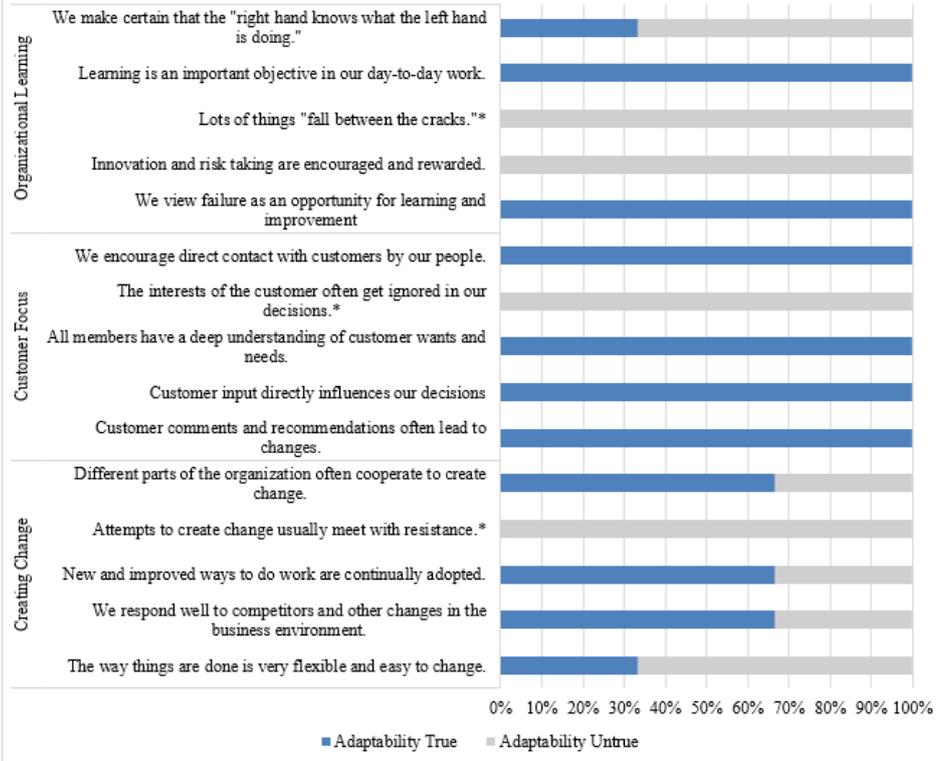
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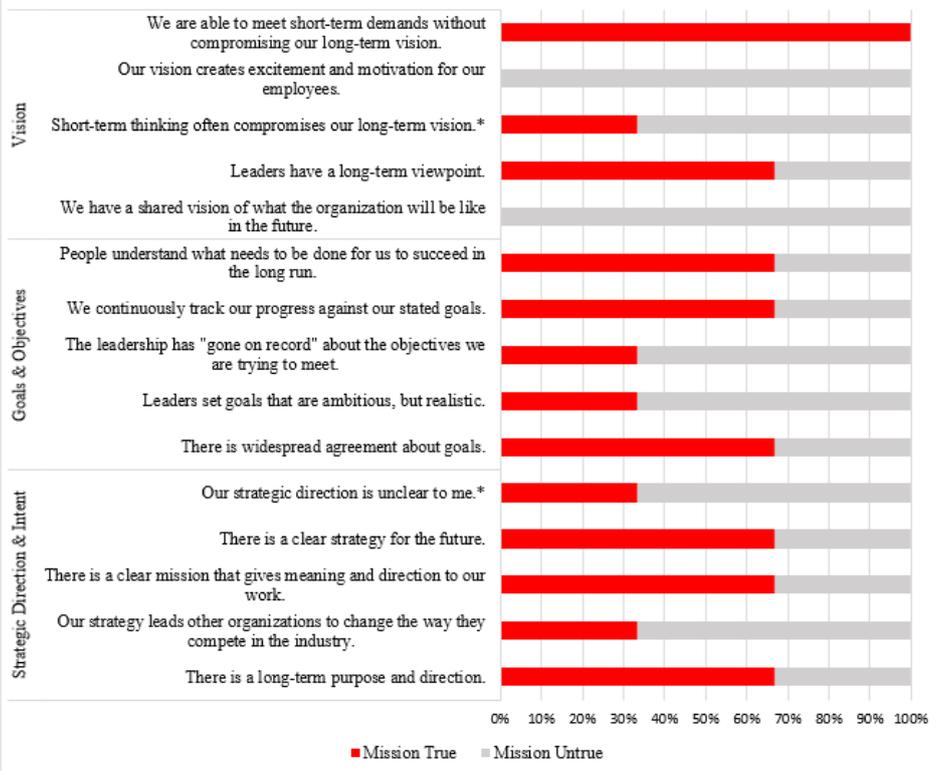
Appendix H Questionnaire Results 2016, Off-site (C)



