

**Exploring corporate departmental cultures: A function-based approach to
setting culture**

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Abstract

Changes in the business environment leads to changes in an organisation's objectives. The adaptability of organisational culture is crucial to meet these environmental changes using a function-based approach that supports the corporate strategy. Organisational objectives are implemented by departments in a functional structure who each have their own departmental functions that informs their departmental culture. Using semi-structured interviews of 18 departmental managers from six typical departments in medium-large firms this research explores the concept of departmental culture, as a subculture in this cross-sectional study.

Thematic analysis with the use of the Competing Values Framework found that primary activity departments have a wider spread of cultural traits across the dimensions of the Framework whilst support activity departments require a specific cultural type to meet their departmental functions and collectively achieve corporate objectives. Although the primary purpose of organisational culture as a tool that aligns the organisation to its overarching objective should not be undermined, the findings underpin a concept in that 'the organisation is at its best position to implement strategy and achieve organisational objectives when organisational culture is aligned to departmental culture'. This study promotes future research from the exploratory findings on the concept of 'departmental cultures' within corporates that promotes an organisation objective in the changing business environment.

Keywords

Subcultures, Corporate Culture, Competing Values Framework, Function-based culture

Plagiarism Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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Abbreviations

'CVF' refers to the Competing Values Framework, 'DC' refers to Departmental Culture, 'DF' refers to the Department's Functions and 'OC' refers to Organisational Culture.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

As organisations are currently impacted by business environments characterised by VUCA and BANI factors, there is a need to adopt transformational strategies that integrate cultural adaptation, innovation and leadership (Vishwakarma, 2024). Organisational culture plays a crucial role in the organisation's ability to be adaptable and agile to survive in these business environments along with strategic alignment to be effective (Patrucco & Kähkönen, 2021). Öztuna & Bayraktar (2024) emphasise the importance of an adhocracy culture that is characterised as 'dynamic' to respond to these external environments.

Large organisations comprise multiple level departments based on function, region and purpose to achieve the organisation's objectives and need to be equally dynamic to respond to changes in the business environment (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Vishwakarma, 2024). This raises the need to understand the relationship of culture at both an organisational and departmental level to identify their co-existence in an organisation. It may be pertinent to provide organisations with a function-based cultural model at a departmental level that informs how organisations should respond to these business environments (Kim et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2022) provide a four-stage model for creating a functional culture that responds to external changing environments. However, they identify in stage three a need for scholarly effort to identify ways in which functional cultures can be built within organisations. This research intends to understand the dynamics of cultures within each department based on its organisational sub-function to address this important literature gap.

1.2 Research Problem

Following the work of Kim et al. (2022); Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2021) and Gibbons et al. (2021), the need for a function-based culture should be addressed. Kim et al. (2022) derives a functional perspective of deriving culture on an organisational level that adapts to changes in the business environment. This view is to respond to changes in the environment that must be adapted by organisational

culture to respond. Organisational Culture has been researched by scholars over a long period based on cultural models, frameworks and theories by Hofstede, Schein, O'Reily, Cameron & Quinn, Sarel et al. and Denison (Audretsch et al., 2021). The argument is that these models guide organisations to select the type of culture that will support the overall organisation's strategy (Abawari et al., 2024), but the organisation comprises of people in a structure who practice culture in achieving these corporate objectives (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Gibbons et al., 2021). Furthermore, existing literature on business studies mention the existence of 'little c culture' or 'micro culture' that informs the existence of sub-cultures in organisations and not necessarily departmental culture (Gibbons et al., 2021; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2021).

This research intends to explore the existence of departmental culture and to illustrate the context of its existence to corporate objectives and organisational culture. This research intends to provide leaders at various levels of an organisation, an understanding of how culture can be derived using a nuance function-based approach. The Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006) is a structured approach to build culture for organisational effectiveness, and the focus of this research is to use this framework to guide the nuance of departmental culture. Organisational culture is traditionally set by organisational leaders based on their "leadership perspective" (Kim et al., 2022, p. 1518), and sub-cultures exist that significantly influence 'innovation and entrepreneurship' more than 'top-down' organisational culture (Audretsch et al., 2021). This raises a need to understand top-down and 'bottom-up' cultures in an organisation to informing the research problem.

1.3 Research Objectives

This research aims to address the gap in academic literature where the concept of departmental culture in an organisation is not prevalent (Abawari et al., 2024). Abawari et al. (2024) provide a systematic review on organisational culture with little findings on the construct of 'departmental culture'. Organisational culture largely overshadows sub-cultures practiced in scholarly literature based on its value-based importance of achieving corporate strategy (Gibbons et al., 2024). This research objective is to provide scholars and business with an understanding of how

departmental culture interacts with organisational culture and highlights the behaviour that each construct may complement, improve or conflict with one another in achieving the organisation's objectives. This study intends to understand the effectiveness of departmental culture as a concept on its own using the Competing Values Framework as an internal cultural setting tool applicable to each department's function, in a similar manner that existing literature uses CVF at an organisational level informing culture to strategy (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Gong et al., 2022).

1.4 Research Purpose

This research is primarily intended to better understand the relationship between organisational culture and departmental culture. It aims to clearly explain what management and cultural setters of organisations should consider when making changes to 'top-down' culture to obtain strategic intent (Audretsch et al., 2021). This research further seeks to discover the significance of 'departmental culture' as a distinct term from sub-culture whilst understanding a departments' cultural role by function. The function-based culture as described by Kim et al. (2022) substantiates this purpose providing organisations with a dynamic culture and this research intends to explain this function-based culture from a departmental perspective. Furthermore, the research aims to add to the body of literature that exists in building a function-based culture (Akpa et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Ng, 2023; Strengers et al., 2022).

1.5 Research Questions

Recent literature reviews on organisational cultures explains the nature and sources of culture at an organisational level relating to artifacts, values and assumptions of the organisation, with little research done on the topic of sub-cultures (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). Furthermore, scholarly literature of cultures within an organisation are mostly qualitative research illustrating the immature nature of literature available to execute empirical tests (Abawari et al., 2024; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). The culture that department's experience can be argued to be a sub-culture of an organisation as per Hofstede's definition, however most recent literature refers to 'departmental culture' in the field of humanities and health sciences (Haenfler, 2023; Short, 2022). This reveals a gap in the literature on the

existence of departmental culture as a subset of the overarching organisational culture, raising the four interdependent research questions.

(RQ1): Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

Firstly, as it is critical for businesses to adapt their cultures to changes in the environment, a recent assessment of whether a function-based culture at a department level is the best approach (Kim & Toh, 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024). Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework is not intended to be a function-based model at a departmental level, but the framework matches organisational function to a recommended organisational culture (Cameron et al., 2006) that relates to functional-dimensions of culture (Kim et al., 2022). Understanding of the urgency behind exploring this cultural type adds credibility and validity to the importance of conducting this research.

(RQ2): Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?

Secondly, Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025) identified seven times more cultural changes at a 'Macro'-level than a 'Micro'-level. Macro-level refers to cultural changes from system changes, and Micro-level refers to behaviours and constraints between managers and employees. Addressing the importance and impact of departmental culture (micro-level) in the context of organisational culture (macro-level) to achieve the departments purpose is relevant. This research question intends to identify the effectiveness of the departmental culture to meet the department's functions, in the same manner that organisational cultural changes are required to meet corporate strategy (Kim et al., 2022). This question builds on research question 1 in crediting the effectiveness of departmental culture.

(RQ3): What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

The focus of organisational departments on their sub-functions helps the business achieve its corporate objectives through a functional structured system (Cummings & Worley, 2015). At the strategic level, incorporating cross-functional management tools and techniques enables separate organisational functions to work in a coordinated manner to achieve corporate objectives (Ewim et al., 2024). But an understanding of each department's functions is critical to explore the culture necessary to complement each department's cultures. This research question addresses the gap identified in the literature to discover the nature and effect of a departmental sub-culture on organisational objectives in context of the overarching organisational culture (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025).

(RQ4): Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?

Ewim et al. (2024) developed the cross-functional coordination framework that contributes to management strategies through robust communication channels, collaborative management tools and performance measures that align separate functional groups to corporate objectives. This implies that the cross-collaboration of departments within an organisation exists, yet there is no indication on whether the existence of separate departmental cultures can effectively achieve organisation objectives? (Abawari et al., 2024). Organisational culture is explained and forms part of the structural alignment of departments, whilst departmental culture is a new concept within the construct of subcultures (Haenfler, 2023). This question contextualises the findings of research question 3 to its relevance on corporate objectives.

These research questions are sequentially structured to aid in understanding the importance, nature, and effectiveness of departmental cultures within organisations in the context of achieving their functional responsibilities and collectively the organisational objectives (Audretsch et al., 2021; Denison et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2022)

1.6 Study contributions

1.6.1 Theoretical contributions

Following the work of Abawari et al. (2024) and Kim et al. (2022), this research primarily intends to provide further insight into effective organisational culture through exploration into a new construct namely departmental culture. This function-based approach of setting culture aims to identify the existence of departmental culture to add to the gap in business management and social studies literature as a type of subculture (Gibbons et al., 2021; Haenfler, 2023; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). Current literature does not identify 'departmental culture' in the field of business management but rather makes use of the term 'sub-cultures' built on Schein's description (Schein, 2002). Existing articles of departmental culture refer to 'teaching studies' (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Kálmán et al., 2020) and sub-cultures in sociology (Akpa et al., 2012) illustrating the nuance concept of departmental culture.

This study intends to provide academics with a deeper understanding on Human Resource Management techniques in business using function-based cultural sources for future business management in the field of effective strategic implementation and social studies. This study intends to add to the body of knowledge a functional cultural framework namely the Competing Values Framework based on the work of Cameron et al. (2006) from an internal viewpoint.

1.6.2 Practical contributions

The practical use of this research is intended to provide managers and consultants who are responsible for building and implementing culture with an evidence-based approach to setting a function-based culture within organisations. Firstly, this research aims to provide businesses with insights into the nature, effectiveness and behaviour of departmental culture as a subculture. It further explains the co-existence of departmental culture in the context of the organisation culture and a functional-cultural model that can assist businesses in addressing changes in the business environment. Secondly, this research will provide leaders at various levels of an organisation an understanding of how functional culture from a departmental perspective can benefit the performance of the organisation (Kim et al., 2022).

1.7 Research Setting

Gorton et al. (2022) in an annual review had identified sub-cultures that exist in medium to large-sized organisations. In corporate cultural literature, these organisations could be adversely impacted by subcultures and silos, if the absence of effective interactions between departments (Ewin et al., 2024; Gorton et al., 2022). Larger company structures have many separate functions in a hierarchical structure that are necessary to achieve strategic intent (Ewin et al., 2024). Large corporations have a growing impact on the economy (Kwon et al., 2024) and in a South African context, the private sector was the primary driver of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product, whilst the government sector experienced negative growth in 2024 (Statistics South Africa, 2025). South Africa also has a large unemployment rate (Statista, 2024) and inequality (Statista, 2025) that must be addressed with effective strategies that can improve the economy.

Adhocracy culture can retain employees (Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024) in the private sector and thus provides insights into effective cultural settings to address unemployment in South Africa. Thus, this research is focussed on medium to large sized private sector organisations who have a function-based structure (Cummings & Worley, 2015) to aid these corporates with a functional-based culture that can improve the economic conditions of South Africa (Williams, 2022).

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

1.8.1 Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is defined as the set of norms, values and attitudes of all organisation's members (Schein, 1992); or the values, beliefs, and protocols that organisational members hold (Denison et al., 2012). It is described as the overarching characteristics of all employees, across departments that influences employees' decisions, behaviours and acts as the 'social glue' that fosters an identity of the organisation (Akpa et al., 2012). This is defined as the overarching culture of the organisation as set by the leaders to achieve strategy (Kim et al., 2022; Patrucco & Kähkönen, 2021).

1.8.2 Departmental Culture

Departmental culture in the context of this research is defined as the norms, values and attitudes of employees within functional departments of an organisation. This definition is based on the “Operator” (Shein, 2002, p. 58) and “Engineering/Design” (Shein, 2002, p. 60) subcultures as described by Edgar Shein. This culture exists in each department within the organisation and is based on the function (Kim et al., 2022) of that department (Williams, 2022).

1.9 Outline of the document

This introductory chapter established a new approach to setting culture through developing a function-based sub-culture: ‘departmental culture’. Exploring culture at functional levels within an organisation can provide insights into cultural effectiveness initiatives that can achieve corporate goals and improve the economy.

This chapter is followed by Chapter 2: A detailed literature review providing relevant scholarly literature on the relationships between Organisational culture, Departmental culture (as a sub-culture) and the Competing Value’s Framework. The function-based approach of informing culture is the focal point of the literature review, and the review includes recent literature on the concepts of Organisational culture and Departmental culture. The literature review of this research exposes the gaps in the concept of ‘departmental culture’ and provides an understanding of the Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006) as a function-based approach to determine what informs departmental culture. The literature review is followed by the Chapter 3: Research Questions, to address the gaps identified in the literature in a systematic way. These questions are followed by Chapter 4: Research Methodology Chapter that provides the justification of the mono-method research type selected to address the research questions. The Methodology chapter provides the research design of the study of departmental culture in the context of medium-large companies in South Africa. Chapter 5 provides the results of the research findings after an analysis of the data is conducted. Chapter 6 synthesises the research findings to the existing body of knowledge in a discussion manner and contributes to extending the literature. Chapter 7 concludes the research, and recommendations are made in context of the insights achieved during this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature on organisational culture is predominantly centred around the expected outputs in achieving objectives of the organisation based on culture as an enabling input factor that influences employee behaviour (Kim & Toh, 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024). Recent key outputs such as digital adoption (Ghafoori et al, 2024) and AI adoption (Isensee et al, 2021) are placing more dependency on organisational culture to achieve these outputs. These outputs are supported by frameworks built on the theories and models of Schein, Denison, Peters & Waterman and Hofstede (Akpa et al, 2021). Cameron et al. (2006) introduced the Competing Values Framework (CVF) that separates the concept of Organisational Culture (OC) into four distinct types of culture based on the dynamic business environment faced today (Zeb et al, 2021) and the best culture from these quadrants that an organisation should foster to achieve to meet these outputs (Gong et al., 2022).

Organisational culture is practiced by the employees of a business, and has been defined as the set of norms, values and attitudes of all organisation's members (Schein, 1992); or the values, beliefs, and protocols that organisational members hold (Denison et al., 2012). Thus, organisational culture has been described as the overarching characteristics of employees across teams and departments within an organisation, but literature does not discuss 'departmental culture' as a concept of subcultures (Abawari et al., 2024). Organisational culture is determined by management of the organisation to set the way employees should behave to achieve a common set of organisational outcomes within organisational rules and regulations (Tulcanaza-Pieto et al., 2021). Departmental leaders promote organisational culture within their functional departments (Jigjiddorj et al., 2021), but as individuals they can create aberrated sub-cultures to meet departmental needs (Kim & Toh, 2019). Sackmann (1992) first used the term sub-culture when she discovered the existence of sub-cultures in functional groups of the organisation. More recent literature refers to subculture in the field of humanities and social sciences (Haenfler, 2023; Short, 2022). Subculture is referred to as the organisational culture that exists within groups of individuals who impact the performance of an Organisation according to Williams

(2022). However, departmental culture as a separate concept is not distinctly researched in the literature exposing a gap in the literature.

In this Chapter, this literature review provides academic literature that discusses the recent conversation on the academic concepts of organisational culture and departmental cultures, as a concept of 'sub-cultures'. It begins with the review of Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006) to contextualise a department's culture within a 'functional business structure' (Cummings & Worley, 2015). The concepts of organisational culture and subculture are thereafter defined based on existing models and frameworks from academic literature as reviewed by Abawari et al. (2024) and Akpa et al. (2021).

This literature review is systematically presented to provide an argument around the understudy of 'departmental culture' as a concept of sub-cultures where no distinct explanation exists (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025; Sackmann, 1992). The explanation is built on translating the Competing Values Framework as a tool, used to inform the most appropriate culture required to achieve the functions of the organisation, more commonly known as the organisation's objectives (Gibbons et al., 2021)

2.2 The Competing Values Framework

Cameron et al. (2006) describes the Competing Values Framework (CVF) as an organisational tool that assesses and improves organisational effectiveness. The framework was subsequently refined to provide a comprehensive model for organisations to improve effectiveness on performance by aligning its culture, leadership and strategy (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The CVF is not intended to be a function-based model at a departmental level, but the framework matches organisational function to a recommended organisational culture (Cameron et al., 2011) that relates to functional-dimensions of culture (Kim et al., 2022).

The CVF begins by identifying two distinct dimensions that determine whether organisations are performing effectively. The first dimension differentiates 'flexibility',

where an organisation has traits of easily adjusting to change and is dynamic in its structure and form to be adaptable and transformative. The opposing characteristic is 'focus', where stability and consistency enable predictability in the organisation's operations as illustrated on the vertical axis of Figure 1:

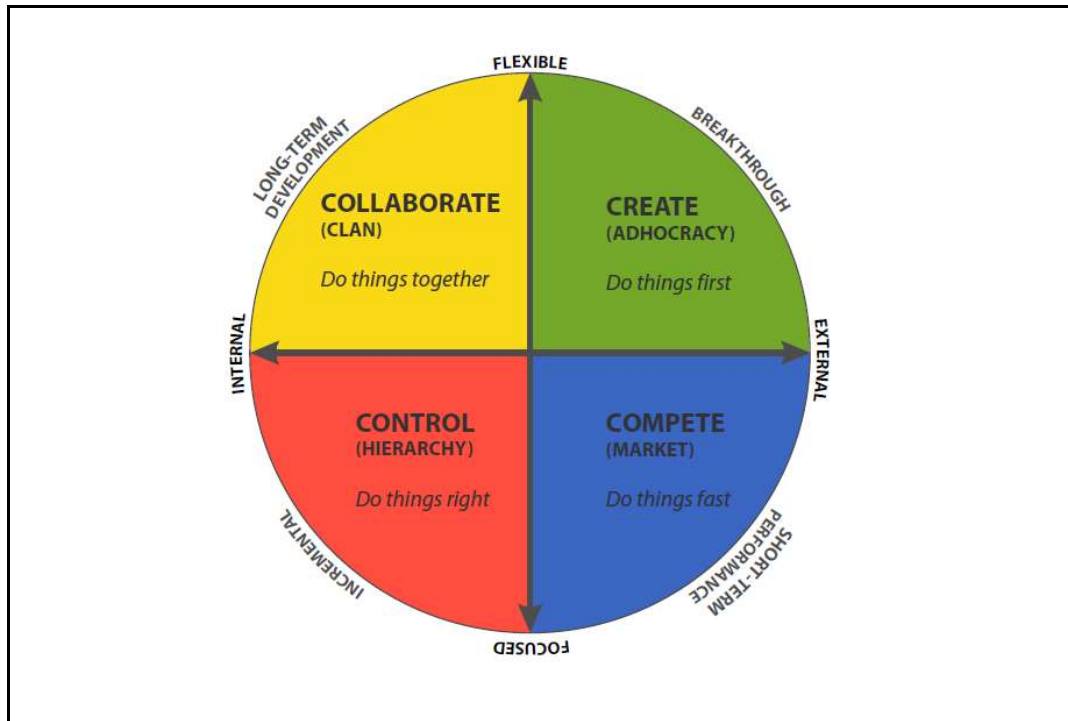


Figure 1: The Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006)

The second dimension identifies an 'internal' view, where the organisation is successful based on factors like corporate collaboration and unity within the control of the organisation, against the 'external' orientation that is determinant of competitors, market changes and rivalry. The internal and external dimension is displayed on the horizontal axis. These two dimensions provide the basis on which leaders in organisations are determined as successful based on the levels of cohesion or consistency they display in their individual behaviours to achieve organisational outcomes based on the organisational culture practiced in an organisation.

Cameron et al (2006), describes the resulting four quadrants as ‘competing values’, and that each core value is opposite to the value diagonally illustrated based on the two dimensions. They further regard the dimensions as illustrated by the vertical and horizontal lines as the ‘continuum(s)’ that are also opposing. The opposite values build the four quadrants across the two dimensions, resulting in the name of the model as the ‘Competing Values Framework’. Thus, organisations through its culture in its entirety are classified as one of the four values as illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Competing Values Framework Quadrants and Characteristics (Cameron et al., 2006).

Type	Orientation	Theory of Effectiveness (Characteristics)
Clan	Collaborative	Human development & commitment via communication
Market	Competing	Aggressively Competitive and Customer Centric
Adhocracy	Create	Innovative, visionary and strong adaptability traits
Hierarchy	Control	Consistency, efficiencies, uniformity and stability

The Competing Values Framework assumes the following factors:

Firstly, the ‘competing values’ drive organisational effectiveness as organisations should continuously trade-off between the opposing factors on the two continuums. Secondly, Organisational culture must be characterised within the four quadrants, and there is no other classification outside of the dimensions on the continuum. Thirdly, flexible organisations are more successful in the current business environment that focuses organisations based on their agility and ability to be adaptable to changes in the organisation’s industry, macro-economic environment and within the organisation. Leadership plays a key role in managing and shaping the competing values to drive operational and strategic effectiveness through culture, structure or otherwise. Lastly, the framework is static in nature as it captures the culture of an organisation at a particular point in time and is blind to the evolving and dynamic nature of culture.

The competing values are not mutually exclusive and can co-exist together within the same Organisation (Boyd & Larson, 2023). Since the CVF provides the current effectiveness of the organisation based on the overarching culture, it does not represent the presence of departmental culture within the organisational culture.

Abawari et al. (2024) identified the 'functional perspective' of organisational culture that is primarily driven by business environment factors. Kim & Toh (2019) argue that current cultures are likely 'sub-optimal' based on the 'leader-trait perspective' where factors that promote cultural transfer from a new leader's appointment may reduce their ability to objectively drive nuanced cultures based on function. These indicators substantiate a need for the CVF to incorporate a functional perspective to enhance the framework's ability to be effective as a tool to assess OC.

2.3 Organisational Culture

"Many of the problems organisations face can be contributed to their culture" (Burnes, 2017 p. 373). Organisational culture (OC) has had a significant impact on organisational performance through employee productivity (Pandey, 2023), employee retention (Anitha & Begum, 2016), and among other factors, innovation (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Hamedani et al. (2024) state that OC is the reason why societal problems exist within an organisation. OC is practiced by individuals within an organisation and is shaped and driven by the organisation's leadership (Kim et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023). Thus, the human element within an organisation directly promotes, enforces and practices the overarching organisational culture.

Organisational culture is defined as the set of norms, values and attitudes of all organisation's members (Schein, 1992); or the values, beliefs, and protocols that organisational members hold (Denison et al., 2012). It is described as the overarching characteristics of all employees, across departments that influences employees' decisions, behaviours and acts as the 'social glue' that fosters an identity of the organisation (Akpa et al., 2012). This is defined as the overarching culture of the organisation as set by the leaders to achieve strategy (Kim et al., 2022; Patrucco & Kähkönen, 2021).

Abawari et al. (2024) identified that the most frequent dimensions used in literature in the context of Organisational Culture were teamwork, results-oriented and innovation-based focus areas. Their research supports the conclusion that organisational culture is shaped by factors such as organisation's industry (Kim et

al., 2022; Galea, 2020) '*functional perspective*'; its leadership (O'Reilly, 2014) '*leader-traits perspective*', and the '*cultural-transfer perspective*' (Kim & Toh, 2019). The functional perspective can be expanded further into the behaviours of organisational members on the dimensions from the Competing Values Framework model (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). An example is the technology industry where innovation is critical for business success, raising the function to create intellectual property incorporating an adhocracy (create) culture (Carlgren & BenMahmoud-Jouini, 2022; Shepherd et al., 2023). Ghafoori et al. (2024) compared the CVF to data-driven adoption in the subject of innovation and found that the competing value of a hierarchical culture and control-orientated culture have negative impacts on innovation. Zeb et al. (2021), Lindquist & Buttazzoni (2021) and Boyd & Larson (2023) among other scholars have used the CVF to assess organisational cultures that promote innovation and explain environments that promote social wellbeing for employees.

These applications of the CVF promote the framework's viability to be relevant to current organisation's aspirations in the context of culture. As industries differ in their function to achieve the organisation's mission and vision, so too do departments differ in its function to achieve their departmental objectives (Gibbons et al., 2021). The CVF justifies the effectiveness of an organisation's culture in achieving the organisation's objectives with the use of the two dimensions on a continuum of competing values.

