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Original Article

Identifying and Explaining the Components of Organizational Culture in Baharloo Hospital in Tehran and Providing a Solution to Tackle the Challenges: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Introduction: Organizational culture plays a key role in the success or failure of healthcare organizations. Weak organizational culture is one of the main causes of inefficiency in hospitals. Identifying the type of organizational culture of hospitals is an important step in engineering organizational culture to increase their productivity. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify the components of organizational culture.

Methods: This qualitative study was conducted in Baharloo Hospital in Tehran in 2023. The statistical population included nurses and support and financial staff of Baharloo Hospital in Tehran. The sampling method used in this study was purposive and snowball sampling. To collect data, we used semi-structured interviews. The content analysis method was used to analyze the texts using MAXQDA version 18 software. To analyze the data, we used the Clark and Brown (2006) thematic analysis method, which is set in 6 steps, to identify important and coherent themes about the components of organizational culture.

Results: In this study, 18 experienced and expert nurses and support and financial staff were interviewed. The results of data analysis show that the 10 main components of organizational culture in Baharloo Hospital of Tehran University of Medical Sciences are rational, ideological, agreement and participation, hierarchical, constructive, passive/defensive, work and open culture, entrenchment, flexibility, and value orientation.

Conclusion: The identified components of organizational culture can help healthcare managers and policymakers to improve service quality, job satisfaction, organizational commitment of employee and organizational performance, and increase patient satisfaction. Managers are suggested to improve the efficiency of hospitals by strengthening the components of organizational culture.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Hospital, Employee performance and productivity

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Introduction

Culture has become a serious bone of contention in recent studies over the past few years. However, its aspects have been associated with ambiguities and difficulties (1). The importance of fostering a healthy culture in exploiting the employees' abilities in the organization is undeniable (2). Organizational culture is a force that causes employees' progression in the organization and has a great impact on various components of the organization (3). Considering that culture affects the behavior of employees, by studying the organizational culture, one can understand the causes of the success or failure of the organization (4). The impact of organizational culture on the employees and members of the organization is the extent to which, by examining its different aspects, one can understand the behavior, feelings, views and attitudes of its members and predict their possible reactions to various developments (5). According to Thomaidou et al. (2021), organizational culture creates consistency outside and harmony inside the organization and acts as a social controller which strengthens specific behaviors and dominant values (6).

Hospitals have a different culture from other organizations due to their mission, commitments, structure and technological infrastructure, and this culture affects all aspects of it (7). The organizational culture of the hospital expresses the common ways of thinking, feeling, and behavior of the employees in the hospital. A hospital consists of many departments and units, and clinical, administrative and support staff work together and in a coordinated manner to provide the health services needed by patients. Therefore, in the hospital, in addition to a dominant organizational culture, there are many subcultures, each of which with unique characteristics (8).

Adherence of managers and employees to negative cultural values, such as utilitarianism, sticking to its comfort zone, not prioritizing the patient and adopting weak standards, ultimately leads to a big scandal for the hospital (9). Organizational culture plays a key role in the success or failure of the organization. About 50 to 55 percent of the success of organizational hospital programs depends on the organizational culture (9). A favorable organizational culture improves the quality of working life, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, quality and safety of hospital services, and performance of the organization, and increases the satisfaction of patients (10-12). Weak organizational culture is one of the main inefficiencies of healthcare organizations, especially hospitals (13).

Since the organizational culture in the healthcare sector plays an essential role in the quality of services in areas such as support, nursing and systematic improvement of administrative processes, it is necessary to come under scrutiny (14). In other words, in centers with a more efficient organizational culture, it is expected that people use up-to-date and useful techniques in order to satisfy and improve the provision of services to patients and prioritize their health (15). According to this approach, nurses have been considered as the study community in this research. Obviously, the upcoming methodology will be applicable to all components of the existing healthcare system. Anyway, as independent workers, nurses need to act independently and use their power. Power and professionalism are related and when nurses have power, they can control their actions (16, 17).

Identifying the type of organizational culture of hospitals is the first step in the direction of engineering organizational culture to increase their productivity. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the components of organizational culture in Baharloo Hospital.

Methods

This qualitative study was conducted to identify the components of organizational culture in Baharloo Hospital, South of Tehran in 1402. In this study, qualitative data was collected using interviews. The statistical population included nurses and support and financial staff of Baharloo Hospital in Tehran. The exclusion criterion was the employees' unwillingness to continue the interview. Employees voluntarily participated in the survey and were assured that their information would remain confidential.

