



Organisational Culture: Concept, Context, and Measurement (In Two Volumes)

Elizabeth Kummerow

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In 1989, the prominent organisational culture scholar, Stephen Ott, lamented what he saw as the failure of the organisational culture perspective to have the kind of lasting influence — whether empirical, or in terms of its contribution to practice — that had been hoped for. In attempting to explain this state of affairs, Ott observed that: “Some of the most important unanswered questions are methodological, and without methodological advancement, the perspective will not achieve maturity.” The situation today, more than two decades after Ott voiced these concerns, is that academics, researchers, and practitioners alike continue to struggle with the question of how best to decipher and measure an organisation's culture.

Organisational Culture: Concept, Context and Measurement (In Two Volumes) aims to encourage an agenda for organisational culture research that gives a renewed emphasis to methodological issues. In pursuit of this aim, consideration is given to both conceptual questions and questions of measurement. In Volume I of the book, the main focus is on the concept of organisational culture. Based on an analysis and critique of existing treatments, as well as a comparison of organisational culture with a number of closely related concepts, consideration is given to how the concept might usefully be elaborated and further refined. In Volume II of the book, the focus is on methodological issues. Drawing on the findings of a series of empirical studies conducted over a number of years, consideration is given to what would be required to develop a measure for organisational culture that is practically useful and also capable of accessing culture at its deepest, and arguably most influential yet most elusive, level. In particular, an approach is advocated that seeks to contextualise organisational culture, in terms of various time and experience domains, and that also promotes the use of attributions analysis as a means whereby to further understand culture at this level.

A valuable resource for scholars and practitioners alike, the book provides readers who are interested in understanding the role and influence of culture in organisations with a comprehensive analysis of the development and application of the organisational culture concept. For readers who are interested in conducting research into the measurement and practical application of organisational culture, the book provides a methodological approach that can be used to guide their research.

Readership: Advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students in organisational psychology and business (including students enrolled in coursework and/or research Masters and PhD programs); organisational psychology or business academics engaged in organisational culture research; organisational change agents and consultants involved in change programs related directly or indirectly to organisational culture.

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High-context culture and low-context culture are terms used to describe cultures based on how explicit the messages exchanged are and how much the context means in certain situations. These concepts were first introduced by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall in his 1976 book *Beyond Culture*.¹ In one article, one sociologist from Japan and two from Finland argued that Japan and Finland are high-context cultures, although both, especially Finland, are becoming lower-context with the increased cultural influence of Western nations.

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