Organisational culture has also raised significant attention as an enabler of change in strategic implementation (Hamedani et al., 2024; Kressman & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). The focus of change in organisations to affect climate action (Husain-Naviatti, 2025), improvements in supply chain management (Pagell & Wilhelm, 2025) and first time AI adoption (Isensee et al., 2021) are driven by people within organisational culture. Thus, Organisational culture is a critical success factor in driving organisational performance and strategic implementation. The review of Organisational culture literature shows the extensive research of the human element, but not sufficient emphasis of the grouping of human behaviours at a functional level. The next section explores literature of corporate culture at a grouping level.

2.4 Departmental Culture

Organisations comprise as a collective of individuals grouped together to achieve a common goal (Turner, 2024). At a strategic level, groups are better able to achieve organisational goals as a collective rather than in their individual capability (Laughlin, 2011). Organisational culture is labelled as the 'dominant culture' (Barker et al., 2014) as an organisation is composed of a group of individuals who direct and implement the organisation's strategy to achieve its mission and objectives (Turner, 2024). Cummings & Worley (2015) describes a functional organisational structure, where departments comprise of groups who are focussed on one or more aspect of the organisation's objectives to execute that function through specialisation.

The Organisation comprises multiple departments, teams and groups who may develop their own set of 'sub-cultures' based on their shared views, experiences and dynamics (Abawari et al., 2024; Akpa et al., 2021; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). Barker et al. (2014) states that sub-cultures form when subgroups have reason to behave in a manner different to the overarching or dominant culture. Subcultures are created by individuals who are from different industries and professional groups (Sackmann, 1992). Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025) identify a micro-level phenomenon such as the existence of subcultures that either promote or hinder change. Kasa (2025) describes sub-cultures that support the OC as 'enhancing sub-cultures'; or 'orthogonal sub-cultures' that accept the OC and create aberrated cultures that does not adversely impact OC, and 'countercultures' that opposes the OC. There is no distinctive reference to departmental cultures in Kasa'

Academic literature on 'departmental culture' largely refers to academic departments in education (Deetz, 1992; Kálmán et al., 2020; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Phillips et al., 2025) whilst 'sub-cultures' is found the field of humanities and sociology (Akpa et al., 2012; Haenfler, 2023; Hebdige, 2013; Pitroso, 2024). However, the concept of departmental culture in business and management sciences is not distinctively researched, explained or defined; whilst the overarching organisational culture or corporate culture is studied extensively across the literature (Abawari et al., 2024; Akpa et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022). Olawale et al. (2023) explains that management science research intends to solve management problems, and thus the topic of

departmental culture is not thoroughly studied leading to the core argument of this research.

Although culture has been labelled as a dynamic concept within businesses (Erez & Gati, 2004; Kim et al., 2022) that either stems from the 'top-down' or the 'bottom-up' (Erez & Gati, 2004; Gibbons et al., 2021), the behaviour of a 'department's culture' is understudied revealing a gap in the literature. The closest study of departmental culture is the construct of sub-cultures as described by Barker et al. (2014) as behaviours of subgroups, when these groups have reasons to behave differently to a dominant culture. Sackmann (1992) described the functional domains that give rise to subcultures based on their shared views, geographical locations, experiences in various industries and professional affiliates. This indicates a need to firstly understand the concept of departmental culture, as a form of a sub-cultures in the context of the overarching organisational culture.

Sub-cultures continue to be prevalent in large organisations as they exist within departments who prioritise the function of the department as a results-driven objective (Gibbons et al., 2021). As groups within departments change over time, the importance of group cohesion and adaptability are becoming increasingly critical to organisational success (Akpa et al., 2021; Ewim et al., 2024). Leaders must have the ability to analyse the context and requirements of departments based on the department's function to continue the course of incorporating the necessary results-driven culture that characterise successful groups (Kim & Toh, 2019; Kim et al., 2022). The functional perspective (Galea, 2020; Kim et al., 2022) can thus inform both the organisational culture and/or departmental subculture to achieve the objectives of the organisation.

The CVF articulates the competing quadrants based on the two dimensions that identify functions of the organisation on a strategic level (Cameron et al., 2006). The organisations are classified as Clan, Market, Adhocracy or Hierarchy based on the type and characteristics of the organisation as displayed in Table 2 below. Cameron et al., (2006) provide a basis that an organisation's culture can co-exist between one or more quadrants, but in doing so the organisation as a collective could lose focus

on the ideal culture that adapts to changing business environments. Their development of the Organisational Culture Assessment Tool (OCAI) assists organisations of selecting the ideal culture tailored to that organisation’s objectives.

Table 2: Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006), by function of an organisation

Type	Orientation	Organisation Type	Academic reference
Clan	Collaborative	Learning & Development	(Boyd & Larson, 2023; Toufighi et al., 2024)
Market	Competing	Consumer Retail	(Gong, 2022)
Adhocracy	Create	Software Service Provider	(Strengers et al., 2022; Zeb et al., 2021)
Hierarchy	Control	Banking	(Kunz & Heitz, 2021)

The CVF was designed to be applied across an organisation to inform an overarching dominant culture, however due to the diversity within an organisation, it may not have been effectively communicated, measured or applied throughout the whole organisation (Englert et al., 2024; Roth et al., 2011). The organisation is seen as a function of multiple groups and teams and thus, each department could have their own culture that enables and promotes its own function (Gibbons et al., 2021). The term cultural misfit is used to describe an OC that does not promote groups of individuals to achieve their functions (Englert et al., 2024). Sackmann (1992) described the functional domains that give rise to subcultures within organisations. These factors elevate the importance of bottom-up cultural enforcement as effective through functional groups when achieving sub-group responsibilities cascading into the organisation’s objectives.

Although the objective of this research is to provide an evidence-based existence of departmental culture it reveals consequential insights into the causes of cultural misfit. Through answering the research questions in Chapter 3, this research seeks to fill the gap in the literature regarding the existence and nature of departmental culture to achieve the organisation's objectives in the context of organisational culture.

2.5 Integrating the Literature in Conclusion

The overarching concept of Organisational Culture has been discussed in scholarly literature as the dominant way individuals behave within their departments across the Organisation (Schein, 2002). The strategy of an organisation is frequently supported by the organisational culture (Ghafoori et al., 2024) that is pervasively applied to groups of individuals to achieve the organisation's strategic objectives (Gibbons et al., 2021). Organisational culture influences employees' decisions, behaviours and acts as the 'social glue' that fosters an identity of the organisation (Akpa et al., 2012). Hofstede, Schein, O'Reilly, Cameron & Quinn, Sarel et al. and Denison derived models, frameworks and theory on Organisational Culture guide organisations to select the type of culture that will support the overall organisation's strategy (Abawari et al., 2024).

Departmental culture in the context of business and management sciences is a new term, as evidently not distinctively mentioned in academic literature (Abawari et al., 2024; Akpa et al., 2012; Deetz, 1992; Haenfler, 2023; Hebdige, 2013; Kálmán et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2022; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Olawale et al., 2023; Phillips et al., 2025; Pitroso, 2024). Departmental culture can be described as a subculture as subcultures are made of group behaviours that differ from the overarching culture (Abawari et al., 2024; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework is not intended to be a function-based model at a departmental level, but the framework matches organisational function to a recommended organisational culture (Cameron et al., 2006) that informs the functional-dimensions of culture (Kim et al., 2022).

The literature provides much information about organisational culture, less information about subcultures in the context of department functions leading to a gap in the literature. The CVF provides a tool that suggests four competing cultural types that recommends the appropriate culture to match the organisation's objectives. These objectives are cascaded down the business for execution through a functional business structure into departments who have their own functions focussed to achieve that function. These departmental functions collectively meet the organisation's objectives. Thus, the CVF can assist in understanding the nature of departmental culture to achieve organisational objectives. The next chapter provides a systematic process to address the gap proven in the literature.

Chapter 3: Research Questions

Scholarly literature of sub-cultures within an organisation are mostly qualitative research illustrating the immature nature of literature available (Abawari et al., 2024; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). Gibbons et al. (2021) describes two types of culture based on origin. They refer to 'Big-C' culture as set by organisational leaders and are values-based, that is slowly adopted in the organisation and is linked to strategic intention. 'Little-c culture' is culture built within an organisation, fast-paced and is formed to address expectations of departmental requirements. 'Big-C culture' is vested within individuals whilst 'Little-c culture' is developed between individuals (Gibbons et al.,2021). This notion can be applied to the overarching organisation culture that can often shadow subcultures practiced in an organisation (Gibbons et al., 2024) based on its value-based importance of achieving corporate strategy.

As businesses adapt their cultures to changes in the environment, a recent assessment of whether a function-based culture at a department level is the best approach (Kim & Toh, 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024). Testing the urgency of a function-based culture must be assessed (Kim et al.,2022):

(RQ1): Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

The next question addresses the occurrence and impact of departmental culture in the context of the departments function, in the same manner that organisational cultural changes are required to meet corporate strategy (Kim et al., 2022; Shepherd et al., 2023).

(RQ2): Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?

The existence of subcultures within groups remains inherent as the literature acknowledges the existence of sub-cultures (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025).

Following the prevalence of departmental culture in answering research questions 1 and 2; and the acknowledgement of 'sub-cultures' in organisations; the next question addresses the gap identified in the literature to discover the nature of departmental culture in context of the organisational culture (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025):

(RQ3): What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

Finally, Ewim et al. (2024) developed the cross-functional coordination framework that contributes to management strategies through robust communication channels, collaborative management tools and performance measures that align separate functional groups to corporate objectives. This implies that the cross-collaboration of departments within an organisation exists, yet there is no indication on whether the existence of separate departmental cultures can effectively achieve organisation objectives (Abawari et al., 2024)?

(RQ4): Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?

Appendix A illustrates the Consistency Matrix linking the four research questions to the purpose and method of research conducted. These research questions are sequentially structured to aid in understanding the importance, nature and effectiveness of departmental cultures within organisations in the context of achieving their functional responsibilities and collectively the organisational objectives (Audretsch et al., 2021; Denison et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2022)

Chapter 4: Research Methodology and Design

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides a systematic method of identifying the type of research required to answer the research questions from Chapter 3 and provides information on the methods that informed the research findings. Fernandes et al. (2023) describes Organisational Culture as the personality and behaviours of the Organisation over time. These are based on the values, norms and expectations of its members. Organisational Culture as construct has been extensively researched to achieve corporate strategy (Gibbons, 2021; Snyder, 2023) through its corporate level relationship with various aspects (Abawari et al., 2024). However, the culture of a department in a corporate entity has not been distinctively identified, and the term 'departmental culture' has been described in academia in teaching (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Kálmán et al., 2020) and sociology through sub-cultural studies (Akpa et al., 2012).

The intention of this research is to explore the nature and effectiveness of departmental cultures in the context of the overarching 'Organisational Culture' where the researcher seeks to "discover information about a topic" (Saunders & Lewis, 2018 p. 115). A justification of the selected participants, data collection process, and data analysis of this research is provided in this Chapter, to provide assurance and transparency of the results addressing the research questions. Quality assurance, limitations and delimitations of this research, and ethical considerations are also provided in this Chapter.

4.2 Research Design

This research design is focussed on directly elucidating the research questions in exploring the nature and effectiveness of departmental culture. Through exploratory research, the researcher understands the existence and nature of departmental culture, followed by an analysis that informs its expected effectiveness. The success of the research project also depended on the researcher's existing knowledge of departmental culture as informed by academic literature from Chapter 2 and available resources (Islam and Aldaihani, 2022; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Olawale

et al. (2023) suggests that exploratory research intends to “explore a topic” rather than to provide a concluding statement. Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025) found that most subcultural studies in business follow a qualitative research method, proving that the topic of sub-culture and specifically departmental culture is under researched.

Exploring departmental culture in the context of an organisation requires a deep understanding from the advocates of departmental culture. Islam and Aldaihani, (2022) and Saunders & Lewis (2018) suggest a mono method based on the available time and existing knowledge of the researcher that determines the success of the project within these constraints. The depth of discovered data through exploratory research comes from a deep and focused response, in the form of qualitative research through semi-structured interviews (Islam and Aldaihani, 2022). The primary aim of the semi-structured interviews will support the deep exploration of information as supported by Saunders & Lewis (2018) to provide evidence of departmental cultures as function(s) of the organisation. Schein (2010) supports the idea of “interviewing persons in the organisation” (p. 181) at hierarchical levels to understand diverse cultural perspectives as opposed to quantitative research.

The time horizon of this research is cross-sectional as culture is dynamic (Kim et al., 2022) and adaptable (Vishwakarma, 2024) and is defined as a behaviour between two or more individuals. An interpretivism philosophy was applied to this research as the concept of ‘departmental culture’ in each function of the organisation (Abawari et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2022) is a “social phenomenon” (Saunders & Lewis, 2018, p. 109). Discovering the existence and nature of departmental culture provided new information of how culture is informed at this specific functional level (Abawari et al., 2024). Cameron et al. (2006) have derived the Competing Values Framework that has been used by academics extensively over the years to assess organisational culture to different constructs (Nugraha et al., 2024; Reisberger et al., 2024). Academic scholars utilise the framework to explain relationships between the organisational culture to the effectiveness of business strategy (Gibbons et al., 2024; Patrucco & Kähkönen, 2021; Turner, 2024;) based on the four competing values as a function of the Organisation (Cameron et al., 2006). The argument is that

departments represent specific functions of the organisation as per Organisational structure (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Nene & Pillay, 2019) and thus each department advocates a specific type of culture within this structure that has not been documented (Gong., 2022).

For the purposes of this research project, the CVF was used at a departmental level, as opposed to an organisational level to induce theory of the research findings from exploratory research (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Cameron et al., (2006) provide competing values that have previously been applied to entire organisations based on their functions, but since the concept of 'departmental culture' is understudied, the CVF was used as an analytical tool to understand the nature of departmental culture as a function within the organisations structure (Cummings & Worley, 2015). This research aims to deconstruct existing 'organisational cultural' theory (Abawari et al., 2024) and undertake qualitative research to explore departmental culture by answering the research questions (Mahadevan, 2024) from Chapter 3.

4.3 Population

Schein (2010) describes culture as a "shared experience of success that supervisors, middle management and higher management" (p. 56) will continue to practice and hand down to their successors or existing teams. Schein refers to organisational culture where leaders set a top-down culture as proven successful in the past, and the leadership at each level is confident of the success rate of that specific culture-promoting model (Ahsan, 2025). In the same manner that incorporate leaders who drive organisational cultures, departmental leaders advocate departmental culture (Kim & Toh, 2019). Abawari et al. (2024) refer to this behaviour as the leadership-trait cultural influence.

Departmental managers are traditionally responsible for promoting culture that improves their department's performance in a top-down manner and are susceptible to being biased towards promoting the overarching culture (Erez & Gati, 2004). Abdullah & Sofyan (2022) have placed middle managers as having influential power to translate corporate strategy into their reporting lines, and communication staff

innovation from their teams to senior management. Creswell & Poth (2025) support qualitative research as information rich, and that research should seek a population who will provide purposeful samples. In the context of departmental culture, middle managers who run departments were the most appropriate population selected. Thus, the population of this research is focussed on middle managers who can differentiate between organisational culture and departmental culture if the latter aberrated culture exists.

Furthermore, it is found that as a company grows, the organisation needs to be more specialised in each of its functions to be effective (Basol & Dogerlioglu, 2014). The population selected for this research are participants from medium and large-sized organisations (Kruger & Johnson, 2013) rather than small organisations as determined by the number of departments that exist (Basol & Dogerlioglu, 2014). Larger organisations are highly susceptible to have an overarching culture and multiple departments who are expected to have distinct departmental cultures.

Zacher & Gielnik (2014) find that older employees are more aligned to positive work attitudes than younger employees based on the Upper Echelons Theory developed by Hambrick & Mason (1984). Senior managers by organisational age, know their organisational cultures better than younger employees (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014). The population thus requires middle managers to have sufficient years of experience in the organisation to observe and provide deeper understanding of cultural mismatches and differentiate in detail the distinguishing characteristics of each.

Another aspect informing the population is the types of departments available within an organisation. Stanikzai & Mittal (2025) label the second cluster theme in their research as “decentralised decision-making” as a form of organisational structure that promotes adaptability and agility of middle managers in responding with autonomous decisions. This supports a functional structure that is also the most common structure used in organisations larger than a ‘handful’ of individuals (Fioretti & Neumann, 2022). Cummings & Worley (2015) finds that the functional structure is the most widely used structure and comprises of certain specialised departments. Using Michael Porter’s Value Chain, the six typical departments by function of an

organisation exists (Porter, 1985), that are not exhaustive but are typical within an organisation to the value chain (see Table 3):

Table 3: Porters Value Chain broken into typical business departments by a function-based structure.

Function of the department	Porter's Value Chain Activities
1. Finance Department	Firm Infrastructure (Support Activity)
2. IT Department	Firm Infrastructure (Support Activity) Technology Development (Support Activity)
3. HR Department	Human Resource Management (Support Activity)
4. Procurement & Logistics	Procurement (Support Activity) Inbound Logistics (Primary Activity) Operations (Primary Activity) Outbound Logistics (Primary Activity)
5. Marketing & Sales	Operations (Primary Activity) Outbound Logistics (Primary Activity) Marketing & Sales (Primary Activity) Service (Primary Activity)
6. Call centres	Marketing & Sales (Primary Activity) Service (Primary Activity)

Thus, the population includes middle managers of medium to large-sized organisations with sufficient years of experience, and who understand culture from one of the six typical departments that exist in an organisation (see Table 4).

Table 4: Population of this research

Population Criteria	Reasons
Middle management	Ability to compare OC to their departments (Schein, 2010); Top-down translators of strategy; excludes C-suite who advocate OC (Abdullah & Sofyan, 2022).
Departmental Leaders	Largest influences of culture at a departmental level. (Ahsan, 2025). Function-based cultural setting agents (Kim & Toh, 2019)
Medium-Large Corporates	Highly susceptible to have sub-cultures compared to smaller organisations (Basol & Dogerlioglu, 2014; Kruger & Johnson, 2013)
Long-term employment	Ability to understand and differentiate cultures in organisations (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014); Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984)
Function-based structured companies	Decentralised decision making as a manager (Stanikzai & Mittal, 2025); manager of function-based department (Cummings & Worley, 2015)
Specific departmental managers (scope)	Value chain departments (typical departments in existence); (Porter, 1985); Cummings & Worley (2015) illustrate the function-based structure departments

4.4 Sampling

Culture is a social concept that is described subjectively by members of an organisation (Abawari et al., 2024), and the population of middle-managers in medium to large-sized corporations in South Africa are continuously changing, making it impossible to identify a sample frame. Saunders & Lewis (2018, p. 142) propose a non-probable sample of between “12 and 30” for heterogeneous populations for student projects based on the time-constraints of conducting the research and the access of the researcher to certain individuals in the population. Purposive Sampling was used based on the researcher’s judgement of the middle-managers within the specified population and the available networks suitability to provide responses on culture (Saunders & Lewis, 2018).

The sample selected for the semi-structured interviews comprised 18 respondents. This excludes two respondents used to test the measurement instrument and 18 respondents whose insights were used for this research. The sample size supports the exploratory research of between 12 and 30 (Saunders & Lewis, 2018). Hennink & Kaiser, (2022) support between 9-17 interviews for qualitative research as the average appropriate number of interviews to reach saturation. Looking at the population, explicitly the linking of typical departments using Porter’s value chain in a functional structure (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Fioretti & Neumann, 2022), the selection criteria of individuals should be 18 participants comprising of the six departments specified.

The study aims to provide in-dept exploration of experiences from the 18 participants to reach data saturation for research questions 1,2, and 4. The six groups provided sufficient breadth to capture managers’ perspective supporting heterogeneity in the differences between each of the group’s functions (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) and achieve saturation. Furthermore, three managers from each group will provide a practical balance in answering research question 3: ‘input factors that determine each department’s culture’ given the time constraints of the research project and emphasising the maximum variation sampling per department to obtain opposing views (Patton, 2015).

Morse (2000) provides factors that should be considered when determining the sample sizes that will be used in this research.

4.4.1 Scope of study

The research questions set the scope of the data required from those who understand their functions in executing their functional responsibility to the business strategy (Iqbal et al., 2022).

4.4.2 Nature of topic

Cultural studies are broad in nature and through qualitative research, sufficient data was needed to be obtained to the point of saturation (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). Middle managers are highly susceptible to understanding their standpoint of their department's culture in contrast to the overarching organisational culture. It is relevant to note that the nature of culture at a functional level is known best from the viewpoint of the department's manager (Iqbal et al., 2022).

4.4.3 Quality of data

The data was collected via semi-structured interviews with the intention to protrude the practiced culture in a department. The participants divulged cultural information based on the culture(s) they could visibly identify from both the organisation and within their departments but were at risk of providing ideal departmental cultural traits rather than the actual practiced cultures.

4.4.4 Study design & use of shadow data

The study was conducted to individuals as opposed to groups, requiring a larger sample size. There was also a high-risk that participants would discuss the experience of others, 'shadow data' as described by Morse (2000) rather than the actual culture being practiced. After considering these factors, the sample size was determined to be 18 participants, that is marginally larger than the standard interviewee size (Creswell et al., 2007). The sample size per department was three participants to obtain a more objective collective opinion than simply using one or two participants as per the standard sample (Pillay et al., 2023). Saturation is

obtained from the perspective of each of the 18 participants on addressing the four research questions in Chapter 3 (Patton, 2015).

A non-probability sample was accessed through purposeful sampling (Stratton, 2021) where the researcher selects participants based on their years of experience in managing departments (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014), their roles in middle managing positions (Iqbal et al., 2022), and the number of years of experience to better identify cultures (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014). All interviews were conducted as scheduled and analysed the point of saturation (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022) in addressing the four research questions. Saturation was demonstrated as part of the sample strategy to improve the credibility of the research and is explained in Chapter 5.

4.5 Unit of analysis

The research questions revolve around the significance of departmental culture in corporate organisations. This research seeks to explore the existence and importance of departmental culture that is a specialised unit to achieve a function in the context of the overarching organisational culture. The unit of analysis is thus 'Departmental Culture' as described by the population (Neuendorf, 2021). The interview participants are middle managers in medium to large-sized firms, and each are employed for a sufficient period in their current role to have a strong understanding of the organisational culture and the ability to assess the existence of departmental culture (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014).

At the time the research was conducted, these individuals reported into a manager above their hierarchy and had subordinates reporting into them as culture is between individuals and is not practiced in isolation as defined (Akpa et al., 2021). Thus, the unit of observation is cultural change agents within departments who are not responsible for setting organisational culture. The respondent's names and organisations were not required for this research and have been masked on the transcripts, for example Respondent B had the alias 'rB' and if the company was mentioned, the transcript read 'Company A'. The 18 respondents' details are listed in Table 5 as obtained during the interviews.

Table 5: Managerial context of respondents and their relevant characteristics obtained from interviews

No. of Respondent (Department and number of respondents per department)	Current Role at Organisation	No. of years in Department Manager in Current Role	No. of years of Managing Departments	No. of ppl. in the current Department	Current Department Functional Statement
1. Respondent A (rA) (Marketing & Sales 1)	Head of Brands	9.5 years	15 years	10 direct reports	"To develop, and ideate all customer facing communication"
2. Respondent B (rB) (Call Centre 1)	Call Centre Manager	10 years	15 years	110, 6 direct reports	"Provide outsourcing for different companies in the financial sector where we market short-term insurance policies"
3. Respondent C (rC) (Finance 1)	Senior Sales-Finance Manager	5 years (2m of title change)	10 years	90, 5 direct reports	"Sales department enable all store operations"
4. Respondent D (rD) (Marketing & Sales 2)	Head of Marketing, Franchising and Client Services	2 years	15 years	60	Marketing - "Manage overall Marketing Function, Full Marketing Mix through start to end"; Franchising – "Managing Franchisees across South Africa" Client Services – "Call Centre, Broker Liaison and Customer Experience and External Sales Team, Manage Claims, Day-to-day client services, Escalations, and New Business"
5. Respondent E (rE) (Finance 2)	Commercial/Finance Business Partner	5.5 years	8 years	4 direct reports	"To bring operations and finance together and guide decision makers with control and financial planning."
6. Respondent F (rF) (Human Resource 1)	Senior Manager in HR Operations	3 years	6 years	8-9	"Business Enablement, to equip business with the right skills: Recruitment, Training & Employment Relations"
7. Respondent G (rG) (Finance 3)	Regional Financial Manager: Western Cape	4 years	10 years	7	"Support Function to the operations of the business, Internal Control, Legislation"
8. Respondent H (rH) (Call Centre 2)	Escalation Manager	1 years	15 years	8	"Customer Relationship, between brokers and insurers to ensure escalations are addressed"
9. Respondent I (rI) (Call Centre 3)	Customer Service Centre Manager	8 years	13 years	35	"Manage Claims for Insurance Partners including Policy Holders and Brokers, and administer claims for service, and manage escalations, and quoting."
10. Respondent J (rJ) (IT 1)	IT Manager	8 months	27 years	16	"Three groups: Service Support, Infrastructure and Networks, and Development of Software"
11. Respondent K (rK) (Marketing & Sales 3)	Head of Warehousing and Logistics	1 year (Title change)	10 years	70, 4 direct reports	"Manage operations, Orders, Receiving and Pricing Products. Delivery and Sales Team Management"
12. Respondent L (rL) (Procurement 1)	Strategic Planning & Execution Manager	6 years	15 years	6	"Supply Chain, Procurement and Sourcing Activities"
13. Respondent M (rM) (IT 2)	Support Lead/IT Support Manager	6 years	7 years	3 (was 7)	"Business enablers, not just IT people but "go to people" and "business enablers"
14. Respondent N (rN) (HR 2)	Head of Learning & Development	1-year 10m	8 years	10	"Learning & Development within and outside business. Largely to Drivers of the business"
15. Respondent O (rO) (Procurement 2)	VP merchandise	4 years	20 years	84, 9 direct lines	"All product category procurement"
16. Respondent P (rP) (HR 3)	Group HR Manager	2 years	6 years	7	"Ensure consistency and alignment to organisational objectives and reciprocate personal-professional employee development"
17. Respondent Q (rQ) (Procurement 3)	Logistics Manager	6 years	20 years	150, 6 direct lines	"Ensure smooth operations and efficiencies in supply chain to meet the retailer's requirements"
18. Respondent R (rR) (IT 3)	Scrum Master	2-3 months (Title change)	8 years at company	9-10	"System Integration and software development"

Since the research is exploratory in discovering the functional aspects of culture at each of the department's level; data of individuals who had sufficient years of experience in managing departments (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014), credited their understanding of organisational culture, and the ability to differentiate between departmental culture and organisational culture. The sample selected have a range of 8 to 27 years in managing departments, and each having a strong understanding of the cultures experienced within their departments.