Due to the necessity of gathering the collective views of the key individuals about the subject of the research, the purposeful snowball sampling method was used in this study. The investigated samples in this sampling method were completely targeted and non-randomly selected (18). Accordingly, the sampling continued until the data was saturated with 18 interviewees.

According to the purpose of the research, which was to obtain the opinions and views of the key subjects related to the subject of the research, a semi-structured face-to-face interview was used, and the researcher assumed the role of the interviewer. In the present study, two in-depth interviews were first conducted to develop an interview guideline, and then two other interviews were conducted as a pilot to ensure that all information related to the research topic was obtained using these interviews. Finally, a semi-structured interview was used to collect the data. Then, the objectives of the research were explained to the statistical population and the time of the interview was determined with the agreement of the participant. The personnel's answers to the questions were recorded with their permission.

The personnel's answers to the questions were recorded with their permission. The recorded interviews were written down. The duration of each interview lasted 20 to 30 minutes on average.

To analyze the data, we used the thematic analysis method of Clark and Brown (2006), which is arranged in 6 steps. The steps of this process are as follows:

1- Familiarizing with the data:
2- Creating basic conceptual codes:
3- Searching for optional codes (themes):
4- Forming the sub-themes (examining the themes):
5- Defining and naming the main themes:
6- Setting the report (91, 92, 94)

In this regard, after each interview session, the researcher wrote down the scripts word for word. Then, in order to create a general concept and understanding of the interviews, several relevant texts were studied and reviewed. After carefully re-reading the interview report, we obtained the concepts and initial codes. Therefore, the arrangement of coding data into main and sub-themes was done by removing unrelated and repetitive items (codes), as well as putting similar concepts together.

It should be noted that qualitative data analysis was done using MAXQDA version 18 software.

To determine the validity and reliability of the study, we used Lincoln and Goba criteria; also, in this context, in order to maintain the credibility, parts of the interviews and coding were provided to the participants in order to achieve the same concepts in the contexts of the conversation (19). Therefore, to achieve the criterion of transferability, it is necessary to provide sufficient explanations about the research problem, its implementation steps, the context of the research implementation, data acceptance criteria, sampling with maximum variety, and conducting pilot interviews. Reliability criteria included making the process of conducting the study available to professors experienced in conducting qualitative research, reviewing the process by them, and confirming the research results. Also, the criteria of verifiability included long-term engagement with data, and preservation of documents during the research period.

Results

The aim of this study was to identify the components of organizational culture in Baharloo Hospital in Tehran, and a total of 18 (11 women and 7 men) employees in different units and departments of the hospital were included in the study and interviewed. In the present study, there were 18 participants, of whom 11 (61%) were women and 7 (39%) were men. Regarding the level of education, most of the respondents had a bachelor's degree (55%), followed by a master's degree with 40%. Examining the age of people showed that the highest number of respondents were 41-50 years old (50%). Examining the occupational category showed that the highest number was nursing with 39% followed by accounting with 22%.

Based on the findings of the present study, primary sub-themes were extracted. The components of organizational culture were also extracted. The primary sub-themes refer to the indicators of organizational culture. In fact, the sub-themes were the background which, by being completed in the next stage, sought to answer the main question of the research.

In the following phase, the main themes and sub-themes obtained were examined and, finally, the main themes answering the main research question were formulated. The researcher put together the sub-themes which had the most semantic and conceptual affinity to each other and created new meanings and words. In fact, the researcher classified sub-themes in the form of main themes. The final results are shown in the Table 1 below. In examining the sub-themes, as can be seen, after revision and corrections, it has become 10 main themes (Table 2).

In the present research, 10 dimensions and their sub-components were identified. The results of qualitative data analysis showed that the organizational culture components of Baharloo hospital of Tehran University of Medical Sciences were rational, ideological, agreement and participation, hierarchical, constructive, passive, work culture and open, entrenched, flexible, and value orientation.

The results of the study showed that 10 main components of the organizational culture of Baharloo Hospital were identified. The results of interviews and components revealed that conscious performance, excellence of women's performance, relationship between performance and financial support, and the need to clarify standard performance were considered as the themes of rational culture category.

Conscious performance, excellence of women's performance, relationship between performance and financial support, need to explain the standards of satisfactory performance were considered as themes of the category of rational culture.