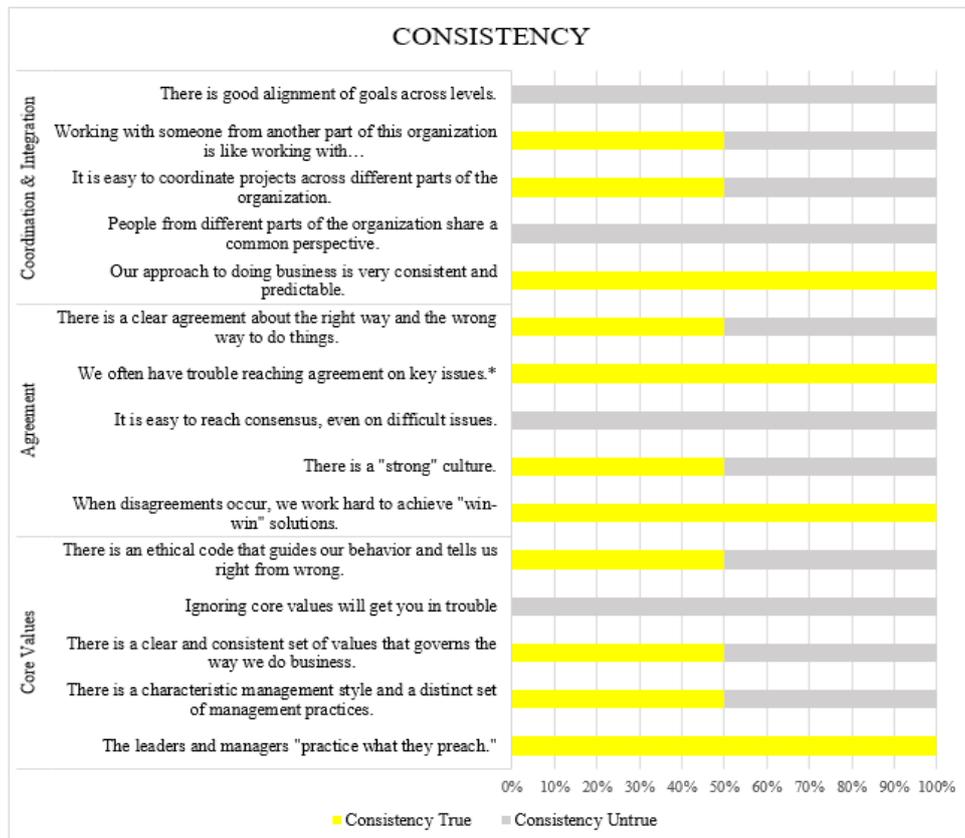
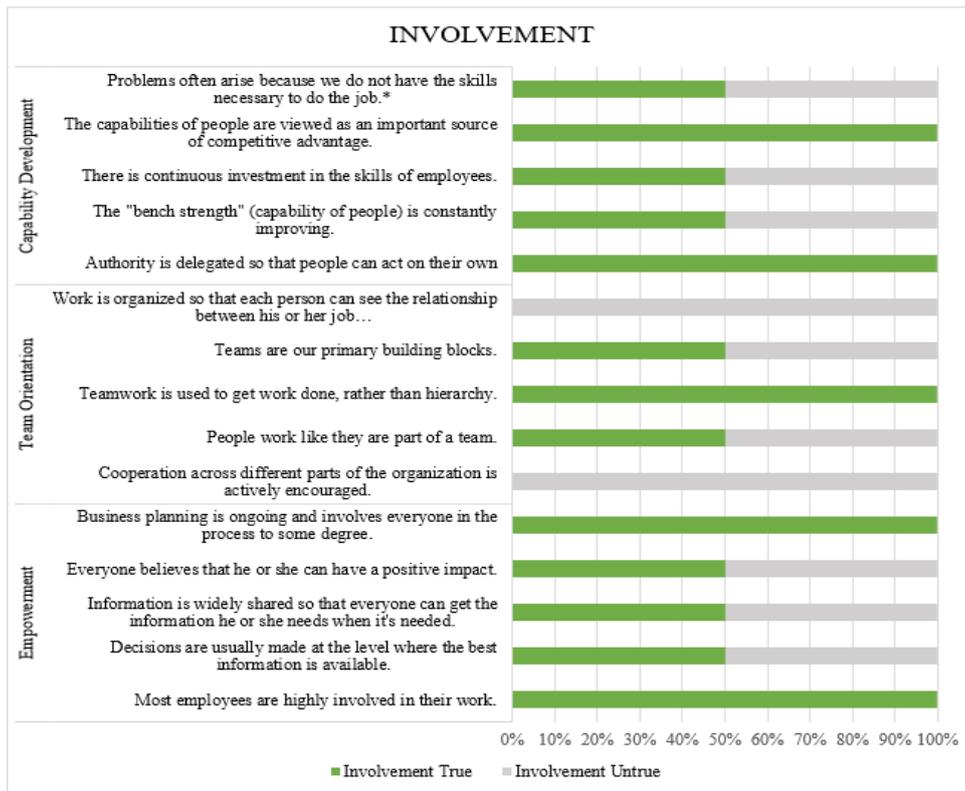
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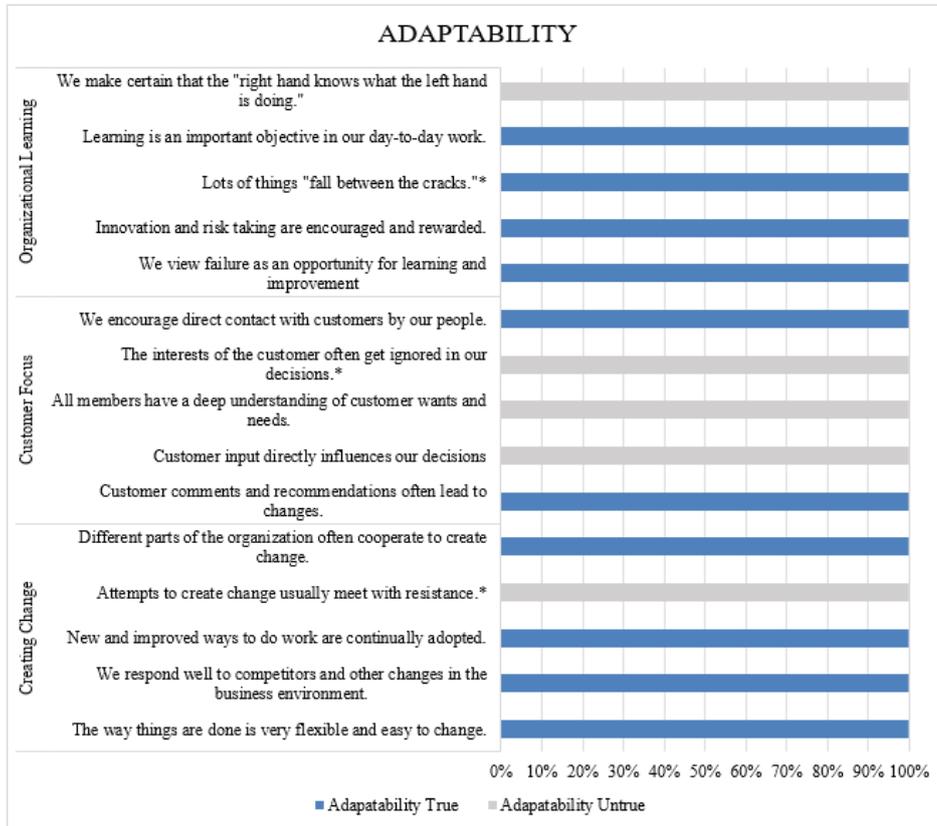


MISSION



Appendix I Questionnaire Results 2016, Off-site (M)





Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Maryse Feeney

Student number: 14106841

School: School of Business

Course: MSc in Management

Degree to be awarded: Master of Science

Title of Thesis: "Examination of Organisational Culture: Case Study of an Irish SME"

I agree to a hard bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate: M. Feeney

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____ Date: _____