4.6 Measurement instrument

This research is intended to explore the causes of variant departmental cultures against the CVF and to understand its existence within the overarching culture. The measurement instrument were semi-structured interviews supporting the mono-method research advised based on time constraints and is exploratory nature of this research. Islam and Aldaihani (2022) support semi-structured qualitative interviews to provide a deep, rich perspective of a topic to be explored.

A pilot study was conducted with two participants from the same population to improve the instrument's clarity, length and to eliminate jargon. The pilot interviews were not included in the research findings. The interview protocol was approved by the University's Ethics Committee before the commencement of the pilot interviews. The pilot study enhanced the semi-structured interview questions by clarifying related questions and providing supporting questions where the participants provided irrelevant feedback from not addressing the questions. No significant changes were made to the measurement instrument. The interview questions were also made clearer for the respondents and were limited to between 8-9 questions as previously linked to the research questions to obtain a clearer dialogue from respondents. Interviews time duration averaged 32 minutes (Table 5) but were scheduled for 45-minutes that allowed respondents sufficient time to provide their perspectives.

Data from the 18 interviews provided a rich perspective that allowed for the expansion of the respondent's opinions (Creswell et al., 2007). The interview guide contained a short-list of formal questions to provide the context of their role and

function, an exploratory list of 4 questions to discover the organisational and departmental culture, and a divergence of questions based on whether they identified a difference between the OC and DC (see Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews as opposed to unstructured interviews (Schein, 2010) provided stronger guided scope of issues that is required in the design to directly answer the research questions formulated. Table 6 explains the relationship of the interview questions in providing responses to the research questions:

Table 6: The design of interview questions to answer research questions.

Research Questions	Interview Questions
<p>1: Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?</p>	<p>3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you see distinct behaviours of your team that achieve functional responsibilities? - What challenges does your team face when collaborating across departments? <p>5. Do you believe that the department's culture should be prioritised if it conflicts with the overarching organisational culture? If so, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you seen strategies fail due to cultural misalignment? - Have persons in the department required stronger standards or processes to function? <p>9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>
<p>2: Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?</p>	<p>3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you see distinct behaviours of your team that achieve functional responsibilities? - What challenges does your team face when collaborating across departments? <p>6. What factors inform the nature of departmental culture, "the way things get done"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What behaviours are celebrated, and what behaviour gets quietly discouraged? - Provide characteristics of interactions between team member and cross-depts. <p>8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give an example of where an organisational culture was lived to achieve a goal. <p>9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>

<p>3: What are the input factors of a department-based culture?</p>	<p>1. Provide a list of the functional responsibilities that the department has at the organisation? i.e. Describe the functions of the department?</p> <p>4. Do you see a strong or weak cultural difference in the department's culture to the overarching organisational culture? If yes, please describe it. If no, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the department is under stress, what cultural traits show up strongest? <p>6. What factors inform the nature of departmental culture, "the way things get done"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What behaviours are celebrated, and what behaviour gets quietly discouraged? - Provide characteristics of interactions between team members and cross-depts. <p>8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give an example of where an organisational culture was lived to achieve a goal. <p>9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>
<p>4: Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more/equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?</p>	<p>2. What is the overarching corporate culture? How would you describe it? These can be the values written down to inform culture and what you physically see and feel as the way people in your organisation behave.</p> <p>3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you see distinct behaviours of your team that achieve functional responsibilities? - What challenges does your team face when collaborating across departments? <p>5. Do you believe that the department's culture should be prioritised if it conflicts with the overarching organisational culture? If so, why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you seen strategies fail due to cultural misalignment? - Have persons in the department required stronger standards or processes to function? <p>7. In your opinion, does having a distinct departmental culture have any adverse impact on the overall organisation and across other departments? Please elaborate.</p> <p>8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give an example of where an organisational culture was lived to achieve a goal. <p>9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>

The interview questions were designed in a story format that allowed for the researcher to understand the OC, followed by the existence and nature of DC and the functions of the department. Each participant signed a consent form during

scheduling and prior to the interview being conducted, via Gmail. Interview question 4 was the intersection point; where OC was identified as either promoting the DF or hindering the DF. Interview questions 5, 6, and 7 were asked if the respondent found that the overarching OC hindered the DF, whilst questions 8, and 9 were asked if the OC promoted the DF. Thus, the questions comprised of a total of 7 questions to allow the respondent to provide deeper insights into the nature of DC enabling the necessary exploratory data for analysis (Olawale et al., 2023). The format of the interview questions also enabled the participants to reflect on their OC, and DC prior to answering questions about the effectiveness of each culture on their DF and the organisation's objectives. This improved the flow of information from the respondent.

4.7 Data collection

The in-depth interviews were conducted via one-on-one video-calling applications using Google Meets and in one instance Microsoft Teams due to the respondent's security settings. Most of the planned participants were available as scheduled with five respondents needing to be replaced based on unavailability. The use of handwritten field notes aided the researcher in documenting key information for subsequent clarification and elaboration during the interviews (Cole, 2024). OBS Studios software was used to record the interviews, as it served a dual function to record the online interviews on the researcher's local PC and to prevent any AI recording that could jeopardise the confidentiality of the participants details.

One respondent met with the researcher in person to conduct the interview, but the OBS recording software was consistently used. If the interview was interrupted due to connectivity issues, the researcher stopped the recording and restarted a new recording to continue with the interview from where the first interview stopped. This occurred on 2 occasions and is noted in the transcription documents as illustrated on Table 7 below. Transcriptions were thereafter conducted using the researcher's local Microsoft Clipchamp software that converted the video files into transcribed text per frame. Each Clipchamp transcribed text data was then copied onto Microsoft Word where the researcher cleaned the data by manually playing the videos and editing any text that did not display the spoken words from the interviews.

Table 7: Interview Transcription and coding details per interview

No. of Respondent (Department and number of responds per department)	Manager of Department	Interview Length (mins)	No. of transcription pages and word count	No. of Codes from Interview across RQs
1. Respondent A	Marketing & Sales	31:33	9p (3,919w)	37
2. Respondent B	Call Centre	34:10 (06:07 + 05:03 + 11:10)	12p (4,895w)	68
3. Respondent C	Finance	26:41	9p (3,580w)	32
4. Respondent D	Marketing & Sales	41:03	14p (6,191w)	59
5. Respondent E	Finance	43:14	12p (5,979w)	57
6. Respondent F	HR	28:34	10p (4,562w)	36
7. Respondent G	Finance	25:13	9p (3,645w)	46
8. Respondent H	Call Centre	30: 41 (7:24 + 23:17)	11p (4,485w)	44
9. Respondent I	Call Centre	32:49	9p (3,768w)	49
10. Respondent J	IT	20:27	8p (2,525w)	48
11. Respondent K	Marketing & Sales	34:16	13p (5,041w)	44
12. Respondent L	Procurement	32:25	12p (5,172w)	41
13. Respondent M	IT	30:41	9p (4,043w)	55
14. Respondent N	HR	29:19	9p (4,150w)	40
15. Respondent O	Procurement	38:04	12p (5,596w)	40
16. Respondent P	HR	43:51	14p (6,469w)	44
17. Respondent Q	Procurement	20:35	8p (2,811w)	26
18. Respondent R	IT	38:14	12p (4,939p)	37

The transcribed data was further masked by any mention of the respondent's name and the company that they were currently or previously employed by, during the data collection process to enforce confidentiality as per the consent forms signed by each respondent prior to the interviews conducted. The researcher did not use any external or outsourced transcription services to keep each respondent's interview information confidential throughout the data collection process. The preparation technique of Lim (2025) was used for the in-depth interviews to add credibility to the research as illustrated in Appendix C and is discussed in the Quality Assurance section of this chapter.

The video recordings, transcripts and signed consent forms are stored on a personal drive using cloud-based Google storage only accessible to the researcher. This data will be held in terms of Gibs requirements for 10 years and will be uploaded to the Gibs student repository as instructed for audit purposes. Departmental culture is an exploratory subject, and thus no secondary data was used, however a deeper analysis of CVF informed the nature of each department's culture using existing

theory from the literature (Cameron et al., 2006). This information was stored on excel and was used during the analysis of research question 3 in naming the themes as discussed in the data analysis section of this chapter. Data collected answered research question 1, 2 and 4 were binary in nature where the respondents either agreed to question or not with themes provided in the justification of these binary responses, whilst research question 3 provided the factors that informed DC at a functional level.

4.8 Data analysis

Inductive (conventional) analysis was used to build theory with the use of the 'coding process' as illustrated by Lim (2025). This entailed breaking the data into discrete parts to label and compare data for similarities and differences (open coding), followed by organising codes into categories (axial coding) and finally on integrating categories to a coherent theme (selective coding). Braun & Clarke (2017) include this coding process along with additional analysis processes in their Thematic Analysis method that transforms "raw data into a coherent story" (Lim, 2025, p. 22). The researcher followed Braun & Clarke 's six step Thematic Analysis and illustrated in Appendix D:

4.8.1 Stage 1: Familiarisation of the researcher to the data

The researcher began the analysis process through the verification of data to become familiar with the data. Each respondent's transcript was verified to the recorded video through playing the video and conforming the Clipchamp's transcriptions. During this phase the researcher drew a table to insert the binary input to research questions 1, 2 and 4 (column labels) from each of the 18 respondents (rows label) to obtain the respondents view on each research question. This method enabled the researcher to familiarise each respondent's perspective in context of their function in the latter stages of the analysis process.

4.8.2 Stage 2: Generating initial codes

Using Atlas.ti, a structured approach was used to architect the format of the data for analysis with the objective of answering each of the four research questions. The 18

transcripts were uploaded onto Atlas.ti. The code group consisted of the 6 groups for each of the four research questions, OC, and other significant findings (Figure 4.1):

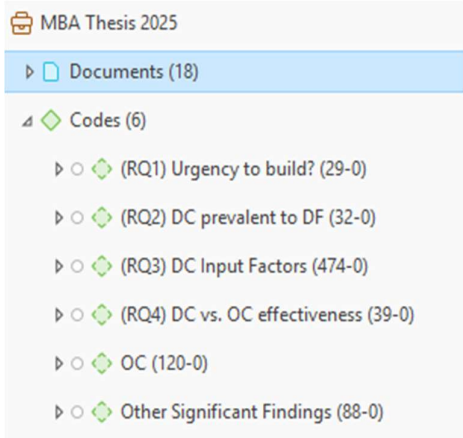


Figure 4.1: systematic approach used to answer the research questions by grouping codes.

This grouping method enabled the researcher to file codes generated during the coding process into each of the 6 groups. In addition to 6 code groups, 12 document groups were generated, including the 6 departments for answering research question 3, and 2x3 binary responses as detected in stage 1 for answering questions 1,2 & 4.

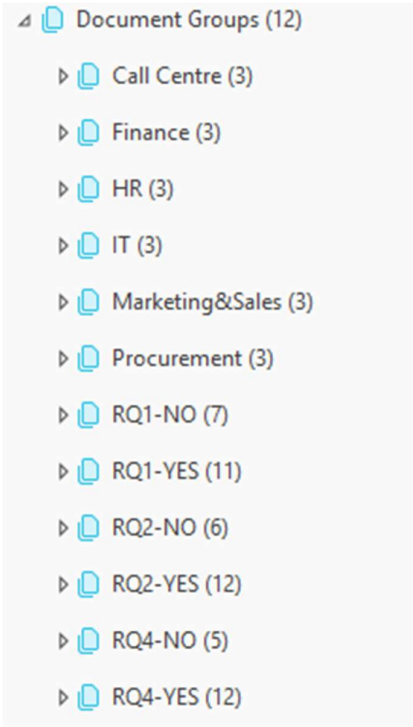


Figure 4.2: systematic approach used to answer the research questions by grouping documents.

These code groups and document groups enabled the researcher to visually analyse the relationship between codes and respondents to primary answer each of the four research questions and to provide exploratory findings about DC. Visual data and reports found in Chapter 5 were extracted from Atlas.ti or created using Microsoft Excel visual tools to provide visual representation of the data analysed. In answering Research Question 3, primary data obtained from the 5 interview questions, resulted in 474 quotations that provided 215 codes using the open coding process facilitated by Atlas.ti. Each of the 18 interviews were coded manually by the researcher that initially resulted in more than 215 codes and was reduced to 215 codes during a review of codes where codes overlapped in meaning and if lower case and upper-case letters of the same meaning existed.

The researcher conducted a detailed axial coding (Simmons, 2017) exercise across all the research questions on Atlas.ti by going into each code's detailed quotation to verify the relationships between the quotation and the code to validate the accuracy of the code assigned. It was found that more appropriate codes generated in the latter stages of the coding process were applicable to the first few interviews. The initial codes assigned were replaced with the more relevant code names resulting in a re-iterative cycle to refine the total number of 364 codes from 803 quotations.

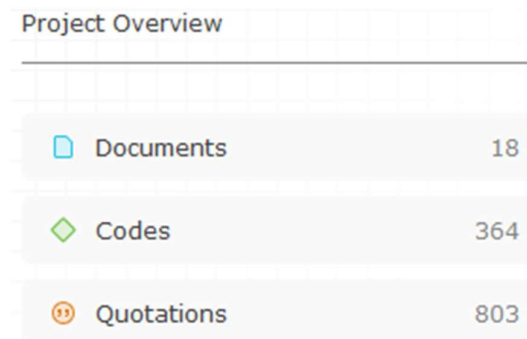


Figure 4.3: systematic approach used to answer the research questions by grouping documents.

4.8.3 Stage 3: Searching for Themes

Although Research Questions 1, 2 and 4 expected binary responses, the need to provide exploratory results as this research design suggests followed an inductive

approach of grouping the justification of respondents' insights into themes. These themes are available in the Appendixes: F (RQ1); G (RQ2); and K (RQ4). The results are discussed in the next chapter. To answer Research Question 3, the axial coding process provided a relational understanding among codes to each of the six functions per department. These input factors representing 215 codes were grouped into 18 categories that best described the nature of these input factors informing the DC for each of the six business functions. The researcher validated the context of each code to the interview guide when there was uncertainty on the appropriate category that the code should have been assigned to. Each of the 215 codes was given a reason for why that code belonged to a specific category (see Appendix H), aiding in defining the nature of the 18 themes.

4.8.4 Stage 4: Reviewing Themes

With the reasons of the 215 axial codes creating the 18 categories, each category needed to be clearly defined, the researcher used the literature from Chapter 2 on CVF to review the themes into each of the four quadrants based on the dimensional attributes of flexibility or stability and internal or external focus of the framework. This supported the selective coding process to validate the distinct characteristics of categories to reduce the codes to 18 mutually exclusive themes. The description of each of the 18 themes are provided in Appendix E.

4.8.5 Stage 5: Defining and naming Themes

The validation process was carefully conducted through reiteration of reviewing axial codes to themes and to the CVF literature in a systems thinking manner that included converging and diverging the 18 themes into a matured state. Defining the themes was largely informed from the literature (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Ghafoori et al., 2024; Gong et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024; Zeb et al., 2021) and the Cameron & Quinns CVF as the underlying framework if a code required to be defined (Cameron et al., 2006; Cameron & Quinn, 2011) by unbundling the cultural behaviours of the four CVF quadrants into 65 attributes (see Appendix Ea). These attributes informed the names of each theme and its definition (see Appendix E).

4.8.6 Stage 6: Reporting Themes

The themes were subsequently added to Atlas.ti 'code groups' tool to assist in reporting any relationships between respondents, document groups, themes and the six department groups to answer research question 3.

Research questions 1,2 and 4 required binary responses resulting in either yes or no responses with themes built around the reasons for each binary response. Thematic analysis was utilised through Atlas.ti to analyse themes drawn from the data gathering process. This six-stage process of Braun & Clarke (2017) is found in Appendix D and emphasises an understanding of the data to build themes using the CVF literature as a guiding framework.



Figure 4.4: extract from Atlas.ti of naming 18 themes by code groups for reporting analytical findings.

This process provided a systematic audit trail of information aiding to the credibility of the research as received in the form of raw data from the in-depth interviews to the formation of information as reported in the Chapter 5.

4.9 Quality assurance

Saunders & Lewis (2018) provide quality control factors and that should be practiced reducing the "invalidity" of research conclusions and define 'validity' and 'reliability' of findings (p. 132). The model in Appendix C is the tree of trustworthiness as

developed by Guba & Lincoln (1981). It enforces Saunders & Lewis (2018) factors and provides a more detailed set of assurance factors linked to the primary objective to achieve trustworthiness of research findings.

4.9.1 Credibility

Firstly, pilot interviews were conducted with two participants from the same population to improve the instrument's clarity, length and to eliminate jargon contributing to the reliability of findings through transparency of data obtained (McCracken & McCracken, 1988). Saunders & Lewis (2018) refers to this as pre-tests in the data collection process. Secondly, the researcher repeated the answers that the respondent provided to attain clarification of the intended statement (Lim, 2025). Where responses were not sufficient to understand the respondent's perspective, the researcher asked for examples to enforce each unclear statement (Lim, 2025). Finally, the use of field notes ensured that information was 'complete' and not taken out of context by the researcher (Cole, 2024).

4.9.2 Dependability

The validation process was carefully conducted through reiteration of reviewing axial codes to themes and to the CVF literature in a systems thinking manner that resulted in the maturity of themes. Defining the themes was largely informed from the literature (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Ghafoori et al., 2024; Gong et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024; Zeb et al., 2021) and the Cameron & Quinns CVF as the underlying Framework, if a code required to be defined (Cameron et al., 2006; Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Example of validating the findings from the thematic analysis codes to the literature in a re-iterative way:

E.g. M4 Profitability & Value Creation clashed with A4 Growth and Value Creation and C4 Development & Growth. Looking at the meaning from the literature: M4 Profitability & Value Creation was in context of the company profitability and value in the eyes of the customer, whilst A4 ...Value creation was in context of efficiently aligning resources to customers needs with literature providing codes such as "Growth", "Customer Feedback", "Resource

Allocation” and “Focussed”. C4 Development and Growth is primarily in the context of the people. Thus M4’s theme was renamed to “Customer Value & Improved Profitability”, A4 was changed to “Aligning resources to Customer Acquisition” and C4 was changed to “Employee Social Development”

RQ 1, 2 and 4 are binary and the reasons behind the yes or no answers were all justified with recipients providing examples. At times recipients provided for and against responses, that are both presented in the findings substantiating the exploratory nature of departmental culture. Thus, more than 18 responses are recorded for each binary-type research question. The researcher reviewed each response to provide a consolidated reason per responded from a direct response or through the responses of the interview questions for similar underlying reason(s), but where the reasons were substantially different a new reason was clarified on Atlas.ti.

4.9.3 Confirmability

Atlas.ti provides an audit trail through the data analysis process, and each interview was recorded and stored. This enhances the ‘dependability’ and ‘confirmability’ of the research (Lim, 2025; Saunders & Lewis, 2018). By selecting three participants from each of the six departments is a form of triangulation to obtain an odd number of objectiveness of views supporting ‘credibility’ (McCracken & McCracken, 1988).

4.9.4 Transferability

‘Thick description’ is a compulsory concept to utilise during qualitative research in a narrative format to detail the exploratory findings aimed at improving further studies in departmental culture. The interview transcripts provide detailed justification, enhancing the transferability of the expected research findings to future studies about function-based cultures (Kim et al., 2022). Furthermore, the systematic formulation of the interview questions enables a logic flow to understand context before the ‘thick description’ of each result was spoken, improving transferability. Another important aspect was the use of the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) where respondents were prompted to provide the most recent example to justify any critical findings during the interviews resulting in a thick description of exploratory findings.

4.10 Study Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations exist in this study that are inherent in the subject of culture as a broad concept. Two respondents of the in-depth interviews were employees of multinational corporations, their insights provided contrasts between the global OC and their local department. Although the interview questions specifically requested input from their functional department (i.e. finance or IT) each may have provided insights to the global OC to the local OC unintentionally. Furthermore, organisational culture as defined is a shared value (Akpa et al., 2021) that is experienced between more than one individual within an organisation's department. A biased opinion could have resulted from applying a mono-method as required for this research project.

Organisational culture is set by leaders in a firm usually to obtain a specific employee-related behaviour (Akpa et al., 2021). As business changes, cultures may need to be changed to compliment new strategies and employee interactions. This research is based on a cross-sectional time horizon and is limited in nature to longitudinal studies of changes in culture over time. Although the research intention is to inform a dynamic culture based on the department's function, changes in technology and time play an important factor to the limitations of this study. The research questions asked aim to understand the existing cultures within an organisation and not what was experienced by respondents over a period.

The interviews were conducted with middle-managers in private organisations, limiting the perspective to this population. Culture is a behaviour that's practiced between individuals and the department's manager's view may be different from the members' views in the department. However, the manager's control over translating OC into a departmental behaviour and measuring performance of the department put them in the ideal position to answer the research questions posed in the previous chapter to address this research.

The sample of 18 participants including three candidates from each department could arguably be a limitation as the participants were in the researcher's network. Although each satisfy the population criteria, a limitation exists in selective sampling.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

This research project protected interview respondents' information, and the research process was compliant with the rules and regulations of Gibs. Interviews, including pilot interviews, were only conducted once ethical clearance was obtained by the University's ethics committee ensuring that no participant would feel prejudiced by conducting the interview. As per the interview protocol and the video recordings, respondents could exit the interview at any time, and their names and places of employment were not recorded on the transcripts, nor were they required for this research. Data was not recorded or transcribed using any AI tools ensuring that the data obtained through the data collection and analysis process was secure and kept confidential.

The interviews recorded does not obtain any 'personal information' as defined by the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) of South Africa, as is thus compliant with the Act. The transcriptions contain non-identifiable content as recipients did not provide their names, organisational affiliations, addresses or any identifying details. Data findings were objectively reported and analysed in an unbiased manner. Ethical clearance was obtained by the researcher through the Gibs ethics committee prior to any commencement of interviews (data collection process).

Chapter 5: Results

5.1 Introduction

The research results illustrated in this chapter have been structured to answer the research questions from Chapter 3. In understanding the existence, significance and nature of DC in the context of the OC, the results are objectively presented using a combination of binary diagrams, detailed graphs and “quotations” from the research findings as provided from Atlas.ti ‘Code Document Analysis Function’. These results highlight the outcome of the previous chapter’s method in the form of the interview questions aim at answering the research questions, providing exploratory insight into a functional departmental culture.

5.2 (RQ1) Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

This research question aimed to obtain the urgency of building a function-based culture from the middle-manager’s perspective amidst the existing OC. The question was asked indirectly using three interview questions (Table 8):

Table 8.: (extracted from Table 6): The design of Interview Questions to answer Research Question 1

Research Questions	Interview Questions
1: Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?	3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department? 5. Do you believe that the department’s culture should be prioritised if it conflicts with the overarching organisational culture? If so, why? 9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation’s culture, what would you change? If so, why?