In this regard, 2 of the interviewees stated: *"When we employees in the organization provide a good and acceptable performance, the organization also shows its financial support and considers gift cards."*

Table 1: Demographic information of research participants by gender, education, and study field

Information		Frequency (percentage)
	General medicine	1 (5.5%)
	Nursing	7 (39%)
Gender	Women	11 (61%)
	Men	7 (39%)
Educational level	Bachelor	10 (55%)
	Master	7 (40%)
	General practitioner, dentist, pharmacist	0
	Doctoral degree (Ph.D.)	1 (5%)
	Post-doctoral degree	0
	Other	0
Field of study	Health services management	2 (11%)
	Information technology management	1 (5.5%)
	Human resource management	2 (11%)
	Accounting	4 (22%)
	Sociology	1 (5.5%)

Table 2: Themes and subthemes of organizational culture

Main themes	Subthemes	Interview codes
Rationality	Conscious performance, Superior performance of women, Relationship between performance and financial support, the need to clarify the standards of satisfactory performance	$_4$F11, $_5$F15, $_6$F25, $_7$F18, $_{12}$F6, $_9$F5, $_8$F9, $_{10}$F9, $_1$F12, $_6$F27, $_7$F19, $_8$F12
Ideological	Mutual respect between management and personnel, Accompanying the organization with the members, Interaction with personnel	$_9$F17, $_8$ F8, $_4$F3, $_7$F19, $_4$F17, $_{13}$F6, $_6$F20, $_{12}$F13
Agreement and participation	Cooperation and coordination between departments, Valuing teamwork, Synchronize with the constitution, Informal relationships in the organization, work commitment, Management support of personnel, organizational trust	F16$_4$, F19$_5$, F8$_6$, F18$_7$, F6$_{13}$, F8$_9$, F6$_3$,F6$_4$, F18$_5$,F6$_7$, F16$_{10}$, F16$_{11}$, F3$_{13}$, F9$_4$, F17$_6$, F5$_9$, F9$_8$, F910 . F8$_1$, F7$_4$, F10$_7$, F11$_9$, F10$_{10}$, F1 . F12, $_4$F21, $_7$F25
Hierarchy	Organizational discipline, emphasis on the application of laws, transparency on laws, the power of doctors and non-compliance with laws, resistance to change	F24$_1$, F20$_3$, F23$_4$, F13$_5$, F27$_6$, F14$_7$, F12$_8$, F18$_9$, F13$_{10}$, F14$_{11}$. F1$_1$, F11$_5$, F39, F810, F16$_{13}$. F12$_6$, F19$_{12}$, F18$_{13}$, F12$_1$, F13$_3$, F24$_4$, F14$_5$, F28$_6$, F15$_7$, F9$_{12}$, F12$_{11}$, F15$_{10}$,F4$_8$.
Constructive	Adapting to work conditions, providing feedback, increasing motivation using encouragement, increasing work motivation, agility	F$_1$, F4$_4$, F24$_6$,F7$_9$, F5$_{10}$, F9$_{11}$, F3 . F12$_4$, F8$_6$, F10 . 2F13$_1$, F22$_4$, F20 . 6F13$_1$, F16$_2$, F5$_7$, F7$_{10}$. F10$_1$, F4$_3$, F3$_4$, F1$_8$,F3$_{11}$, F1$_{13}$
Passive/defensive	Lack of organizational support, lack of job satisfaction of the treatment staff	F14$_8$, F12 . 7F7$_1$, F9$_5$, F6$_8$, F12$_9$, F4$_{11}$.
Work and open culture	Valuing and accepting new ideas, changeable personnel, the effect of the environment on work interest, self-control, direct relationship between the organizational climate and turnover rate, information clarification, confidentiality of patient information.	F13$_2$, F21$_4$, F16$_5$. F22$_1$,F2$_4$, F6$_6$, F9$_7$, F4$_9$, F3$_{10}$, F2$_{11}$, F12 . 30F14$_6$, F11 . 25F1$_1$, F12$_6$, F11$_{12}$, F1 . 10F14$_2$, F5$_3$, F7$_{12}$, F11$_5$
Trench area	Lack of trust of personnel due to lack of job security, cultural difference due to difference in education level, employment of bad employees, difficulty of work, organizational conflict, job stress	F18$_3$, F29$_6$, F11 . 16F11$_1$, F25$_4$, F16$_7$, F15 . 20F11$_1$,F7$_3$, F15$_4$, F4$_3$, F5$_1$, F4$_2$, F2$_3$, F28$_4$, F15$_5$, F10$_6$ F15$_7$, F10$_9$ .F10$_9$ F2, F15$_3$, F18$_4$, F3$_6$, F11$_7$, F10$_8$, F19$_9$.
Flexibility	Flexibility, customer orientation	F23$_1$, F5$_2$, F19$_4$, F25, F6$_7$, F18$_{13}$ F16$_3$, F1$_4$, F14$_5$, F3$_7$, F1$_{10}$, F8$_{11}$, F20$_{13}$
Value orientation	Maintaining people's values, work conscience, religious beliefs, religious beliefs, the existence of honesty and integrity	F8$_2$, F30$_4$,F1$_5$, F2 . 5F9$_1$, F105, F7$_6$, F2$_9$,F1$_1$ F12$_{14}$, F6$_{19}$, F1 . F17$_{10}$, F11$_{11}$, F7$_{12}$, F4 . 1F13$_2$, F2$_{10}$