Respondents provided multiple reasons to justify why they each believed that it was an urgent need to build a function-

based culture in the context of departments. Eleven of the 18 respondents required a function-based culture, and in total 3/4 respondents provided examples where the OC was not practiced in the Department based on its poor relevance to the DFs.

Figure 5.2.1 displays the collected results for each respondent's answers to the need to build a function-based DC:

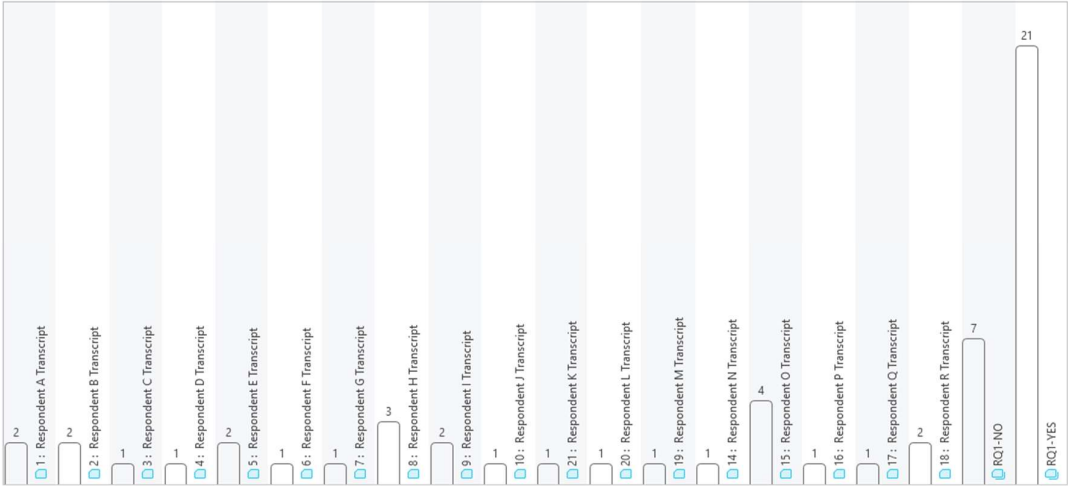


Figure 5.2.1: Number of Responses to Research Question 1 Binary Response of: No=7, and Yes=21

If the same reasons were provided by the same respondent, the code was removed to clearly obtain the respondents true count as presented in the form of the 28 quotations resulting in nine codes, with two themes clearly identified in agreement or disagreement with the urgency in building the function-based DC as provided in Appendix F, and illustrated by proportion of responses in figure 5.2.2 below:

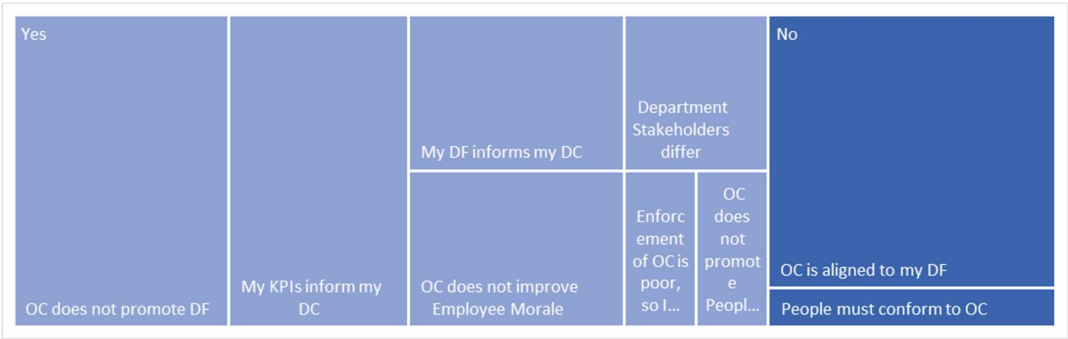


Figure 5.2.2: A visual presentation of the proportion of responses to (RQ1) Is there an urgency requirement to build a function-based culture: Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

During the interviews, respondents said the following (references made to Atlas.ti):

“So, in marketing, you have to be really quick, and you have to be relevant, and you need to be able to think out-of-the-box and those are more attributes of a culture than an overall culture necessarily.” (rA 1:27)

“To be honest, no, because finance is a compliance space, especially in the retail environment. It's all about compliance. You've got to make sure that the controls are being followed to prevent the risk of fraud to prevent the risk of theft” (rG 7:19)

“I think every single department builds an element of their own culture. I think it'd be foolish of us to think that it's one culture for the entire organization. If you just look at the deliverables of each environment...you kind of develop that culture within your organization or your area of responsibility.” (rO 15:32)

In contrast 6 of the 7 reasons why there is no urgent need to build a function-based culture found that the OC promoted their activities. This opinion was supported by all three of the HR managers who concluded that their department promotes the OC.

“That's one of our mandates” (rF 6:13); “not necessarily the responsibility of HR... but however, we are drivers of it to an extent” (rP 16:17); “the RESET values is something that we that we emphasize in everything that we do” (rN 12:36)

Two respondents whose departments comprised of the organisation's majority employees didn't need a different culture to the overarching OC:

“sales department is very, very much aligned with the company culture and it follows it quite closely” (rC 3:22) “sales is about 95% of the company (rC 3:23).

“the culture of the organization and what I'm driving” (rD 4:18) “your team is the majority of the staff in employment? Yes, I would say.” (rD 4:55)

Respondent Q found that the OC was “enforced” onto employees upon induction: “when you start work for our organization, the organization takes you through an induction program where the values and the culture of the facility is drummed in you” (rQ 17:14) and the OC is continuously enforced through employee wanting to belong: “predominantly if 90% of the staff is thinking of those organizational cultures or those values, then automatically the 10% gets to conform” (rQ 17:12).

5.3 (RQ2) Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?

The results of research question 2 provided a rich perspective of whether DC is effective to achieve the DF, compared to the OC. The answers to this question were identified through formalising binary responses from each recipient with their justifying views based on the interview questions as highlighted in Table 9 below:

Table 9: (extracted from Table 6): The design of Interview Questions to answer Research Question 2

Research Questions	Interview Questions
2: Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?	3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department? 6. What factors inform the nature of departmental culture, "the way things get done"? 8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate. 9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?

Thirty-two quotations were extracted from the eighteen interviews providing a variety of reasons from middle managers to achieve their respective DF. These codes were raised as a binary result of either DC (bottom-up) or OC (top-down) being the dominant behaviour between departmental members that is more effective to DFs, (Appendix G). Eighty-four percent of respondents strongly believed that DC was prevalent to achieve the DFs with four prevailing reasons (see Figure 5.3.1 below):

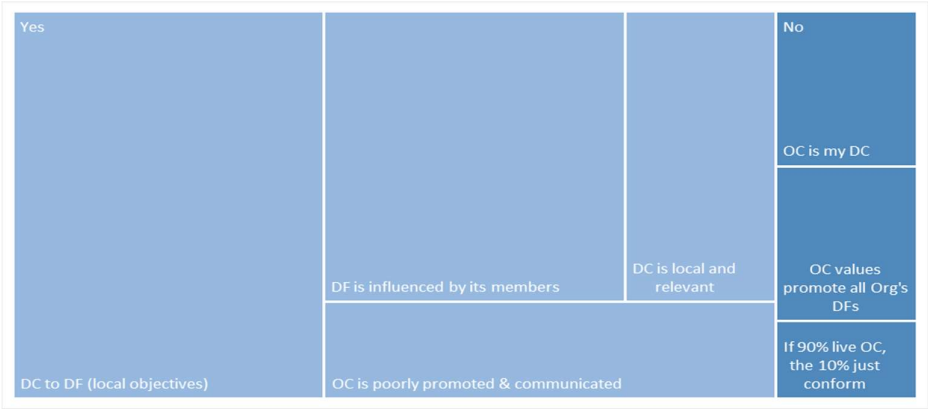


Figure 5.3.1: A visual presentation of the proportion of responses to (RQ2) Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?

DC informed DF based on the DCs focus on departmental objectives; the DF was influenced by the individuals-personality types of the department; the relevance of DC to achieve the local intent of the department's strategy; or that the OC was poorly promoted across the organisation resulting in the formation of DC to achieve the DF. Using the statements obtained from the semi-structured interviews where respondents stated their DF, the expected cultural type from Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework was pre-allocated to determine the expected culture (see Table 10). These results comprise of each respondents DF matched to the CVF:

Table 10: Departments function according to respondents translated to a DC using the CVF

Department	Respondents Function Stated (3 each Dept)	Statement Summary	Cultural type (CVF)
Call Centre	rB: "Provide outsourcing for different companies in the financial sector where we market short-term insurance policies" rH: "Customer Relationship, between brokers and insurers to ensure escalations are addressed" rI: "Manage Claims for Insurance Partners including Policy Holders and Brokers, and administer claims for service, and manage escalations, and quoting."	"providing services to external stakeholders to improve customer acquisition and profitability"	Market Culture (Compete Culture) Focus: External, Stability Core Values: Competition, Target Achievement, Customer Focus and Productivity
Finance	rC: "Sales department enable all store operations" rE: To bring operations and finance together and guide decision makers with control and financial planning. rG: "Support Function to the operations of the business, Internal Control, Legislation"	"providing support to business operation with internal control, compliance, planning and decision-making"	Hierarchy Culture (Control Culture) Focus: Internal, Stability Core Values: Efficiency, Consistency, Control, Order, Accountability
HR	rF: "Business Enablement, to equip business with the right skills: Recruitment, Training & Employment Relations" rN: "Learning & Development within and outside business. Largely to Drivers of the business" rP: "Ensure consistency and alignment to organisational objectives and reciprocate personal-professional employee development"	"drives business enablement through skills, training, and development enabling organisational goals while fostering personal and professional growth"	Clan Culture (Collaborate Culture) Focus: Internal, Flexible Core Values: Teamwork, Cohesion, Empowerment, Mentorship, Loyalty
IT	rJ: "Three groups: Service Support, Infrastructure and Networks, and Development of Software" rM: Business enablers, not just IT people but "go to	"serves as business enablers driving system integration, technological innovation and IT-related support"	Adhocracy Culture (Create Culture) Focus: External, Flexible (Innovation & Growth)

	people” and “business enablers” rR: “System Integration and software development”		Core Values: Innovation, Risk taking, Entrepreneurial, Agile, Experimentation
Marketing & Sales	rA: “To develop, and ideate all customer facing communication” rD: “Manage overall Marketing Function, Full Marketing Mix through start to end”; Franchising – “Managing Franchisees across South Africa” Client Services – “Call Centre, Broker Liaison and Customer Experience and External Sales Team, Manage Claims, Day-to-day client services, Escalations, and New Business” rK: “Manage operations, Orders, Receiving and Pricing Products. Delivery and Sales Team Management”	“oversight of customer-facing functions including client services, product sales and customer experience”	Market Culture (Compete Culture) Focus: External, Stability Core Values: Competition, Goal-Achievement, Productivity, Market Share, Profitability
Procurement	rL: “Supply Chain, Procurement and Sourcing Activities” rO: “All product category procurement” rQ: “Ensure smooth operations and efficiencies in supply chain to meet the retailer’s requirements”	‘manage procurement of product categories to meet customer requirements with reliable supply chain practices’	Market Culture (Compete Culture) Focus: External, Stability Core Values: Competition, Goal-Achievement, Productivity, Market Share, Profitability and Hierarchy Culture (Control Culture) Focus: Internal, Stability Core Values: Efficiency, Consistency, Control, Order, Accountability

“but having their own culture in the department should obviously be determined by your way of work, the amount of work that you get, the type of work, the type of stakeholders you deal with” (rR 18:39)

“the marketing team are often younger, and they are more connected with what's happening in society” (rA 1:25)

“...departmental culture 100% has to take priority...that sort of space does open up gaps for people to exploit” (rG: 7:46)

“the internal culture within the department is a much stronger driving force to get things done than the overall arching culture from the organization.” (rJ 10:25)

Respondent I stated that critical functions such as people management had gaps and learning and development was lacking in the OC (rI 9:49, 9:36).

The remaining 5 respondents believe that OC was the prevalent factor to achieve DF based on goal alignment to the organisation’s objectives:

“It encourages growth. And that in itself, makes the department function better and better. And this is true for all departments.” (rC 3:32)

“it’s the organizational culture is really promoting what you’re doing” (rF 6:21)

“the RESET values is something that we that we emphasize in everything that we do” (rN 14:23)

Other significant findings was an instance of the respondent’s organisation vertically integrated through acquisition in 2020 forming a new department. This department rejected the acquirer’s culture seeing that their legacy culture was relevant to DF.

“that team came into an organization, very entrepreneurial, small business, a different way of thinking, and they got brought into this big corporate... they didn't want to work with marketing, and they didn't want to work with IT. They wanted to do their own app and their own marketing and their own everything” (rA 1:39)

5.4 (RQ3) What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

The results of research question 3 provides further insights into the characteristics of each DC from all respondents’ departments in the sample. 215 codes were found across all six departmental managers interviews from the 5 interview questions aimed at informing the input factors for each DC as indicated in Table 11.

Table 11.: (extracted from Table 6): The design of Interview Questions to answer Research Question 3

Research Questions	Interview Questions
3: What are the input factors of a department-based culture?	1. Provide a list of the functional responsibilities that the department has at the organisation? 4. Do you see a strong or weak cultural difference in the department’s culture to the overarching organisational culture? If yes, please describe it. If not, why? 6. What factors inform the nature of departmental culture, “the way things get done”?

	<p>8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate.</p> <p>9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>
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The 215 axial codes generated were grouped into mutually exclusive themes and were substantiated by the researcher with reasons for allocating the code to the theme (Appendix H). The themes were compared to the document groups of each department to illustrate the input factors to the various departments under consideration (Appendix I) and are displayed in Figure 5.4.1 below.

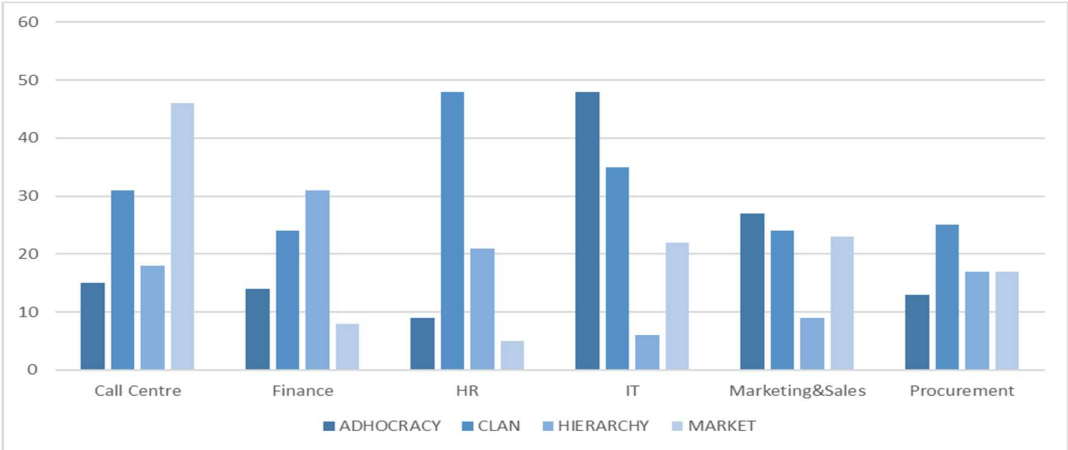


Figure 5.4.1: Themes clustered by department using CVF quadrants.

Using Porter's Value Chain, the six major departments of medium-large organisations were formulated into Primary Activities (Call Centre, Marketing & Sales, Procurement) and Support Activities (Finance, HR, IT). The CVF quadrants provide insights into each input required per department based on the two competing dimensions of flexibility against stability and internal against external focus. The primary support activities being core to the organisation's trade show nearly equal distribution of each of the four quadrants in Marketing & Sales and Procurement Departments, whilst the Call Centre showed dominance to the MARKET quadrant. The support departments resulted in variable levels of each competing value with the HR department having stronger attributes of Clan cultural aspects and IT department of ADHOCRACY culture. The finance department is the only department that leads

with HIERARCHICAL culture closely followed by CLAN. These results include all 18 themes, and the results of the key findings are discussed per department below:

5.4.1 Call Centres Input factors that inform culture.

The Call Centre leads with MARKET culture illustrating a focus on external aspects of the organisation in valuing competition and performance. This value is closely followed by CLAN culture showing the importance of internal capabilities to gain a competitive advantage through teamwork and cohesion as illustrated on figure 5.4.2:

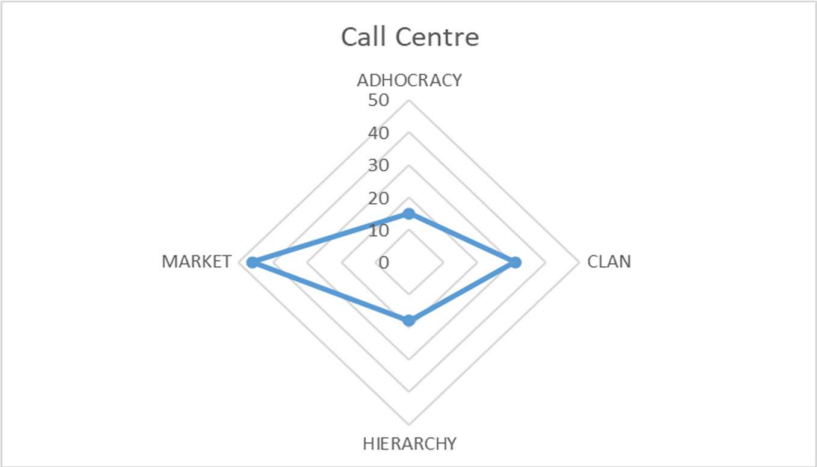


Figure 5.4.2: Themes clustered by Call Centre department using CVF quadrants.

Call centre managers value high performance to improve organisational profit share through increasing customer value as shown in figure 5.4.3.

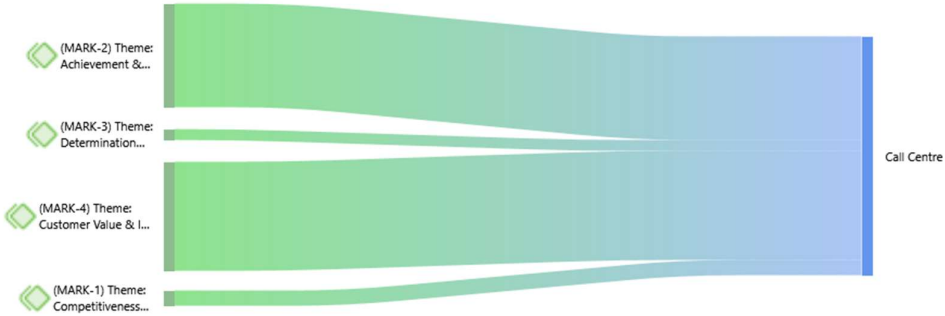


Figure 5.4.3: Call Centre’s importance placed on Market based culture.

Call Centre managers provided insights into translating customer requests using innovation to improve their service levels. Respondent B placed customer centricity and delivery through KPI's at the forefront of the Call centre's objective and it's the ability to meet customer expectations:

"recommendation made by a client. They'd like to see a particular metric." (rB 2:13)

"maximize a campaign at a certain amount of touches per lead." (rB: 2.31)

"I'd make recommendations to IT for systems change or anything to do with development" (rB 2:11)

Well formed KPIs is a key success factor to meet customers' expectations, and all three managers have instilled a high-performance culture through KPIs even if the OC does not enforce KPIs:

"We have KPIs that are introduced in the department. However, overall, the organization does not have KPIs" (rI, 9:38)

"you have your daily, weekly, and monthly recognition and rewards, where we acknowledge achievements through our own Facebook" (rB, 2:50)

"that people are paid based on performance than you will always have a team that is engaged, to be productive because they know that, e.g., when implement time comes, my performance is going to be looked at...that then brings in a culture of wanting to perform at a higher level because you understand that I am going to be rewarded for the work that I put in" (rI 9:45)

Respondent H places the customer as the key stakeholder in informing their culture, to meet customer expectations timely, with transparent communication so that customer confidence levels are improved:

"my escalation department comes into play where we rectify the complaint" (rH: 8.6)

"do not lose their confidence in the company as an overall" (rH: 8.8)

Respondent I external focus defined the Call centre purpose as customer-centric that is seen as frequent interaction with the customer through integrated platforms:

“It’s very customer-centric and your customers, you see it both from a fulfilment perspective and from an inbound perspective” (rI 9:4) “we have integrated systems with insure...” (rI 9:12)

The focus on customer centricity is coupled with the ability of the Call centre to meet these customer demands through employee autonomy in decision making and innovation as illustrated in figure 5.4.5.

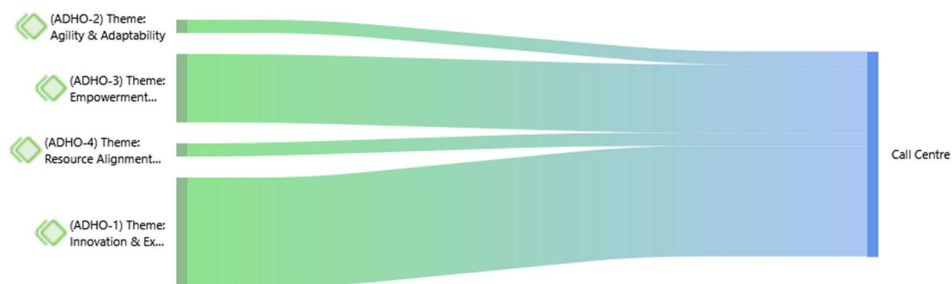


Figure 5.4.5: Call Centre’s managers importance placed on Adhocracy culture.

Call centre managers placed importance on product and process knowledge along with internal collaboration enables quicker response times within the department to achieve innovation:

“We’re doing the entire investigation; we have to start from the start again and then follow the entire journey. Once we follow the entire journey, we need to go back and give the insurance detailed description of what happened, where the ball was dropped, give them resolution, and give them rectification” (rH 8:13)

“And in my department, I’ve always encouraged the sense of urgency” (rI: 9:13)

Product and process knowledge is shared within the department emphasising a Clan-type culture that fosters collaboration, an interest in call centre functions and high performance. Managers act as parental figures in mentoring and communicating any changes in the organisation that enables KPIs to be met on a team-level. The

Clan-cultural attributes of the Call Centre are almost equally spread against the themes as illustrated on figure 5.4.6:

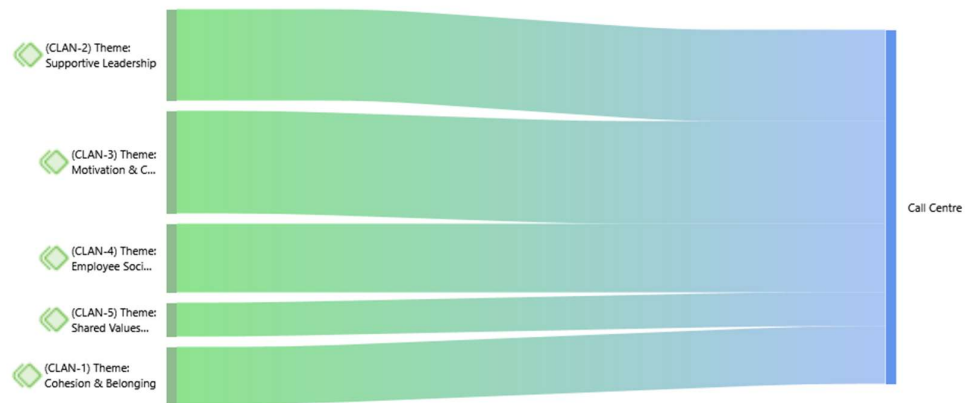


Figure 5.4.6: Call Centre’s managers importance placed on Clan culture

This shows the manager’s support in promoting a culture of teamwork, collaboration and knowledge sharing within the Call centre to service customers. This enables loyalty and a sense of belonging, learning and interpersonal growth among the department’s team members and managers.

“we lead, we coach, and mentor team leaders and managers” rB 2:17

“harmonious culture in my department where you have an open-door policy” rH 8:33

“Everyone wants to know that they’re important and they’re valued and that what they are doing makes a difference and you appreciate everything that they do” rH 8:42

“if people are well taken care of or there’s a good connection between the people and the organization” rI 9:21

A significant finding from Respondent I was that aspect of putting people first amidst the contradicting organisational culture. This respondent placed internal training and people wellness at the forefront of the department’s success:

“somebody that is new in the organization, we depend on the other agents who train the new agent with the understanding that the old agent, because they’re not obliged to train people” rI 9:37

“organization's culture does not promote putting sort of people first and putting people's wellness up front, which has this positive impact on the performance of the organization” r1 9:24

In conclusion, the Call centre's culture is built with the primary objective of satisfying the customer's needs to improve profits. This is achieved through the ability of having product and process knowledge along with departmental support in learning and building cohesive solutions to meet KPIs. These results promote a culture of flexibility and external focus in the context of the CVF dimensions.

5.4.2 Finance Input factors that inform culture

The three finance managers looked to building a hierarchical culture to achieve the functions of the department. Two of the three respondents reported that the OC did not promote the DF's whilst the third respondent stated that the OC aligned to the DC since their department comprises about 95% of the total organisation's employee count. The results are shown in figure 5.4.7 below:

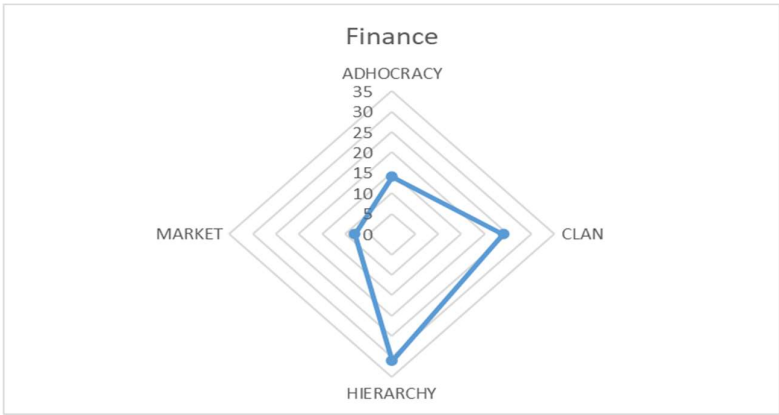


Figure 5.4.7: Themes clustered by Finance department using CVF quadrants.

Forty-five percent of the total HIERACHY quadrant consisted of the theme: consistency and standardisation as illustrated in figure 5.4.8. The department also places an importance of governance, control and oversight highlighting a risk management culture to safeguard company resources through compliance and reporting.



Figure 5.4.8: Finance managers importance placed on Hierarchy culture

Managers build a culture of control for standardising processes across its functions such as customer debt policies, supplier limits, lease accounting, internal audit and cash books. This enables reliable and transparent reporting for BEE, ESG, and strategic decision-making.

“3.5 billion rands worth of expenses a year. Everything you do with those finances”

rC: 3:5

“could possibly happen in the future...forward-thinking work” rE 5:22

“you integrate yourself and understand the business operation and understand what the people do, understand how the people work, understand how the decisions that we take impact the overall business, understand the decisions that the people in operations take impact your finance function” rG 7:23

“we understand where you're going, but no. You can't do that. You're assessing the risk at the same time of making the decision.” rG7:38

Managers describe finance members as being professional, strict and having the organisation's best interest in mind through risk mitigation and fraud prevention:

“general view of finances is very strict, because finance is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the business...finance people, the general view of finances is very strict” rG 7:34

“to produce a set of numbers for the business” rE 5:1

The control function is further promoted with supportive leadership and cohesion as illustrated through themes attributable to that of a CLAN culture in figure 5.4.9. This perspective promotes team competence to effectively support the organisation.

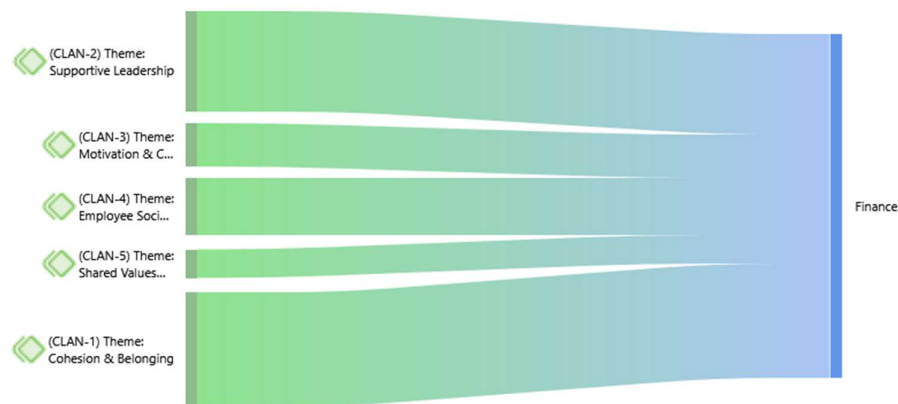


Figure 5.4.9: Finance managers importance placed on Clan culture.

“We help, we support, we grow, we assist, we coach, we mentor” rC 3:26

“we will patch the gaps as a team in order for us to deliver on the job that needs to be done” rE 5:51

Finance, as a support function, works with the business to improve profitability.

“if their customer walks away could severely impact the profitability of that store. So that's me where sort of the manager comes in and sort of tries to integrate the two.” rG 7:32

The department primarily bases its culture on the task to be done with professionalism, compliance through control while working with internal stakeholders to improve the organisation's performance. The CVF dimension of internal focus is valued within the department, with less mention of KPIs that drive the culture.

5.4.3 HR Input factors that inform culture

HR managers place the strongest emphasis on the CLAN quadrant with almost no consideration to the opposing MARKET - orientated quadrant as shown in figure

5.4.10. This shows a large consideration towards practicing a culture that is internally impactful within the business and less consideration for external competitive factors.

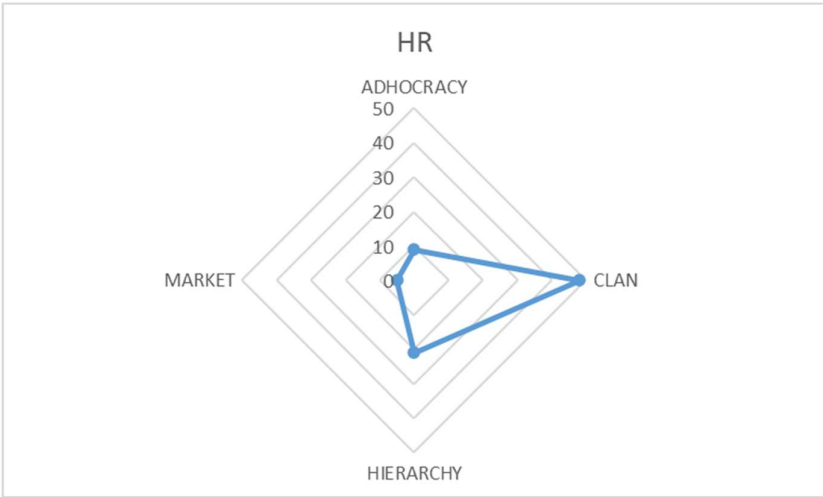


Figure 5.4.10: Themes clustered by HR department using CVP quadrants.

Each of the HR managers reported that they support and promote the OC of their respective organisations through employee social development and supportive leadership (figure 5.4.11).

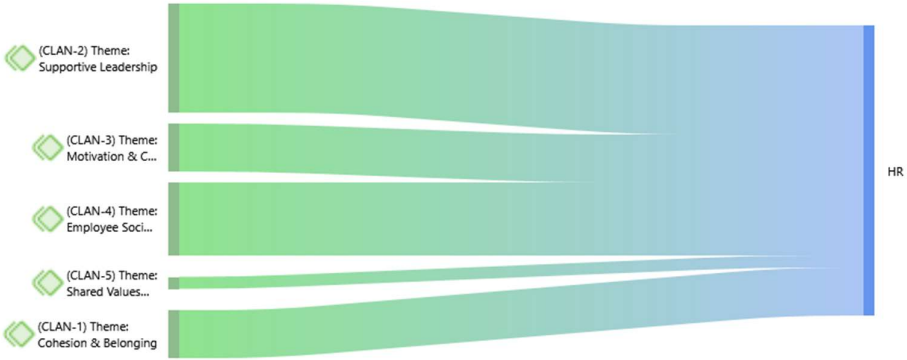


Figure 5.4.11: HR managers importance placed on Clan culture

With a focus on employees through employee management, learning and support on both the departmental and organisational level, the HR department builds its culture by putting the employees needs first. These quotations are strong characteristics of the Clan-based culture:

“innovation and just being able to think of things and then get it done, but also obviously things that will help people feel better about work” rF 6:31

“we’ve got a culture of support, even within our own team. My team sits nationally and we help each other” rN 14:13

“most departments like HR and training or HR and L&D will work very closely together. If HR can’t handle something, they’ll come and knock on the door and say, can you guys assist?” rN 14:31

“engaging with people so that people can, as and when they feel that, okay, you know what, I just want to come through to talk, or I just want to come through for advice, or I just want to come and just sit. I just need some time to think, because we are in an economy or in an environment where sometimes work could be overwhelming.” rP 16:27

“where it develops our people into better managers and leaders, and that can only be good from an overall organizational perspective” rP 16:38

However, open communication is coupled with employee confidentiality as HR also places a significant importance to structure and control as shown in diagram 5.4.12. It’s interesting to note that the Theme: Stability & Predictability have no codes allocated from HR interviews, signalling the variability in its day-to-day function of employee relations that is difficult to predict.

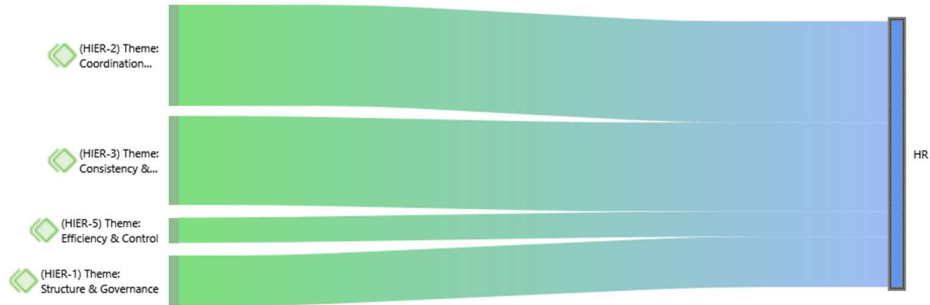


Figure 5.4.12: HR managers importance placed on Hierarchy culture

The fundamental need for control in the HR department arise in meeting compliance requirements with labour laws and enforcing company policies:

“an instance where further discipline needs to be taken, where we then result in disciplinary inquiries or matters at the CCMA” rP 16:11

“we are not accredited to give that kind of training. We'll find somebody outside that can do it...so the academy is QCTO accredited as a skills development provider... we can provide training for the truck driver qualifications; it's an occupational qualification.” rN 14:4/14.5

“Part of our training portfolio is induction” rN 14:21

“like onboarding them, and also giving the process for them to actually form part of the organization” rP 16:4

A significant finding of HR managers is that each advocates the promotion of OC in the organisations and identifies this as one of their DF. OC is communicated through the various platforms, but the employees within each department have the flexibility to translate OC, reject OC or find an alternative DC that works:

“That's one of our mandates” rF 6:13

“You get happier employees because they feel more free to speak to a colleague, speak to a manager, or a platform where that is allowed” rN 14:38

“...we are drivers of it to an extent. The responsibility...lies on every individual because like we would put up at the general overview, the broad culture, but subcultures would develop from that. And the subcultures grow on their own. They kind of mushroom out of nowhere. Hence the responsibility of cultures are on the individuals themselves rP 16:17

Furthermore, HR measures OC effectiveness through cultural engagement surveys, whilst other departments measure their department effectiveness through the department's objectives or KPIs, and not DC effectiveness.

“pay a lot of attention in terms of engagement” (rF 6:14)

5.4.4 IT Input factors that inform culture

The input factors that inform the IT department are mainly driven by an ADHOCRACY-culture defined as innovative and experimental with the CLAN-type

culture following strongly that enables innovation through cohesion as displayed in Figure 5.4.13.

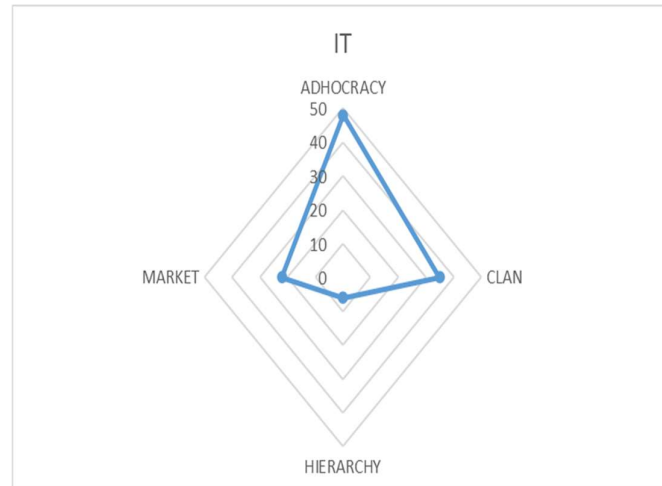


Figure 5.4.13: Themes clustered by IT department using CVF quadrants

The hierarchical aspect of the CVF is the least and is isolated to reasons such as the horizontal structure of the department's chain of command, and the cost savings consciousness of most department managers placing control on IT project costs:

“..this is more cost-wise driven to see if they can come up with opportunities where we can enhance performance or do cost savings and then earn themselves time off for that.” rJ 10:40

“We'll then provide estimates so the architect, myself, the developer work together to see how ... fast we can implement this code...” rR 18:7

“And creating that has actually cost business some money, it costs money to create some of these things.” rM 19:34

The input factors that inform the IT DC significantly lies in the aspect of innovation and experimentation (figure 5.4.14). The department requires 'out-of-the-box' thinking that informs IT solutions to business issues as required from internal stakeholders such as other departments. Their function requires them to work in isolation to obtain external information that advises solutions to networking, cyber

security, industry standards from best practice and internal IT support calls through research of new technologies or diagnosing issues in building solutions.



Figure 5.4.14: IT managers importance placed on Adhocracy culture

“On the development side, they will find use cases within the business and programs or functions around of that and then build the relevant systems for the users” rJ 10:6

“they need to be up to date with all technologies relevant...they also do have the responsibility of doing a research topic, either assigned to them or something of their own interest that can benefit the organization” rJ: 10:34/10:37

“support team would be then responsible as first line support to that software which we are working on” rM 19:6

Agility and adaptability is part of the individual traits that IT employees naturally have. “IT dudes are just a breed of their own” rJ 10:24. Apart from working in solidarity to obtain external knowledge, their ability to meet their DF lies in the culture of sharing knowledge and cohesion within the department (figure 5.4.15). The CLAN cultural attributes of IT lies in their ability to understand and trust each other to meet development deadlines or support software SLA timeously.

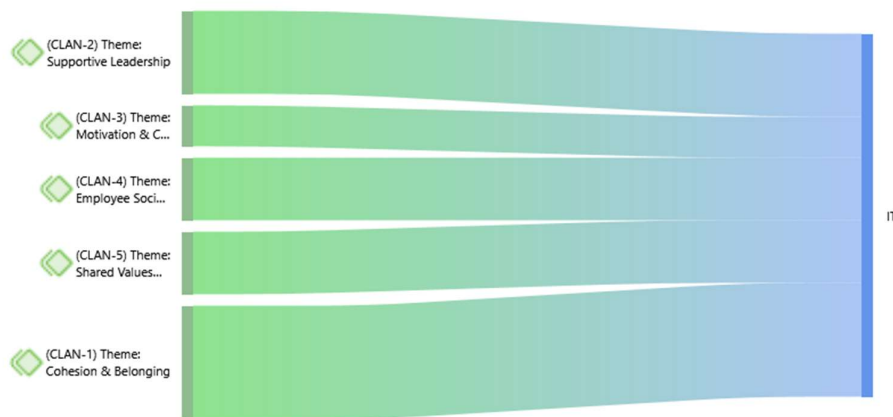


Figure 5.4.15: IT managers importance placed on CLAN culture

“IT people do tend to talk in a language that normal users or end users do not understand or comprehend.” rJ 10:23

“it's technical language barrier that actually causes some of the misunderstandings” rM 19:33

“they need to earn it back and basically justify that the team that they're trustworthy enough to work from home again...” rJ 10:43

The CLAN culture of commitment through shared-vision and employee social development fosters internal communication to achieve departmental output.

“Waterfall was the keeping everybody in silos and developing in silos, whereas Agile is inclusive of everybody” rJ 18:8

“value of sharing information” rM 19:44

“a day without learning is a waste in our space, and we are encouraging people not to be intimidated by the fact that they are surrounded by much more intelligent people.” rM 19:47

“All the guys are core IT at heart...another face to face instead of hiding behind the screen and actually start working with the goal and not pointing fingers and blame. We got a working solution.” rJ 10:44

Through obtaining knowledge from external sources and sharing that knowledge the IT department builds on a culture of ADHOCRACY and CLAN to meet DF. Although Market-orientated culture is evident, it is narrowed to the department having group KPIs that support other departments in the organisation through teamwork.

5.4.5 Marketing & Sales Input factors that inform culture

Unlike the support functions, the Sales and Marketing managers have an equal spread of cultural influence from MARKET, ADHOCRACY and CLAN cultures that inform their DC (figure 5.4.16). Control through hierarchical culture is significantly low as the organisation’s dependence on increasing sales allows these departments to practice autonomous control. Each of the three dominant quadrants are summarised:



Figure 5.4.16: Themes clustered by Marketing & Sales department using CVF quadrants

Firstly, Market-based culture is prominent in the theme: Customer Value and Improving Profits as opposed to other input factors in the same quadrant. Secondly, Adhocracy culture embodied in Innovation; Agility and Adaptability; and Empowerment and Autonomy have equal weight of codes. Thirdly, Clan culture incorporates attributes such as cohesion and supportive leadership. The three dominant input factors are illustrated in figure 5.4.17.

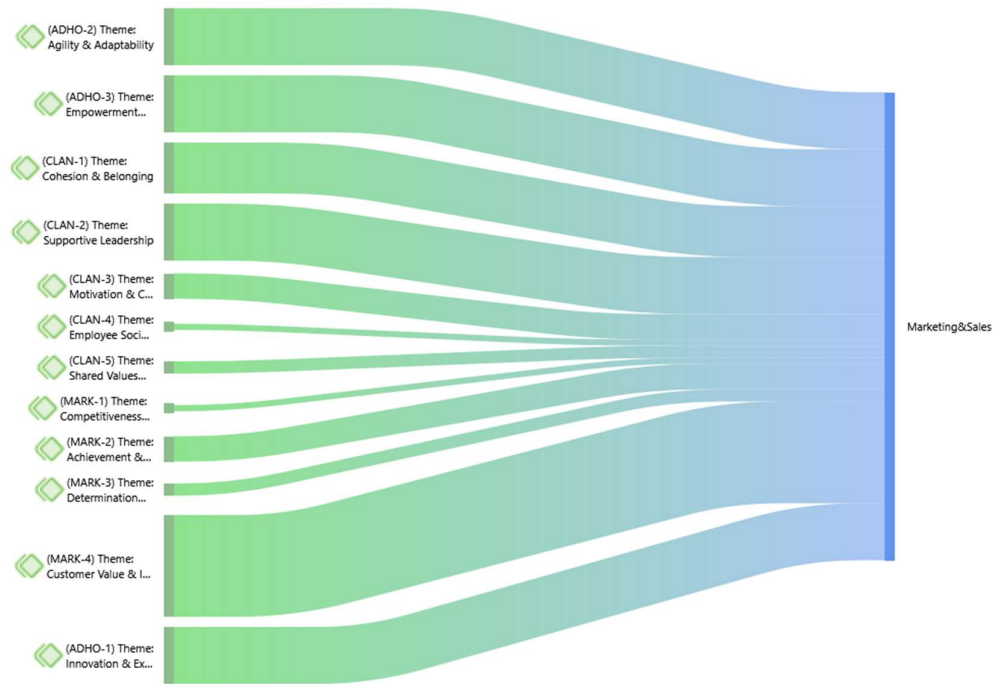


Figure 5.4.17: Marketing & Sales managers importance placed on MARKET, ADHOCRACY & CLAN

The focus on improving customer value is justified to increase sales to earn higher profits for the organisation that translates into sales commission. This supports a market-based culture to achieve short-term profits. “achieving results, making money” rK 21:31

“I actually have an amazing team that will do what it takes to help the clients or to do whatever's needed to actually support the business” rD 4:99

Respondent K describes the members as “salesmen are very customer-centric.” rK 21:17, and “wanting to please the customer” rK 21:18. The team was reported to break policies to achieve customer sales targets: “Salesmen are so focused on the customer and achieving what the customer wants that they are willing to forego any of those to serve their customer and get to whatever the customer wants.” rK 21:22.

This is a high-performance culture as described by Respondent D “high-performance culture” rD 4:24 where resources are proactive to meet their functions “sales is very energetic, very loud” rK 21:20.

These departments create ways to meet the customer's needs by finding solutions outside of the norm: “they will find a way around that department so that they can still service the customer...through changing the process, through whatever means” rD 4:52; 4:53 and “They'd often want to break the rules” rK 21:19. Respondent A described the culture as “fluid” rA:1.24; “really quick” r1:28, “forward-thinking” r1:33 and “change direction” r1:35 placing an emphasis on agility and adaptability of marketing to meet customer demands. Respondent D also applies less control to meet the fast-paced environment of the department with mention of: “all my managers make their own decisions” rD 4:47 and placing autonomy in the employee’s hands.

Looking to the Clan culture the autonomous behaviours encouraged is met with supportive leadership in strong internal communication and criticism:

“I am very direct, I'm very upfront, and it's transparency” rD 4:34;

“I will give my input, and I will say, I think we should do A, and they might say B, and then we'll settle on C or whatever” rD 4:46

“but he'll never come and spy on his colleague or tell me what's going on with the colleague. He'll sort out his colleague. You know, he'll cover with me, but he'll deal with it in their own way.” rK 21:38

In summary, the Marketing and Sales department managers promote innovative ways to exceed customer expectations through fostering autonomy, open communication and criticism thus aligning to three different quadrants. The least importance placed on the hierarchical culture is evident from the department’s mandate to drive sales at whatever costs.

5.4.6 Procurement Input factors that inform culture

Like the Marketing and Sales Department, the Procurement department is a primary activity of the organisation having themes widely spread across the four quadrants as illustrated in diagram 5.3.18.

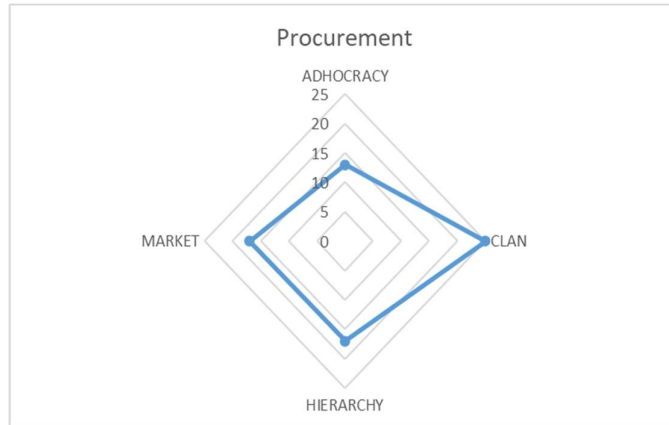


Figure 5.4.18: Themes clustered by Procurement department using CVF quadrants

The Clan quadrant informs the input factors of the department's culture marginally, with 10% more influence than the other three quadrants. Each procurement manager in the sample has at least 4 years of experience in their current positions and have provided key insights into the input factors that inform their DC. Respondent Q was the only interviewee who stated that the OC was instilled into every employee during induction and that the OC was subsequently promoted through conformity during employment: “predominantly if 90% of the staff is thinking of that organizational culture or those values, then automatically the 10% gets to conform” rQ 17:12

A deeper analysis of the data obtained from the Procurement department managers found a significant influence of customer value and profitability on DC as shown in figure 5.4.19, with respondents placing their procurement strategies in line with products that customers demand.