Another interviewee said: *"In these years, the performance of women in the hospital has improved in every way and they are very effective in the growth and development of the organization."*

Ideological was found to be another category of organizational culture, which has subcategories of mutual respect between management and personnel, association of the organization with members, and interaction with personnel. This means that the mentioned organization has a

calm environment to work in and the employees of the organization are trying to reach the organizational goals in peace.

In this regard, the interviewees stated: *"We in the organization believe that the personnel and the management respect each other, the opinions of the employees are taken by the management, and as a result, the hospital and the employees are together and interact with each other and make the hospital like their home. They know and some colleagues are like their family members.*

Agreement and participation were considered as one of the main categories of organizational culture, which has sub-categories of cooperation and coordination between departments, valuing teamwork, coordinating with the constitution, having informal relationships in the organization, having work commitment, supporting management of personnel, enjoying organizational trust. This means that the mentioned organization is based on teamwork and develops human resource capabilities at all levels. In such an organization, the members of the organization are committed to their work and feel themselves as part of the body of the organization. People at all levels feel that they have a role and these are the decisions that affect their work, and their work is directly linked to the goals of the organization. This category is considered as one of the categories that had the most weight.

As to the participation of the employees, some of the interviewees said: *"One of the good things that this hospital has is the work and teamwork spirit, when the colleagues consider the hospital as their home and the colleagues as members of their family; then, they help each other in their work. They do teamwork. There is still work to be done about teamwork and we can be better than this. People play a role at all levels."*

The category of hierarchy was considered as another category of the mentioned organization with the sub-themes of organizational discipline, emphasis on the application of rules, transparency on rules, the power of doctors and non-compliance with rules, and resistance to change. One of the things that explains this result is that it is a sovereign organization and the spirit of obeying the laws and implementing government policies are institutionalized in it.

"The degree of resistance of the organizational culture to changes does not become resistant as long as these changes are not to the detriment of patients and employees. But if it ends with the patient or our colleague."

«The level of employees' resistance to changes in organizational culture is related to the level of their connection with the organization management. If these two are together and synchronized, the changes that the manager feels, the employees will also feel and go along with him.»

Constructive category was presented as another category of organizational culture in the mentioned organization, which has the sub-themes of compliance with work conditions, providing feedback, increasing motivation using encouragement, increasing work motivation, and making agile. According to this category, internal integrity and external adaptability can be considered the advantage and superiority of this organization.

The interviewees stated*: "In the cultural hospital that exists, using the encouragement and financial support given by the management in line with the better performance of the employees increases the motivation of the personnel."*

Another interviewee stated that *"The weak points that our colleagues have because of the work culture here, we try to fix the weak points of that person."*

Another main category of organizational culture was defensive culture with secondary themes of lack of organizational support and lack of job satisfaction of treatment staff.

Preservation of people's values, work conscience, religious beliefs, the existence of honesty and integrity were considered as the themes of value-oriented culture.

Three of the interviewees stated*: "We, the treatment staff, have increased the volume and weight of our work, and we are not satisfied with the salary we receive, we often end up in the hospital and shift work. Wrong judgments have been made about the life of the treatment staff."*

The categories of trench area mentioned by the interviewees were lack of trust in personnel due to lack of job security, cultural differences due to differences in education levels, hiring bad employees, difficult work, organizational conflict, and job stress. According to these themes, the employees in such an organization do not have enough trust in the organization, there is a conflict in such an organization, and on

the other hand, there is a cultural difference in this organization.

Preservation of people's values, work conscience, religion and religious beliefs, and the existence of honesty and integrity were considered as themes of value-oriented culture. In this model of organizations, attention should be paid to people's moods and human values. The interviewees stated: *"Our hospital understands the values of a human being, but there have been times when the morals and moods of the employees have been violated and only the interests of the organization have been considered."*

Discussion

The current research was conducted with the aim of identifying the components of organizational culture in Baharloo which is one of the hospitals affiliated to TUMS. On the one hand, organizational culture shows how employees behave and affect the behavior of managers and employees at all levels; on the other hand, a coherent and strong organizational culture gives employees a sense of increased commitment while gaining knowledge about the goals and strategies of the organization. Moreover, it strengthens responsibility towards values and norms. The need to pay attention to the organizational culture is so great that leaders believe that if effective and sustainable changes are to occur in an organization, the culture of that organization must be changed. The results of the interviews generally indicate that the dimensions of the organizational culture in this educational and therapeutic center are favorable. A healthy organizational culture provides an open, sincere, trustful, creative, collaborative, experimental, scientific, rational, and logical environment in liberating the abilities of people and the potential of the organization.