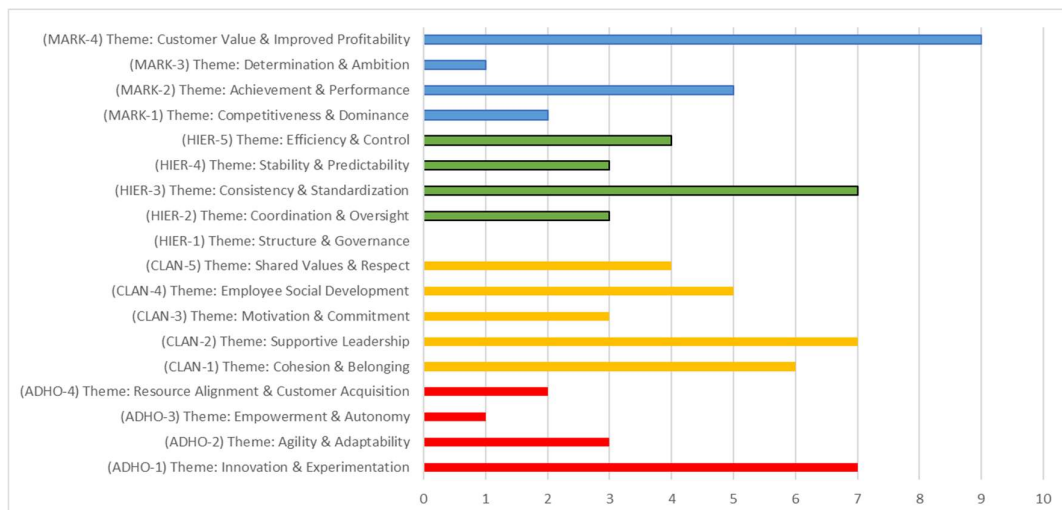


Figure 5.4.19: Themes clustered by Procurement department using CVF quadrants

In the value chain, Procurement has an impact on company profits through supplier and product selection, thus impacting product availability and costs that further influence selling prices through cost-plus pricing strategies.

“we have to make sure that we have the most appropriate ranges in stores that serve the customer's needs. Part of understanding what those ranges should be is we do in-depth analysis and category reviews to understand what is it that customers are looking for, how do we ensure that we best serve those customers” rO 15:3

“finding the right product, having it in stock, and having it at the right price. Now, if one of those three fail, we fail as a business because ultimately our business is about selling product” rO 15:13

“market relevant and understand the market” rQ 17:19

“We have a global repository where specifications and drawings are kept. When a procurement or sourcing person is dealing with quality for specifications, would need to go and understand it” rL 20:23

The Procurement department is widespread throughout the competing values framework as each manager follows internal policy and external requirements to conduct their operational tasks whilst working in a cohesive manner to find efficiencies in the process and completing their tasks as shown in Table 12 below:

Table 12.: Other Key Procurement Input factors informing DC

Theme	Quotes	Reference
Consistency and Standardisation (HIER-3)	“more accuracy, more strategic behaviours around that “can-do” type of attitude, being compliant, make sure that you're accurate, stock is exactly the sort of way it needs to be”	rQ 17:21
	“business demands has a certain standard operation procedure for each of those functions that applies”	rL 20:11
	“You've got to buy within these thresholds, you've got to sell within these thresholds as for the SLA”	rL 20:14
Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	“We've implemented certain things that I think have built a culture of accountability, family. And when you're in this environment, you almost don't want to disappoint family”	rO 15:20
	“...it's like a consequential culture based on the region. the North-rand region believes in excellence, they believe in family, they believe in doing things right the first time...”	rQ 17:7
	“Trust is very important in my team, is that I share strategy, I share	rL 20:36

	whatever in the organization with my team”	
Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	“because the philosophy I have is that nobody intentionally wakes up in the morning to mess something up. So where did the process go wrong? And if the process is incorrect, how do we fix that?”	rL 20:38
	“the planners would do is that they are constantly looking for efficiencies”	rO 15:5
	“ they believe in doing things right the first time, coupled with the lean thinking, so those things sort of underpin our culture”	rQ 17:9

The finding to research question 3 is that in all the support functions of the value chain, one or two of the competing values are prioritised over the others in informing the DC. From the managers perspectives, some of the competing values directly inform the objective and another value may inform how the objective gets done. For example, the IT managers practice a combination of Adhocracy culture and Clan culture where the individuals conduct silo research or resolve support tickets in isolation to be efficient and thereafter share knowledge with their peers to further learn and innovate. The primary functions of the value chain, like Marketing & Sales, and Procurement have more spread-out cultural traits across the competing values except for the Call centre whose function is primarily around customer communication. The Call centre behaves differently than the other reviewed departments as it values two opposing values on the CVF namely Market and Clan. Furthermore, Marketing & Sales and Procurement managers value all quadrants and each of their functions are core to the normal operations of the organisation.

5.5 (RQ4) Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than the overarching organisational culture?

The results for this research question were obtained from four interview questions as shown in Table 13. The respondents each described their employer’s OC and commented on whether the OC promoted the DF effectively and if DC was the relevant departmental behaviour that would promote the organisation’s objectives.

Table 13: (extracted from Table 6): The design of Interview Questions to answer Research Question 4

Research Questions	Interview Questions
4: Can a departmental-based culture drive	2. What is the overarching corporate culture? How would you describe it?

<p>organisational objectives more/equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?</p>	<p>3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department? AND 5. Do you believe that the department's culture should be prioritised if it conflicts with the overarching organisational culture? If so, why? 7. In your opinion, does having a distinct departmental culture have any adverse impact on the overall organisation and across other departments? Please elaborate. 8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate. OR 9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?</p>
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The results reflected that 12 of the 18 respondents believed that their DC was more effective than the OC to achieve the organisation's objectives, 3 felt that a separate DC hindered the organisational objectives; and 3 respondents believed that their DC was informed by their OC. Although respondents were descriptive in providing pros and cons to the effectiveness of a distinctive DC (see Appendix J), their concluding belief was used to depict their view. Figure 5.5.1 includes 40 codes with 6 concluding themes as stated by the respondents to answer research question 4.

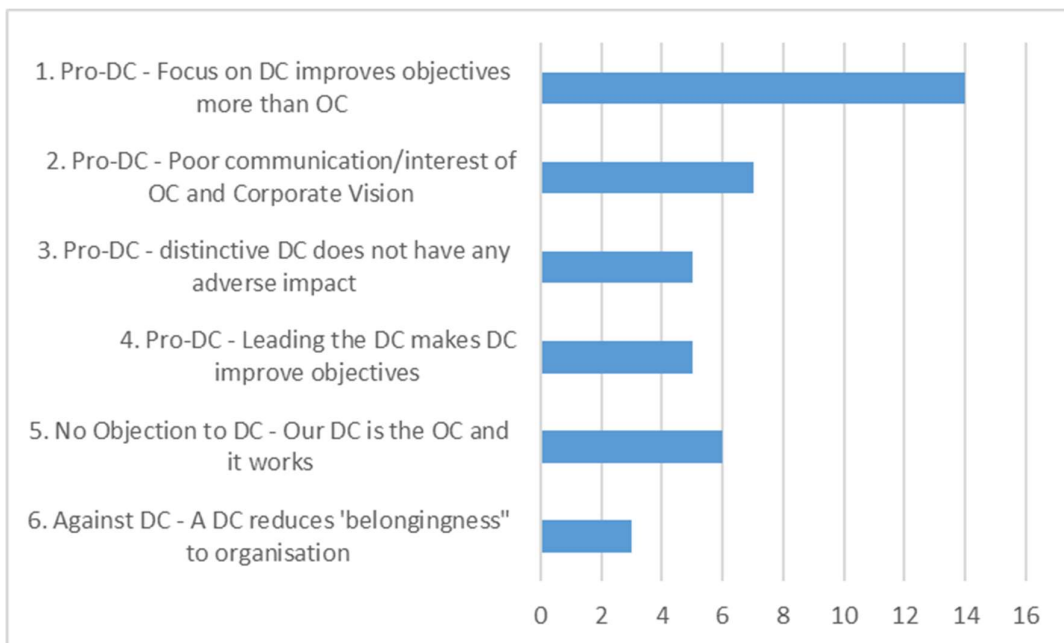


Figure 5.5.1: (RQ4) Themes by reason in answering research question 4

5.5.1. Pro-DC - Focus on DC improves objectives more than OC

Respondents who believed that DC promoted organisational objectives better than the overarching OC felt that by focussing on promoting their functional activities would aid in achieving overall performance.

“The stronger the belief in their own ability, the better profitability for the company”
rB 2:42

“You're always prioritize your department because I think you have more control over that than vast organization's culture, right? Because you're also contributing to your department... in the bigger picture, you're contributing to your organization” rR 18:31

“the internal culture within the department is much stronger driving force to get things done than the overall arching culture from the organization.” rJ 10:25

“...it's up to you to build a culture because we need to keep people motivated and driven to deliver on what's necessary for the business” rO 15:37

“I'd say rather the prioritisation should be on the organization's overall cultural tone. However, with that, it would then require that as a department, would be more focused and creative in terms of how. Because the reality of the matter is the department does have its own deadlines, and the department has its own processes to be more efficient and more effective.” rP 16:33

These respondents stated that by fostering a DC that drives the DF, enabled the department to stay closer to their customers and safeguard company assets among other functional roles to achieve their function within the organisation.

“so a good example is speed at which you do things. So in marketing, you have to be really quick and you have to be relevant and you need to be able to think out-of-the-box and those are more attributes of a culture than an overall culture necessarily. But they're not part of the overall Company A culture, for example. But they are essential for a marketing department because if you don't have that, how do you stay connected to customers? So that's what I'm saying. They don't contradict the overall culture” rA 1:31

“...culture is not aligned with what our function is required, and the whole finance team understands we've got to save by the assets, we need to move off of the cash, make sure there's no theft, make sure that there's no loss of money” rG 7:35

5.5.2. Pro-DC - Poor communication/interest of OC and Corporate Vision

If the intended OC is poorly communicated through to the department, in a top-down manner the managers would tend to build their own culture to improve organisational objectives. They believed that the strategy informs the culture on an organisation level, and if the organisational vision was poorly communicated, the middle-manager would look to their departmental function as the vision to build departmental culture.

“If there's no communication of culture, there's no communication around purpose, there's no transparency, people are not held accountable, no one's driving towards a single vision, then where are you going? Where's the strategy?” rD 4:28

“rather communication that drives us or shows us that our vision is in this direction, then the department cannot perform to that level or meet, we don't know whether we are meeting the vision or not of the organisation because the department has its own vision or own culture as opposed to that of the organisation.” rI 9:47

“if we were so transparent as an organisation, we would understand the importance of always having the calls” rI 9:29

5.5.3. Pro-DC - distinctive DC does not have any adverse impact

These finding support a distinctive DC that does not have an adverse impact on the OC or the Organisations objectives. The focus was to build a DC that assists the department in achieving its functions first and by achieving its DF the Organisational objective is achieved consequently.

“I've got a distinct culture in, but it does not attribute negatively on the organization culture” rH 8:43

“it's like a blanket approach that, Guys, here's a uniform policy, whereas we could have just started with that one individual specifically. I think that's really one thing that's all for one, one for all vibe, and it's sometimes not so good” rF 6:33

“in terms of the overall blanket culture, it is a positive culture, and I don't think it would have any adverse effect on the organizational culture. We still operate with integrity. It's all about doing things right, servicing customers, and I don't see how that would ever negatively impact” rK 21:41

5.5.4. Pro-DC - Leading the DC makes DC improve objectives

A critical factor promoting the DF was the manager's perspective that the ownership laid on them to promote the appropriate culture, whether it was the OC or the DC that was critical to achieve their DF. The aspect of understanding your people as a manager and leading the culture by example promotes the DC, that promotes the Organisational objectives.

“middle management get to know your staff. But your higher management and higher organization don't know their staff. A lot of the time, staff feel isolated from higher organizations.” rH 8:32

“I think more leaders possibly need to have fearlessness to do that within their department so that when they recognize that something is not working, they have to be the change that they want to see” rE 5:58

“I don't think that any individual within a department would be able to resonate with that values if it wasn't kind of lived and believed by their leader that they see on a daily basis” rO 15:38

5.5.5. No Objection to DC - Our DC is the OC, and it works

Some managers believed that DC was informed by the OC and thus had a neutral stance on answering the research question. The insights provided illustrated an importance of OC in providing guidance and alignment to achieving the Organisations Objectives.

“it is so embedded at a fundamental level, everybody works together well because you understand what our end goal is” rC 3.18

“we are not far off from the overall organizational culture. Our department culture lives within the parameters of the big organizational culture.” rM 19:55

“I might slow down the organisational culture, but when they want to do things a lot faster and change everything all the time, that's what's best for business. I don't think it's a negative.” rK 21:42

5.5.6. Against DC - A DC reduces 'belongingness' to the organisation

The respondents who believed that a distinctive departmental culture had an adverse impact on the organisational objectives stated that the purpose of the OC was to create a sense of belongingness in their individual behaviours.

“The culture is very much embedded in that level and it really drives their passion for the business. They will go above and beyond because they feel that part of, and that is what culture is, you feel that you're part of the whole” rC 3:15

“If there's no like communication of culture, there's no communication around purpose, there's no transparency, people are not held accountable, no one's driving towards a single vision, then where are you going? Where's the strategy?” rD 4:28

“We have a culture of teaching and a culture of learning. I'm not saying the other departments don't have it... the behaviours that we exhibit would be behaviours that everyone needs to exhibit or should exhibit” rN 14:40

In answering Research Question 4, all respondents provided insights into their belief of whether a department-based culture could achieve the objectives of the organisation more or equally effectively than the overarching culture. Their perspectives provided contrasting reasons that were illustrated as six overriding themes. Although most respondents found that DC is more effective than OC as it drives profitability through focus, customer centricity, and safeguarding assets; some respondents found that the purpose of OC in creating a sense of belongingness can be disrupted by the presence of emerging DCs.

5.6 Conclusion of Results

The results presented in this chapter address the research questions from the 18 semi-structured interviews conducted. More than 60% of the 18 respondents found an urgent need to build a function-based structure based on the department's

function. More than 80% of respondents found that the department's function informs the most effective departmental culture for their department. Although the HR department advocated the OC as their function, the factors that determine each of the six typical departments from a functional business structure show specific behaviours when plotted onto the CVF including the HR department.

These results from a middle manager's perspective find that the support activity departments have a dominant culture namely Finance (Hierarchy-based); HR (Clan-based); and IT (Adhocracy-based) whilst the Call centre being a primary activity find that a Market-based culture suits their functions. Finance, IT, and the Call centre have Clan-based culture as the second most common cultural attribute; whilst the other two primary activities have a wider spread across the CVF except for Marketing & Sales, who place less emphasis on Control-type culture.

The results from the final research question are reflective of the previous research questions, giving a strong calculated opinion from each respondent. Fifteen of the Eighteen departmental managers believed that DC is equally/more effective to achieve organisational objectives, whilst 3 responded felt that multiple DCs in an organisation reduces 'a sense of belongingness' and will hinder the department's abilities to cross-function and achieve organisational objectives.

The findings from these results were extracted from Atlas.ti as indicated in the research methodology chapter, and are illustrated in Appendixes E to Appendix J. The next chapter discusses the findings from the semi-structures as provided in this chapter to the literature review and any additional literature required to explain the findings, or extend, conform or challenge literature.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Results

6.1 Introduction

The research problem identified in Chapter 1 informed the nuance concept of Departmental Cultures in business studies. This chapter provides a critical analysis of the results presented in Chapter 5 that were obtained from the semi-structured interviews as designed in Chapter 4, in context of the literature review conducted in Chapter 2. The discussion presented in this chapter is structured to directly address each research question posed in Chapter 3 to refine, confirm and/or differentiate the findings from the existing body of knowledge of literature on departmental cultures, as a concept of sub-cultures and corporate culture as a tool moulded by the Competing Values Framework to achieve Organisational objectives. This chapter provides a discussion of the results obtained from the thematic analysis findings.

6.2 Discussion: (RQ1) Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

This question aimed to assess the effectiveness of a functional culture practised within the departments where each of the 18 respondents who comprised of 3 managers of six typical departments provided insight on the effectiveness of their practised culture. This discussion informs the urgency to build a function-based culture from within a department from the perspective of department managers.

<p>RQ1: Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?</p>

The responses from the managers provided binary responses to research question 1 through justifications of agreement or disagreements, in context of the OC. Cultural change is informed by the business strategy and culture changes as the objectives of the organisation change (Kerr & Slocum, 2005). On an organisational level, the function of the organisation through communication of the vision informs the OC (Gibbons et al., 2021). Majority of the respondents required an urgent need for a function-based culture whilst the minority believed that the OC was aligned to their

current DF as illustrated in the proportion of insights obtained are illustrated in Figure 6.2.1. The two opposing perspectives are discussed.

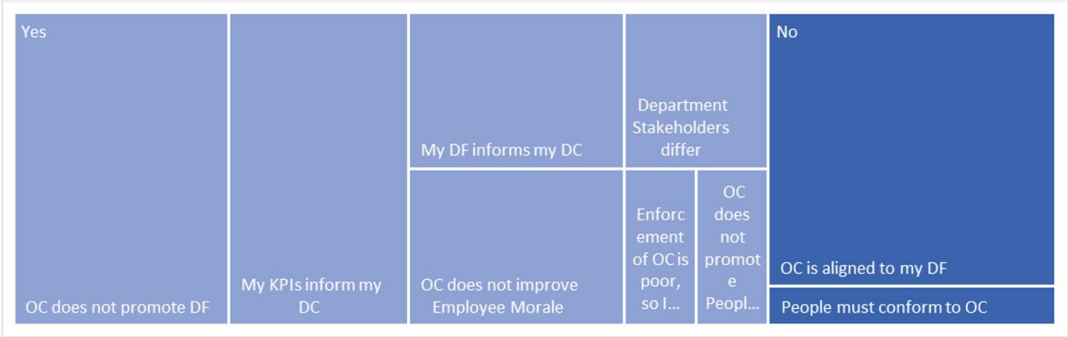


Figure 6.2.1: A visual presentation of the proportion of responses to (RQ1) Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

6.2.1 Justification for building a function-based culture

If the OC did not promote the functions of the department, most departmental managers believed that there was a need to build their own culture to meet their departmental objectives. The cultural alignment to objectives on a departmental level can be explained by Gibbons et al. (2021) mention of Little-c Culture that “focuses on the expectations rather than on values” when compared to the nature of OC, as Gibbons et al. (2021) describes as ‘BigC Culture’ (p. 115). The Marketing and Sales managers prioritised the fast-paced cultural experienced in their department, whilst the Finance Department managers appreciated compliance in comparison to the overarching OC. The actual objectives of the organisation are translated by middle managers into their areas of responsibility, using the OC as a guiding tool (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025).

If the OC was poorly communicated into the organisation, or if the middle-manager felt that the OC did not align to the necessary culture needed to promote that manager’s DF, a DC would form. Carlgren & BenMahmoud-Jouini (2022) explain these events through senior management support as a “primary antecedents for implementing a practice” (p. 60). The strong design of OC communication guides managers behaviour to achieve the intended corporate strategy results and thus refines the findings of the majority perspectives. The use of departmental KPIs by the departmental managers was a large influence in setting DC when the

Organisation did not have group performance targets (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025). The KPIs provided transparency on the department's objectives and clarified the way activities are supported by DC. For example, the DF informed a DC that were 'celebrated' (rO, 15:34) and provided transparency of the 'way of work, 'the type of work' (rR 18:39).

6.2.2 Justification to conform to the OC

On the contrary, if the organisation's vision and OC are well promoted by the senior managers, the middle managers share that vision and cascade the OC into their departments. The OC then becomes the DC. HR Department managers advocate the OC through communicating the OC into the organisation through campaigns such as 'toolbox talks', assessing the effectiveness of OC; and by practicing the OC within their departments (Aggarwal & Agarwala, 2023).

When an organisation forms, or when a new strategy is being implemented, the HR department collaborates with senior managers to set the OC to achieve the strategy. This is done through systems designs thinking to identify the guiding culture that should be practiced by the entire organisation (Carlgrén & BenMahmoud-Jouini, 2022; Tulcanaza-Pieto et al., 2021). However, the formation of this culture considers most of the employees impacted and does not consider minority departments interests such as the support departments. The need to form a function-based culture is usually not an urgent requirement for departments who have most of the workforce in the organisation's employ. This is explained through literature on OC in general as the organisational behaviour necessary to achieve a corporate strategy (Akpa et al, 2021). Examples illustrating this concept is the strategy of digital adoption (Ghafoori et al, 2024) and AI adoption (Isensee et al, 2021).

Porter's value chain provides a strong distinction between the support activities and primary activities of an organisation (Porter, 1985). Where the primary activities include most staff in the organisation, whilst support activities have much smaller volumes of workers to assist the primary activities within the organisational structure (Foss & Klein, 2023). Although prior literature supports the importance of OC to

achieve the Corporate Strategy (Akpa et al, 2021; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2021), its relevance to the 'support' departments are undermined during the creation of OC adding a new concept to the body of knowledge. These findings refine Kasa (2025) subcultural theory of 'enhancing subcultures' that supports the OC.

6.2.3 Conclusion of Discussion to RQ1

The results from the semi-structured interviews raised binary results where respondents either believed that there is an urgency to build a function-based culture or not. The responses were critically analysed using thematic analysis to provide the major reasons to support their responses in conjunction with scholarly literature. Well communicated OC by senior management is promoted by middle managers in their roles as departmental managers as it aids in transparently advising the organisation's members on the behaviour to achieve the corporate vision. HR department managers promote the OC since they are involved in setting and advocating the OC, whilst managers in departments who execute the primary activities of the business do not require a function-based culture as the OC was initially built for these departments who comprise of most employees in the organisation. Poorly communicated OC is met by departmental managers who create aberrated DC based on their DF as the guiding tool. Furthermore, if OC was irrelevant to a department, the manager would create a DC that supported the KPIs of the department.

6.3 Discussion: (RQ2) Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)

Research question 2 links to Research question 1, to obtain a perspective of the nature of the function-based culture. The function could arise from within or outside the organisation and research question 2 contextualises the urgency to build a functional culture to the department's function. This research question was answered with a combination of interview questions during the semi-structured interviews to provide the researcher with a perspective of the importance of DC to achieve the DF.

(RQ2) Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function?

The manager's responses were interpreted into binary themes and found that 80% of responses believed that the DC was prevalent to achieving the DF (Figure 6.3.1).

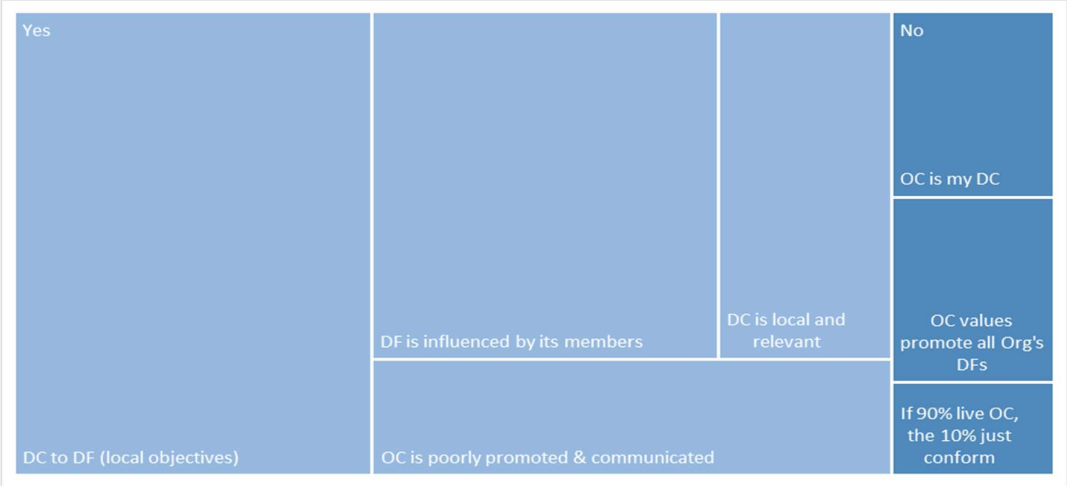


Figure 6.3.1: A visual presentation of the proportion of responses to (RQ2)

Each reason supporting the binary response to research question 2 is discussed in context of the literature in this section. This is further discussed at each of the six departmental levels as derived using Porter's value chain and Thematic Analysis.

6.3.1 DC is informed by the local objectives of the department

Turner (2024) found that within an organisation, groups of individuals direct and implement strategy using the dominant culture. Sub-cultures form when these subgroups have reason to behave in a manner distinctly from the dormant culture (Barket et al., 2014). The formation of departments creates focus areas for implementing the overarching strategy, such as the Call Centre, Finance, HR, IT, Marketing & Sales, and the Procurement departments. This research found that each respondent's stated function during the interview (Table 10) informed the necessary culture using the Competing Values Framework (Cameron et al., 2006).

The Call Centre and Marketing & Sales Department statements paired to a culture of competitiveness and customer focus to achieve goals as explained in a Market-based culture (Gong, 2022). The Finance Managers found that a culture that promotes efficiency, consistency and accountability improved their ability to control functions within the organisation to safeguard assets and cash depicting a hierarchical-based culture (Kunz & Heitz, 2021). HR managers advocated for a clan culture that 'drives business enablement through skills, training and development' to promote organisational goals while fostering personal and professional growth (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Gong et al., 2022). The IT department managers preferred a culture that promoted system integration, innovation and support thus illustrating an adhocracy culture (Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024; Zeb et al., 2021).

These department's function informed a single cultural type on the CVF in support of literature that uses the CVF to inform the OC based on the type of business. However, the Procurement department had two functional aspects that informed two quadrants, namely the Market and Hierarchical culture. The functions included both the internal and external positioning of tasks through efficient procurement in strong internal controls with suppliers, while being flexible enough to meet changing customer demands. Cameron & Quinn (2011) state that organisations can fall between one or more quadrants based on the dimensions that are prioritised, which is true for the Procurement Department.

6.3.2 DC is influenced by the department's members

The second factor that informed the necessary culture were the people in the department. The people consisted of both the members who execute the tasks, and their leader, usually the department manager. Abawari et al. (2024) provides a concept known as the leader-trait perspective that refines the research regarding the influence of departmental leaders in promoting culture. The departmental manager's personality, consistent behaviour and beliefs impact the cultural tone of the department. This research further refines the influence of the department's leader-led culture on the department through the departmental leader's behaviours in leading by example and consequently impacting the behaviours of the members (Kim & Toh, 2019).

The members of the department follow the departmental leader's vision and drive the DC by 'reflecting the values of the leader' in a shared-belief manner (O'Reilly et al., 2014). The departmental managers, excluding HR managers, believed that the clan-based culture embodying cohesion & belonging, supportive leadership and shared values was the second most valued culture to achieve the department's objectives. This finding adds to the body of knowledge following Kim et al. (2022, p. 1534) "Four-Stage Model for Creating Functional Cultures" where stage 3 searches for a supporting cultural model following changes in the environment. The manager's perspective of placing a Clan-based culture second to achieving the DF enforces the importance of building a people-development culture for long-term adaptability (Boyd & Larson, 2023).

6.3.3 DC is influenced by the OC

The HR department managers and departments who represented most of the employees who followed the OC as the DC, translated the OC in the context of their DF and did not find that an aberrated DC achieves DF. The corporate strategy informs the OC (Akpa et al., 2021; Gibbons et al., 2021), that is built with senior managers (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2021), advocated by HR (Boyd & Larson, 2023) for the primary activities of the organisation. Middle managers look to the OC in guiding their departments' behaviours and inadvertently adopt the OC as the DC through translating aspects of the 'national culture' (rQ 17:17).

6.3.4 Conclusion of Discussion to RQ2

The discussion of research question 2 found that three major themes emerge that can aid managers and scholars in understanding how DC is prevalent in achieving the DF. The DC is formed based on the objectives of each department, that is followed by a people-development culture as illustrated in the Clan-type culture. The leader plays a critical role in either translating the OC into the DC or creates an aberrated DC from the DF resulting in a leader-trait and people-based culture to enable long-term adaptability to change. This discussion contextualises the literature

at an organisational level at to a departmental level in understanding the cultural setting to corporate objectives.

6.4 Discussion (RQ3) What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

The discussion of research question 3 follows the results of the research as presented in Chapter 5, and the discussions provided in answering research questions 1 and 2. Middle-managers of the six departments largely believed in a function-based culture based on advancing the department's function. Following the work of Kim et al. (2022); Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2021) and Gibbons et al. (2021), the discussion of research question 3 provides academics with a new understanding of how sub-culture, 'little c' or 'micro-level' cultures can be informed by the input factors from the DF.

The 18 departmental managers were interviewed to obtain an exploratory understanding of what informs the culture of six functional departments. Three middle-managers of six typical organisational functions as derived from Porter's value chain namely the Call centre, Finance, HR, IT, Marketing & Sales and Procurement departments were interviewed. Their insights were analysed using Atlas.ti based on answering RQ3:

(RQ3) What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

The 215 axial codes were identified and grouped using Braun & Clarke 's six stage Thematic Analysis model to form 18 mutually exclusive themes in an inductive manner. These themes were further categorised against Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework (CVF) to understand each of the six departments' input factors against the framework. Figure 6.4.1 illustrates the research findings that will be discussed using CVF in the context of the department's functions (DF) and scholarly literature used for corporate strategy and organisational culture (OC).

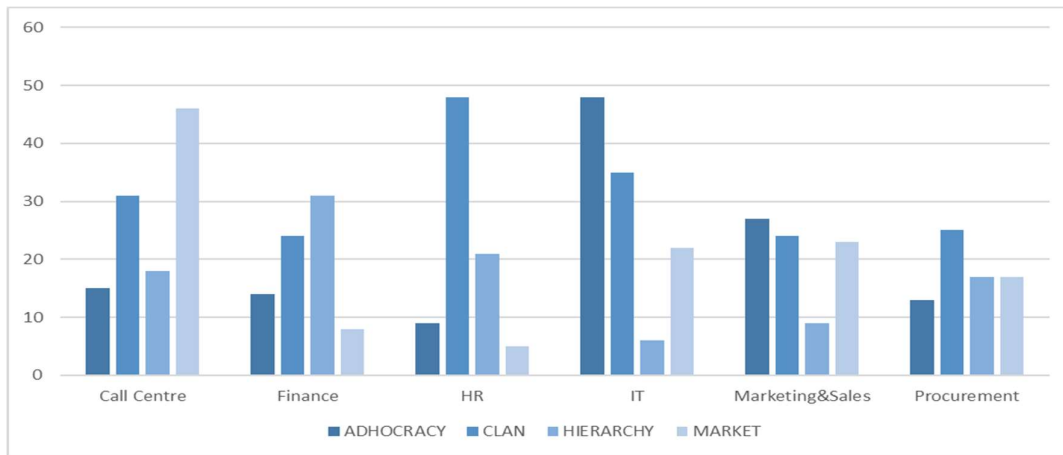


Figure 6.4.1: Axial codes clustered by department using CVF quadrants

Although the CVF has been used by scholars in the prior body of knowledge to determine the ideal organisational culture to achieve corporate strategy (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Fernandes et al., 2023; Gong et al., 2022), this research follows Kim et al. (2022) research on setting a functional culture based on the DF within and organisation. The discussion of the two previous research questions found that OC guides DC, but an aberrated DC forms if the OC is not designed for a supporting DF.

6.4.1 Discussion of the CVF to inform departmental culture

In the Call Centre, the functional statement is ‘to provide services to external stakeholders to improve customer acquisition and profitability’ that displays a Market-based culture supporting their competitive nature in providing the best customer value (Cameron et al., 2006). The managers promote a high performing culture among call centre agents through setting KPIs in the ‘pursuit of profit’ (Gong et al., 2022). This promotes customer satisfaction and market acquisition, through working in a team to support and develop agents to meet their functional requirements. The department also has attributes of a clan culture largely influenced by motivation and support attributes shown by the department’s leader (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014).

The Finance Department provides support to business operations with internal control, compliance, planning and decision-making displaying a culture of control in meeting risks with mitigation strategies. These managers value a Hierarchy-type

culture that is closely followed by a Clan-based culture (Cameron et al., 2006). It can be argued that the hierarchy-based culture does not promote knowledge-sharing unless mediated (Ng, 2023). But the Finance Managers place internal control on mitigating risk through enabling the members of the department to support the organisation as found in this research. Piwowar-Sulej (2021) found that no significant relationship exists between OC and the functions with the financial industry, whilst Kun & Heitz (2021) found that a culture of control achieves risk mitigation in banking. The findings of this research refine the literature where finance-orientated organisations placing a large dependence on controls emphasising a hierarchical-type culture. Furthermore, the Clan-type culture is described by managers as enabling the department to better support the organisation (Raziq et al., 2024) further refining the literature.

The HR department also supports the business but places many of its cultural attributes toward people-centricity within the organisation. Their department exists 'to drive business enablement through skills, training and development to enable organisational goals while fostering personal and professional growth' in the members of the organisation. A key focus of the culture is placed on putting the people's interest first resulting in a dominant Clan-type culture (Boyd & Larson, 2023). Gong et al. (2022) specifically describes this culture as human resource development refining the findings to the literature. This dominance of the clan-type culture can be further discussed as both the leader practicing participative leadership in mentoring departmental members on how to support organisational members (Toufighi, 2024), and for the entire HR department to support the members of the organisation through 'managing' the OC and any aberrated DC that exists (Gibbons et al., 2024).

The IT department's managers described their function as 'serving the business through business enablement in system integration, technological innovation and IT-related support'. This cultural type largely supports the Adhocracy culture (Cameron et al., 2006) as it illustrates the enablement of business innovation (Zeb et al., 2021). The key cultural influence is the ability of individuals to have product knowledge in technology through having an external view on the latest technologies and bringing

that knowledge into the business (Ghafoori et al., 2024). The translation of external knowledge is then translated into the organisational context through a Clan-based culture that localises the knowledge to a relevant solution facilitated by the leader (Kim & Toh, 2019). The DC of the IT department is supportive to the operations of the business that is achieved by members being entrepreneurial, risk taking and experimental (Strengers et al., 2022). Strengers et al. (2022) supports this finding of combining the adhocracy and clan cultures to scale-up performance in IT startup businesses. This research adds to the body of literature where an increase in studies between organisational culture and IT are prevalent (Sieber et al., 2022). The cultural misalignment of IT to the rest of the business, is explained through their department's cultural behaviours in both focus work, and knowledge sharing through technical jargon. Sieber et al. (2022) find that the cross-cultural alignment is problematic, and this research adds to the literature in explaining the nature of the DC of IT.

Post the analysis of the six departments, the Marketing & Sales and Procurement departments did not show a distinctive cultural type when compared to the CVF as illustrated in figure 6.4.1 above. These departments along with the Call centre are classified as primary activities using Porter's value chain. However, the department manager's function statements obtained following the discussion from research question 2 places the functions of Marketing & Sales as a Market-based culture and Procurement into a Market-type & Hierarchy-type culture. Although the perceived DC (Table 10) does show some similarity to the results of research question 3 (Figure 6.4.1), no specific quadrant or quadrants can be identified from the results. However, the exploratory nature of this research intends to provide insights into the department manager's perspectives of what informs the culture of each department that contributes to this discussion.

The findings of this research shows that the Marketing & Sales department places less emphasis on building a hierarchy-based culture as these members will bypass controls to achieve the function. Marketing & Sales managers described the function as 'oversight of customer-facing functions including client services, product sales and customer experience'. The culture is customer-driven through finding innovative ways to meet customer demands whilst using clan-type cultural traits of transparent

communication (Gong, 2022). The Procurement managers stated that 'managing procurement of products to meet customer demands' is their primary function, placing a culture of enhancing internal capabilities to meet external requirements. Furthermore, the reliability of products requires workers in the buying team to be flexible in choosing suppliers and applying consistency in the process. These are two opposing competing dimensions of the CVF (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). These two concepts represent opposing competing dimensions of the CVF (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) that are embodied in the function of the department adding to the literature.

The exploratory nature of this research contributes to the broad allocation of quadrants of these primary activities, as these departments are not specific to the trade or service like the support departments. However, the research adds to Gong et al. (2022) transformation frameworks in providing the 'situational-sensitive' information of these departmental groups.

6.4.2 Conclusion of Discussion to RQ3

Although existing literature refers to the corporate level of how OC can achieve corporate objectives through CVF (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Gong et al., 2022; Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024), the contextualisation of CVF to determine the sub-culture of departments can be based on each DF. Each of the support activity departments show a focus on a specific culture namely finance to hierarchical, HR to Clan and IT to Adhocracy. With the Finance and IT department seconding the Clan culture to achieve cohesion and teamwork to enable the major culture. Although the Call centre represents a primary activity, it displayed a Market-type culture, where the other two primary activity departments had an equal spread of culture across the CVF.

These findings refine or add to the literature and provides a fresh perspective of matching DC to DF, in the similar manner that OC is matched to corporate strategy (Gibbons et al., 2021). These exploratory findings provide insight into the type of culture that fosters each department objective using a function-based approach. These insights follow Abawari et al. (2024), Kim et al. (2022) and Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2021) perspectives of building a function-based culture as a micro-level within the organisation.

6.5 Discussion (RQ4) Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than the overarching organisational culture?

With an understanding of both the types and nature of DC, this section establishes whether focussing on the DC is equally effective to achieve the organisation's objectives. Research question 2 found that most of the departmental managers believed that a DC promotes the DF or departments objectives, but research question 4 looks at the effectiveness of DC in context of the organisation's objectives or corporate strategy.

(RQ4) Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than the overarching organisational culture?

Middle managers provided information about their practiced OC and stated OC during the semi-structured interviews along with insights on whether each departmental manager believed that having a distinctive DC had any adverse impact on the organisation's objectives. Another key insight from the interview protocol was any changes that the departmental manager believed should be changed in the OC that would assist the department of the organisation to achieve the corporate's objections. This section discusses the binary results from the findings of this research question in context to existing literature.

6.5.1 DC can effectively achieve organisational objectives

Middle managers found that their power to control within the department enabled the department to achieve their DF. They believe that their department exists within the organisation's structure to specialise on a specific area of the organisation (Cummings & Worley, 2015). These separate departmental functions through an ideal structure cascades departmental performance into achieving the corporate objective (Gibbons et al., 2021). The department's manager is responsible for achieving their department's objective and thus promotes a culture that drives this objective (Meyer, 2024). Meyer (2024, p. 72) states that "most important is to identify your strategic objective" informing that the function should inform the culture. The

departmental managers have a certain degree of control over the sub-culture experienced within the department and can adjust the culture through their leadership styles of communication style, performance measurement and disposition (Kim & Toh, 2019).

Poorly communicated OC by senior managers down to the department, or an OC that was not designed for the department is not well received by the middle-manager, resulting in the manager building a culture that is tailored to meet the DF (Bamidele, 2022). This is not the case for the HR department who advocate the OC (Boyd & Larson). Well communicated OC is largely adopted by a department if that department comprises most of the workers in the organisation. The OC acts as the guiding culture for departments to adopt and managers tend to translate the OC to inform their DC (Shahzad et al., 2021). The departmental managers are arguably the drivers of culture at the departmental level and can translate the OC into a DC that can promote the DF without restricting the organisation's objectives. These findings add to the literature by extending the reasons for creating aberrated sub-cultures in a function-based context (Kasa, 2025; Kim et al., 2022; Shahzad et al., 2021).

6.5.2 DC being in-effective in achieving organisational objectives

Multiple differing DC within the organisation from the OC can cause a misalignment to the culture required to be practiced achieving the corporate strategy. This misalignment can cause confusion within departments characterised by an incompatibility of cross functional collaboration and a sense of absent belongingness on individuals to the organisation (Ewin et al., 2024). This research found that even though a well-developed OC exists, a vast set of sub-cultures can reduce the members ability to align to corporate objectives refining the existing literature (Akpa et al., 2021).

6.5.3 Conclusion of Discussion to RQ4

The discussion of the findings of research question 4 to the literature results in relating DC to affecting corporate objectives in a similar manner that OC affects corporate objectives. HR departments and departments who comprise the primary

activities of the organisation do not show aberrated DC as evident in the support activity departments. This is explained through 'one shoe cannot fit all' analogy as each departmental manager promotes a culture that is aligned to their departmental objectives in achieving their individual responsibility of the corporate objectives. However, caution must be applied to establish a well-developed OC that reduces the risk of multiple sub-cultures that could cause poor cross-collaboration between departments in their aberrated cultural behaviours to the detriment of achieving corporate objectives. These findings refine the existing literature of OC as an alignment tool to achieve corporate objectives.

6.6 Conclusion of Discussion

The discussion concludes the findings of the four research questions that were systematically designed to provide exploratory results on the nature and effectiveness of 'departmental culture'. These questions were systematically derived to provide insights into the urgency, nature and prevalence of developing a departmental culture that promotes the department's function and ultimately the organisation's objectives. These findings add and refine the existing scholarly debate on 'Organisational Culture' and 'Departmental Cultures' as a concept of sub-cultures. The concept of 'departmental culture' is understudied in business management studies, and this discussion satisfies the gap on contextualising DC in terms of the literature that uses the Competing Values Framework to inform the appropriate OC to meet corporate objectives.

Following the need to further research a function-based culture (Abawari et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2022) it has been proven that a departmental culture exists as a functional culture with medium-large sized organisations. Department managers have influential control through the leadership-trait concept (Kim & Toh, 2019) to translate OC into DC. When the OC is built or changed to meet corporate objectives, cultural setters take the larger departments population's interest into consideration. This reduces the relevance of OC to smaller departments largely found in the support activity departments of the organisation. The HR department advocates OC and translates the OC into their DC to further promote and monitor the effectiveness of

the OC at all organisational levels and across departments, showing a strong clan-type culture.

Poorly communicated or built OC is met by middle managers who create aberrated DC based on the DF. These functions are informed by the objectives of the department as cascaded from the corporate objective into functional departments, focussed on meeting these objectives. The finance and IT department show strong hierarchical and adhocracy cultures based on their function, respectively. The primary activity departments as portrayed in Porter's value chain have a wider spread of cultural traits across the CVF dimensions as their functions include a variety of cultural attributes.

When comparing the findings to the literature, this research refines the support activity departmental cultural traits to the organisational cultural traits to achieve the corporate objectives in content of literature that used the CVF informing the OC. Each department has its own identity and plays a specialised part in achieving their function(s). Through practicing the culture that promotes their function, the collective consequence is achieving the organisation's objectives. This research also adds to the body of knowledge by providing a broader understanding of 'Departmental Culture' in the literature of sub-cultures (Kim et al., 2022; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2021; Gibbons et al., 2021) adding detail into the nature of little 'c' or 'micro-level' cultures.

It can be argued that the organisation performs at its optimal level when all the individual departments' culture is strongly aligned to the organisational culture. This argument adds to the body of literature specific to the use of CVF in informing the cultural types applicable to functions (Boyd & Larson, 2023; Gibbons, 2021; Gong, 2022). The concept that 'no single culture may be perfect for an organisation' (Bamidele, 2022; Cameron & Quinn, 2011) has been refined through the thematic analysis results of this research project. This discussion concludes the study findings to the scholarly debate on setting a nuanced way of setting a function-based culture.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This Chapter concludes the research project on exploring departmental cultures from a function-based level, in the context of the overarching organisational culture to achieve organisational objectives.

7.1 Conclusion

7.1.1. The context of this research and its importance

As the business environment changes, organisations must adapt their organisational cultures to meet the changing organisation's objectives (Gibbons et al., 2021). This entails understanding the functional cultures required within an organisational structure to effect organisational culture (Kim et al., 2022). The corporate objectives are executed at functional levels within an organisation based on the function-based structure to achieve focus within each function-based department (Cummings & Worley, 2015; Gibbons et al., 2021). It is thus important to understand the culture that exists at a departmental level and its nature and effective influence of achieving the organisational objectives in context of the overarching organisational culture. The findings from this research provides cultural change agents and business leaders with an evidence-based approach of setting culture from a departmental level to achieve organisational objectives.

7.1.2. The importance of this research

Existing literature on organisational culture is profound in the academic literature as reviewed by Abawari et al. (2024); Akpa et al. (2021) Gorton et al. (2022); Kim et al., (2022) among other literature, but the concept of 'departmental culture' as a sub-culture is not explicitly researched in business and management sciences (Abawari et al., 2024; Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2025; Williams, 2022) as it refers to sub-cultures in humanities and sociology literature (Haenfler, 2023; Pitroso, 2024) or education studies (Kálmán et al., 2020; Phillips et al., 2025).

This research is set to understand departmental culture within the private sector who make use of a function-based structure to achieve corporate objectives (Cummings & Worley, 2015) by middle-managers who can differentiate between the

departmental and organisational culture. This research enables the exploration of departmental culture as a concept of subcultures to provide South African businesses with an evidence-based perspective of setting an effective culture to achieve corporate objectives through retaining talent (Öztuna & Bayraktar, 2024) and ultimately improve the stagnant South African economy (Statistics South Africa, 2025).

7.1.3 Existing knowledge from the literature

Departmental culture in business management studies is a fresh perspective of subcultures in an organisation (Williams, 2022). Existing literature refers to subcultures in organisations known as ‘little-c culture’ (Gibbons et al., 2021) and ‘micro-level culture’ (Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger, 2021) whilst organisational culture is extensive across business management studies (Abawari et al., 2024; Akpa et al., 2021; Gorton et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2022). Furthermore, the competing Values Framework has been extensively used as a functional culture setting tool to meet corporate strategy with the optimal organisational culture based on two competing dimensions from the framework ((Boyd & Larson, 2023; Fernandes et al., 2023; Gong et al., 2022). Thus, exploratory research was conducted in this research project to understand the nature and effectiveness of departmental culture considering the current body of knowledge.

7.1.4 Research Questions underlying this research project

The understudied concept of departmental cultures in a business context required sufficient insight of the topic to address its existence, importance, nature and effectiveness in achieving organisational objectives. These four sets of insights were addressed with the following four research questions:

RQ1: Is there an urgent requirement to build a function-based culture within an organisation in the context of its departments?

RQ2: Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department’s function(s)?

RQ3: What are the input factors of a department-based culture?

RQ4: Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more or equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?

7.1.5 Methodology used to address research questions

Since the topic of Departmental culture is a new phenomenon in business studies an exploratory research method was applied through qualitative research (Saunders & Lewis, 2018) as supported by Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025) methods of researching subculture. A mono-method through 18 semi-structured interviews of departmental managers based in South Africa provided a rich, thick, and descriptive data (Islam and Aldaihani, 2022; Saunders & Lewis, 2018) that was analysed using Braun & Clarke's six-step thematic analysis on the Atlas.ti software (Braun & Clarke, 2017) and the CVF to inform the behaviour of themes. Quality assurance using Lim's (2025) Tree of Trustworthiness and the relevant Gibbs ethical consideration was compliant.

7.1.6 Research Findings

In addition to the nuance findings confirming the existence of departmental culture in management science studies, it was found that a significant number of respondents found that departmental culture is largely built on the department's functions confirming Kim et al., (2022) function-based perspective within the organisation. This excludes HR managers who advocate organisational culture (Boyd & Larson, 2023) within their department and the wider organisation. Furthermore, the analysis of each department's functional input-factors found distinct cultural behaviours that middle-managers perceived to be important to achieving the organisational objectives (Gong, 2022). Porter's Primary activities departments tend to have a wider spread of culture across the CVF, except for the Call centre, that is customer centric, competitive and profit driven; whilst the support departments incline towards a CVF quadrant that enhances focus in the specialised area that each support.

A key finding was the adoption or translation of organisational culture by the departmental manager in the leader-trait perspective (Abawari et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2022) where only the necessary values of organisational culture were used that

promoted the department's functions. However, the 'one shoe fits all' analogy is profound in organisations in the case where a multitude of diverse departmental cultures can cause misalignment between departments to the corporate vision. This research finds that when organisational culture is aligned to department culture the organisation is at its best position to implement strategy and achieve organisational objectives.

7.1.7 Contributions to academic literature

This study follows the work of Kim et al. (2022) to build a function-based structure that assists the organisation achieve its objectives more effectively in a changing business environment. This research fills the gap of the phenomenon known as departmental culture in business science studies and extends the literature of sub-cultures that exist within organisations. The findings follow the evidence-based process of academic studies providing a new construct known as 'departmental culture' and provides an exploratory understanding of its relationship to achieve the construct: of organisational objectives using the CVF in the context of the construct: organisational culture.

7.2 Limitations and Delimitations

The study of organisational culture has inherent limitations as it is a study of behaviour between one or more individuals (Shein, 2002). Although this study has successfully explored the nuance concept of departmental culture in management studies, certain limitations and delimitations exists.

Firstly, the study is cross-sectional and is limited from longitudinal study outcomes, as cultures change over time and this research assessed the existence and effectiveness of DC at a specific point in time. Secondly, the population only includes the perspectives of middle managers. Given the limited time to complete the project, only the perspectives of departmental managers informed the findings. Cultural study findings can be informed from more angles and perspectives than the mono-method used in this study. A limitation lies in using a single cultural model, namely the CVF to explain the nuance construct of departmental culture. Other cultural-setting models may have provided different outcomes. Lastly, the sample of six typical

departments in a functional corporate structure limits the study to these department's cultural behaviour. Different corporate structures to the functional structure exists such as the matrix and divisional structures where different behaviours can be explored, providing new insights to the body of knowledge.

Another limitation lies in the separation of the Marketing and Sales functions. Although corporates usually have these functions grouped together and lead by a manager, these can be seen as separate functions within the organisation.