One of the main categories of organizational culture in this study was agreement and participation. In such an organization, the members of the organization are committed to their work and feel themselves as part of the body of the organization. People at all levels feel that they have a role, and these are the decisions that affect their work, and their work is directly linked to the goals of the organization, so it is suggested to create as many spaces as possible for negotiation and learning chats in the form of meetings. Discussion should be provided in

order to create a suitable platform for teamwork, loyalty, organizational commitment, etc. (20, 21).

In the themes obtained from the constructive category of organizational culture, constructive organizations are guided by customers, turn their weaknesses into strengths, make themselves agile, and continuously improve the organization's ability. They are for valuing themselves and their customers (22, 23). According to the themes obtained from the constructive category, it is suggested that by giving feedback to the employees regarding their work activities, they will be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and with more effort, they will try to transform the weaknesses into strengths. On the other hand, considering that the reward and motivation system in the mentioned organization is in a good state, this organization should continue with the same process.

Hierarchy was one of the categories of organizational culture. In this type of organizational culture, it is a sovereign organization and must obey the laws and policies of the government. For this reason, it is suggested that employees try to create a friendly environment by holding various ceremonies and occasions for more interaction, and, on the other hand, try to increase the flexibility of the organization by reducing unnecessary rules and regulations and simplifying processes (24, 25).

According to the themes obtained from the trench category, it is suggested that an atmosphere should be created in the organization so that the employees can enjoy higher job security in addition to trusting such an organization. On the other hand, different strategies and measures should be provided to minimize job stress and learning environment to transform bad forces into productive people (26) and pay special attention to the whole system as well as systematic training (27, 28).

Based on the themes of the category of rational culture, it is recommended that this component should increase by receiving the employees' opinions about organizational issues to increase their participation in the organizations; also, undermining the performance of the employees should be reduced as much as possible. Their job stress should also be reduced (29).

Qhale Rashidi in his research entitled as "examining the organizational culture of the organization based on the Denison model" (study of Tehran University of Medical Sciences)

reached the conclusion that the dominant culture in the mentioned organization is a collaborative culture. Accordingly, the organization was average and above average in all four dimensions. The findings of this study are consistent with those of the present study (30).

In the research by Barati et al. entitled "examining the organizational culture of Hasheminejad Hospital", they conclude that the dominant culture in Hasheminejad Hospital is a collaborative culture. This means that the mentioned organization is formed on the axis of working groups and develops human resources' capabilities at all levels. The results of this study are consistent withthose of the present study (31).

Mohsen Bigi, in his research on the organizational culture of Afzalipur Hospital in Kerman, concluded that the majority of people under investigation in this hospital (67%) did not have a positive view about the organizational culture of the hospital, which is not consistent with the results of the present study (32).

Conclusion

In any organization, we need the lever of culture to create new directions and changes because the culture of any organization shows the behavior and performance of its employees. By changing some aspects of organizational culture and improving working conditions, hospital CEOs should first increase the job satisfaction of employees so that they can improve and develop work processes.

Determining organizational goals and expectations from employees, developing work teams, supporting conscientious employees, ensuring that employees believe in the shared transcendental values of the organization, receiving suggestions from employees and providing continuous feedback to them, focusing on positive points, evaluating continuously, working processes, and promoting the spirit of cooperation lead to the development of a superior organizational culture. The goal of management should be to improve the performance of employees and equipment, improve service quality, increase productivity, and generate pride in the employees' work.

Based on the current research, which shows the multiplicity of the factors involved in the organizational culture and its consequences in the dynamics of the organization, it is suggested that other researchers should use a questionnaire to evaluate the organizational culture of hospitals in other cities of the country in order to get a clear picture of the characteristics of the organizational culture of Iranian hospitals and accordingly measures should be taken to improve the organizational culture of those hospitals.

Research Limitations

Because this study was conducted in one organization, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Due to the busy work schedule of nurses, some of them did not have enough time and patience to conduct interviews. Aso, some questionnaires did not return and some doctors and policymakers working in the hospital did not cooperate.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues (including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancy) were thoroughly observed by the authors. The study was approved by the ethics committee. With the code of IR.TUMS.SPH.REC.1399.1059.

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