This study was conducted by the researcher with supervisory guidance, that can pose a concern to researcher bias. Using the research process as informed by literature studies, the methodology of this research was derived. The tree of trustworthiness in Appendix C largely influenced the researchers' decisions in providing a clear and transparent research process from obtaining the interview data through to the results (an audit trail is available in Atlas.ti).

7.3 Recommendations for Future research

This section highlights the future research that can be studied from the limitations and delimitations of this study, and since this study provided exploratory findings of support activity cultures will largely contribute to the body of knowledge.

Firstly, a longitudinal study on the changing behaviours of departmental cultures may provide insights into the sustainable input-factors that influence departmental cultures over time. Since cultures change over time from leader-trait, and function-based perspectives, future studies on departmental cultures could prove prevalent. Secondly, A complete perspective of departmental culture can be obtained from other employees in the functional structure, such as front-line workers, to obtain a comprehensive objective view of department culture's nature and effectiveness. Thirdly, as businesses change over time from technological advancements and environmental changes, new departments emerge whose cultures can be studied.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Consistency Matrix

Research Objective: The existence and composition of a function-based departmental culture within the Organisational culture						
Sub-objectives	Sections in literature review	Hypothesis	Research questions	Variable: (Independent (IV), and Dependent (DV))	Data collection	Analysis technique
The effectiveness of a function-based culture on corporate objectives	Kim et al., 2022. Tadesse Bogale & Debela (2024)	H1. There is a positive relationship between a function-based culture and corporate objectives	1. Is there an urgent requirement to build functional-based culture?	IV1 = function-based culture. DV1 = corporate objectives.	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Analysis
The urgent need to recognise a function-based departmental culture	Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025). Shepherd et., al (2023)	H2. An organisation's departments exist based on their function	2. Is departmental culture prevalent to achieve a department's function(s)?	DV2 = departments existence. IV2 = corporate function.	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Analysis
The composition of a functional departmental-based culture	Cameron et al. (2006). Kim et al., 2022	H3. The department's function requires a specific cultural type	3. What are the input factors of a department-based culture?	IV3 = Departmental Function. DV3 = Departmental Culture.	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Analysis
The effectiveness of a department's function-based culture in comparison to overarching organisational culture	Kressmann & Mueller-Seeger (2025). Shepherd et., al (2023)	H4. The department's culture has a positive impact on corporate objectives	4. Can a departmental-based culture drive organisational objectives more/equally effectively than an overarching organisational culture?	DV3 = Departmental Culture. DV1 = Corporate objectives.	Semi-Structured Interviews	Thematic Analysis

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Hi, my name is Rushil, and I am doing research on departmental culture. Your name and organisation will not be recorded as it is not important for the report to be concluded for this research. If you become uncomfortable during any part of this interview, you may end the interview.

I am exploring the nature of sub-cultures in organisations and want to find out more about the nature of departmental culture to achieve the functions of the department in an organisation. For the purposes of this research, I would like to understand the existence and influence of departmental culture in the context of the overarching organisational culture.

Take note of the following information of the respondent:

Job Title/Position: _____

No. of years in current position: ____ No. of years of managing departments: ____

No. of person(s) in the department: _____

Department's Purpose/Functional Statement: _____

1. Provide a list of the functional responsibilities that the department has at the organisation? i.e. Describe the functions of the department?

2. What is the overarching corporate culture? How would you describe it? These can be the values written down to inform culture and what you physically see and feel as the manner in which people in your organisation behave.
3. Does the organisational culture promote the functions required of the department?
 - Do you see distinct behaviours of your team that achieve functional responsibilities?
 - What challenges does your team face when collaborating across departments?
4. Do you see a strong or weak cultural difference in the department's culture to the overarching organisational culture? If yes, please describe it. If no, why?
 - When the department is under stress, what cultural traits show up strongest?

If the department's culture is different to the organisation's culture, ask questions below:

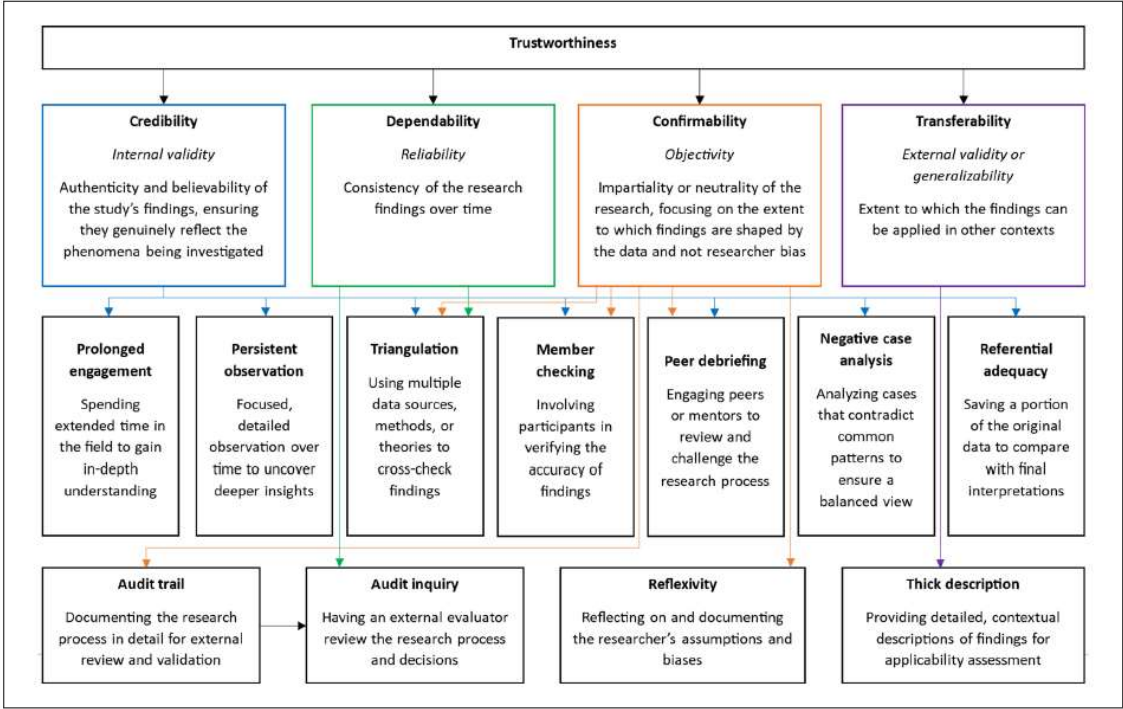
5. Do you believe that the department's culture should be prioritised if it conflicts with the overarching organisational culture? If so, why?
 - Have you seen strategies fail due to cultural misalignment?
 - Have persons in the department required stronger standards or processes to f(x)?
6. What factors inform the nature of departmental culture, "the way things get done"?
 - What behaviours are celebrated, and what behaviour gets quietly discouraged?
 - Provide characteristics of interactions between team member and cross-depts.
7. In your opinion, does having a distinct departmental culture have any adverse impact on the overall organisation and across other departments? Please elaborate.

If there is no difference the below questions will be asked (continued from question 4):

8. What aspects of the overarching organisational culture enhance the functional responsibilities of the department? Please elaborate.
 - Give an example of where an organisational culture was lived to achieve a goal.
9. If you could change any aspects of the organisation's culture, what would you change? If so, why?

Thank respondent for their time, and end the interview

Appendix C: Tree of trustworthiness



Source: Lim (2025)

Appendix D: Use of Thematic analysis

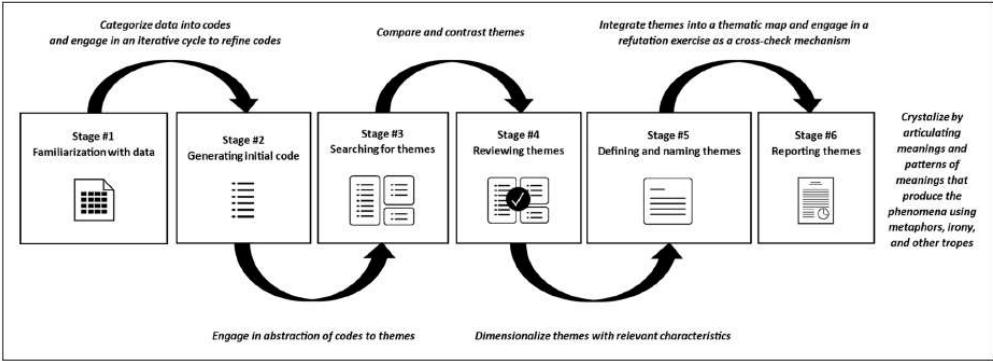


Figure 5. Thematic analysis inspired by Virginia Braun, Victoria Clarke, and Susan Spiggle. Note. The six stages of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) are illustrated in regular font while the ideas or principles of analysis and interpretation by Spiggle (1994) are presented in italic font.

Braun & Clarke (2017)

Appendix E: 18 Theme Codes with Description in context of CVF for RQ3

CVF (Atlas ID)	Theme Name	Theme Description
CLAN (CLAN-1)	Cohesion & Belonging	Emphasises emotional connection, open communication, and the sense of being part of a supportive organisational "family"
CLAN (CLAN-2)	Supportive Leadership	Leaders act as mentors, facilitators, and guides
CLAN (CLAN-3)	Motivation & Commitment	Focuses on fostering morale and sustaining dedication through trust and shared purpose
CLAN (CLAN-4)	Employee Social Development	Investing in employee development and fostering interpersonal relationships that blend social and professional support
CLAN (CLAN-5)	Shared Values & Respect	Highlights respect, continuity, and equality across hierarchical levels, strengthening the organisation's shared identity
ADHOCRACY (ADHO-1)	Innovation & Experimentation	Encourages original thinking, taking calculated risks, and learning through experimentation and iteration. Mistakes are treated as opportunities for innovation and progress
ADHOCRACY (ADHO-2)	Agility & Adaptability	Highlights responsiveness and the ability to pivot quickly in changing environments while maintaining a proactive, future-oriented mindset
ADHOCRACY (ADHO-3)	Empowerment & Autonomy	Focuses on distributed authority and self-management teams and individuals are trusted to act independently while supporting one another in uncertain or dynamic contexts
ADHOCRACY (ADHO-4)	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition	Centers on driving sustainable expansion by aligning innovation with customer needs, efficient use of resources, and strategic focus on value-generating opportunities
HIERARCHY (HIER-1)	Structure & Governance	Focuses on formal structures, clear authority lines, and well-defined processes that ensure order and compliance within the organisation
HIERARCHY (HIER-2)	Coordination & Oversight	Centers on the managerial responsibility for organising, supervising, and maintaining oversight to ensure goals are met systematically
HIERARCHY (HIER-3)	Consistency & Standardisation	Emphasises reliability through standardised methods, repetitive processes, and ongoing refinement to sustain dependable performance
HIERARCHY (HIER-4)	Stability & Predictability	Reflects the value placed on steadiness, predictability, and reliability even at the cost of flexibility ensuring minimal disruption and smooth operations
HIERARCHY (HIER-5)	Efficiency & Control	Targets optimal use of resources and strict control mechanisms to maximise performance and reduce waste within a regulated system
MARKET (MARK-1)	Competitiveness & Dominance	Captures the drive to outperform competitors and achieve market leadership through aggressive positioning and external orientation.
MARKET (MARK-2)	Achievement & Performance	Highlights a focus on measurable results, achieving ambitious targets, and maintaining a culture where success is quantifiable and rewarded
MARKET (MARK-3)	Determination & Ambition	Represents the motivational intensity and high-pressure leadership style that pushes individuals and teams to excel under demanding standards
MARKET	Customer Value & Improved Profitability	Links market success to financial performance and customer satisfaction, sustaining growth and organisational strength

(MARK-4)		through economic discipline
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Appendix Ea: 65 Characteristics of each theme using CVF

4 CVF	18 Theme names	Characteristics (65 characteristics)
CLAN	1. Cohesion & Belonging	Solidarity & Loyalty
		Cooperation & Friendliness
		Teamwork
		Family Awareness
		Communication
	2. Supportive Leadership	Mentor & Parent Role
		Advisor
		Facilitator
	3. Motivation & Commitment	Morale Enhancer
		High Commitment
	4. Employee Social Development	People Improvement
		Social-Work Relation
	5. Shared Values & Respect	Tradition
		Equal Respect Mng-Empl
	ADHOCRACY	1. Innovation & Experimentation
Creativity		
Change & Innovative		
Risk-Taking		
Fail-Forward		
2. Agility & Adaptability		Adaptability
		(Highlights responsiveness and the ability to pivot quickly in changing environments while maintaining a proactive, future-oriented mindset)
		Agility & Readiness
		Flexibility

		Forward-Thinking
	3. Empowerment & Autonomy	Freedom of Action
		Shared Risk, Help Each Other
		Shared Responsibilities
	4. Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition	Growth
		Customer Feedback
		Resource Efficiencies
		Focussed
HIERARCHY	1. Structure & Governance	Formal, Rules & Roles Defined
		Regulation & Procedures
		Structured & Systematic Management
		Social Control
		Administrator
	2. Coordination & Oversight	Coordinator & Organiser
		Monitor & Control
		Management Power
		Continuous Planning
		Review and Refine
	3. Consistency & Standardization	Consistency
		Standardisation
		Uniformity
		Routine
	4. Stability & Predictability	Focussed, Stability
		Predictability
		Timeliness
		Reliable Delivery
		Inflexible
	5. Efficiency & Control	Cost Containment

		Efficiency
MARKET	1. Competitiveness & Dominance	Competitiveness
		Market Superiority & Dominance
		Emphasis on Winning
		External Focus
	2. Achievement & Performance	Goal & Target Achievement
		Success Orientated
		Results-Based Workplace
		Performance
	3. Determination & Ambition	Determined
		High Expectations
		Demanding Leadership
	4. Customer Value & Improved Profitability	Profitability
		Customer Focus
		Stability

Appendix F: (RQ1) Theme identifications from reason codes:

	(RQ1) Urgency to build? Gr=28	Binary Answer	(RQ1) Code Level a derived from Quote
Respondent A Transcript Gr=36	2	YES	Yes, Department Stakeholders differ; Yes, My DF informs my DC
Respondent B Transcript Gr=67	2	YES	Yes, My KPIs inform my DC
Respondent C Transcript Gr=31	1	NO	No, OC is aligned to my DF
Respondent D Transcript Gr=58	1	NO	No, OC is aligned to my DF

Respondent E Transcript Gr=58	2	YES	Yes, Enforcement of OC is poor, so I need DC, Yes, OC does not promote DF
Respondent F Transcript Gr=36	1	NO	Yes, OC does not promote DF
Respondent G Transcript Gr=45	1	YES	Yes, OC does not promote DF
Respondent H Transcript Gr=44	3	YES	Yes, My KPIs inform my DC, Yes, OC does not improve Employee Morale; Yes, OC does not promote DF
Respondent I Transcript Gr=48	2	YES	Yes, My KPIs inform my DC
Respondent J Transcript Gr=48	1	YES	Yes, OC does not promote DF
Respondent K Transcript Gr=44	1	YES	Yes, OC does not improve Employee Morale
Respondent L Transcript Gr=41	1	YES	Yes, Department Stakeholders differ
Respondent M Transcript Gr=55	1	NO	No, OC is aligned to my DF
Respondent N Transcript Gr=40	1	NO	No, OC is aligned to my DF
Respondent O Transcript Gr=39	4	YES	Yes, My DF informs my DC
Respondent P Transcript Gr=44	1	NO	No, OC is aligned to my DF; Yes, My KPIs inform my DC; No, OC is aligned to my DF
Respondent Q Transcript Gr=25	1	NO	No, People must conform to OC
Respondent R Transcript Gr=37	2	YES	Yes, OC does not improve Employee Morale; Yes, OC does not promote DF
RQ1-NO (TOTALS) Gr=289; GS=7	7	NO = 7	
RQ1-YES (TOTALS) Gr=507; GS=11	21	YES = 11	

TOTALS	28 Quotations	18 Interviews	
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Appendix G: (RQ2) Theme identifications from reason codes:

	(RQ2) DC for DF?	(RQ2) Binary Response	o (RQ2) Themes derived from Quote
Respondent A Transcript Gr=37	4	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent B Transcript Gr=68	1	YES	Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent C Transcript Gr=32	1	NO	No, OC values promote all Org's DFs
Respondent D Transcript Gr=59	1	YES	Yes, OC is poorly promoted & communicated
Respondent E Transcript Gr=58	2	YES	Yes, DC is local and relevant; Yes, OC is poorly promoted & communicated
Respondent F Transcript Gr=36	1	NO	No, OC is my DC
Respondent G Transcript Gr=46	2	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent H Transcript Gr=44	3	YES	Yes, DC is local and relevant; Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent I Transcript Gr=49	3	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members; Yes, OC is poorly promoted & communicated
Respondent J Transcript Gr=48	2	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent K Transcript Gr=44	2	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, OC is poorly promoted & communicated

Respondent L Transcript Gr=41	2	YES	Yes, DC is local and relevant; Yes, DC to DF (local objectives);
Respondent M Transcript Gr=55	1	NO	No, OC values promote all Org's DFs
Respondent N Transcript Gr=40	1	NO	No, OC is my DC
Respondent O Transcript Gr=40	3	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives); Yes, DF is influenced by its members
Respondent P Transcript Gr=44	1	YES	Yes, DC to DF (local objectives)
Respondent Q Transcript Gr=25	1	NO	No, If 90% live OC, the 10% just conform
Respondent R Transcript Gr=37	1	YES	Yes, DC is local and relevant;
RQ1-NO (TOTALS) Gr=289; GS=7	5	NO = 5	
RQ1-YES (TOTALS) Gr=507; GS=11	27	YES = 13	
TOTALS	32 Quotes	18 Interviews	

Appendix H: (RQ3) 215 Codes allocated to Themes with reasons for allocation

Code	Theme (with ID)	Allocation Reason
Building solutions	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	creative innovation in problem-solving.
Collaborative Innovation	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	team-based creativity and experimentation.
Creative Thinking	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	innovation and idea generation.

Curiosity to improve	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	experimental, learning-oriented curiosity.
Entrepreneurial	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	innovation and risk-taking behaviour.
Frugal Innovation	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	creative resourcefulness and experimentation.
In-house software development	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	innovation through internal creation.
Know Latest Technologies	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	innovation through technological learning.
Learn from Failure	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	experimentation and learning through iteration.
Problem Solving	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	creative innovation and exploration.
Process Innovation	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	experimenting with process improvement.
Promote curiosity	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	experimentation and learning orientation.
Analyse Scenarios	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	analysis for developing software
Hardware & Network Support	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	support hardware implemented
Remote Support	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	support remotely on internal/external services
System Support	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	support system implementation
Network Security	Innovation & Experimentation (ADHO-1)	providing network security services
Ability to flow easily	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	reflects flexibility and adaptive work patterns.
Act with speed	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	emphasises responsiveness and agility.
Agile Thinking	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	flexibility and rapid adaptation to change.
Embrace Change	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	adaptability and openness to new directions.
Fast-Paced	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	agility in action and quick adaptation.
Flexible Hours	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	adaptability in work arrangements.
Foreward Thinking	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	adaptability and proactive orientation.
Hot desking	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	adaptable, fluid workspace arrangements.
Remote Working for Fluidity	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	adaptability and flexibility in work mode.
Team Agility	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	flexible, adaptive teamwork.

Urgency in Response	Agility & Adaptability (ADHO-2)	quick adaptability to business demands.
Employee Empowerment	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	autonomy and self-directed decision-making.
Empowered Decision Making	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	granting autonomy and flexibility.
Flexibility against Policies and Procedures	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	autonomy challenging rigid rules.
Flexibility in Decision Making	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	empowered, adaptive judgment.
Freedom in managing tasks	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	autonomy and empowerment.
Informed Decision Making	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	autonomy supported by a multitude of awareness.
Non-Authoritarian Decision Making	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	empowerment and autonomy in leadership.
Self-Management	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	autonomy and empowered control.
Accountability	Empowerment & Autonomy (ADHO-3)	responsibility of autonomous action taken
Business Enablers	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition (ADHO-4)	aligning resources to strategic opportunity.
Customer Acquisition	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition (ADHO-4)	resource alignment to attract new clients.
Outward Looking	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition (ADHO-4)	external alignment and opportunity seeking.
Product Management	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition (ADHO-4)	alignment of resources with customer needs.
Sustainable Thinking	Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition (ADHO-4)	external, long-term resource alignment.
Create Belongingness	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and sense of inclusion.
Family-Like Belonging	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion, closeness, and belonging.
Friendly & Approachable	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and interpersonalisation.
Group Think	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and belonging leading to conformity.
High-performing Fun Culture	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion combined with motivation.
HR builds Cohesion	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	team unity and belonging fostered by HR.
Individuals who keep people together	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and social glue.
Inter-Relational	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion through interpersonal connection.
Internal Collaboration	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	belonging and cooperative teamwork.
Mutual Support	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion through mutual care.

No break in Communication	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and connectivity.
Own Language	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	belonging and identity within group culture.
Relaxed	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	belonging and informal social tone.
Team Approval	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion through collective agreement.
Team deals with issues internally	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	belonging and mutual resolution.
Team Trust	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	cohesion and reliability.
Teamwork	Cohesion & Belonging (CLAN-1)	belonging and collaboration.
Active Leadership Interventions	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive, people-focused management.
Employee Relations	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership in people relations.
Engage people to have understanding	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership through communication.
Helpfulness	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership and assistance.
Internal Supportive and Development	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership that develops others.
Leadership Development & Coaching	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership and growth.
Open Communication	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership through transparency.
People Feedback	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive open employee communication.
People Management	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	employee leadership and guidance.
Radical Candor	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive honesty in feedback.
Resolve People Issues	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership resolving conflicts.
Support is not our function but we do it	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive leadership mindset.
Supportive Accountability	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	helping while maintaining responsibility.
Transparent Internal Communication	Supportive Leadership (CLAN-2)	supportive transparency in leadership.
High Motivation	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	commitment and enthusiasm to perform.
Introverted Engagement	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	internal motivation and commitment focus.
Passion and Interest	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	motivation and internal commitment.
People Centricity	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	commitment to people and engagement.
People First	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	motivated by care for individuals.

Positive Attitude	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	motivated, committed outlook.
Positivitive Disposition	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	enthusiasm and engagement.
Self Improvement & Growth	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	commitment to personal betterment.
Self-motivation	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	inner commitment to perform.
Team Motivation	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	engagement and emotional commitment.
Work Life Balance	Motivation & Commitment (CLAN-3)	motivation sustained through balance.
Connected to Society	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	social responsibility and community orientation.
Formal Training & Refresher Course	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	employee development and learning.
Growth Opportunities	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	development and social advancement.
Knowledge Sharing	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	social development and collective learning.
Learning & Development	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	employee growth and social learning.
People Development	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	social and personal growth focus.
Retaining Talent	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	development and social retention.
Soft Skills	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	social and developmental competence.
Teaching & Education	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	social and developmental growth.
Training & Development	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	employee learning and growth.
Health and wellness innovation	Employee Social Development (CLAN-4)	experimenting with people well-being solutions.
Act with Integrity	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	honesty and shared ethical values.
Authenticity	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	trust and shared respect among colleagues.
Candor	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	honesty and openness in communication.
Equality & Fairness	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared values and mutual respect.
Ethical Practice	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared integrity and moral alignment.
Gratitude in Service	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared respect and appreciation.
Honesty on the Job	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared value of truthfulness.
Meaningful Purpose to serve	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared values and sense of meaning.
Recognition and Appreciation	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared respect and valuing contributions.

Respect	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared respect and core values.
Truth	Shared Values & Respect (CLAN-5)	shared honesty and respect.
BEE Compliance	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	governance and regulatory structure.
CCMA Disciplinary	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	governance, formal compliance, and structure.
Confidentiality	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structured safeguarding of information.
Financial Reporting for ESG	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	governance around ESG requirements.
Hierarchical	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structured governance emphasis.
Leadership enforcement	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structured authority and governance.
Policy Setters	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	governance and rule creation.
Remuneration policy setters	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structured governance over pay.
Strict Policies	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	governance and authority-based control.
Strong Policies & Procedures	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structure and rule-based operation.
Well Defined Roles	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	structured governance and clarity.
Professionalism	Structure & Governance (HIER-1)	Role defined and rules followed
Cross Functional Alignment	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination across departments.
Customer Audits	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	oversight ensuring process compliance.
Employee Induction	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordinated onboarding and oversight.
Finance is Support	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination of finance in service of structure.
Forecasting Knowledge	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination through planning and oversight.
Human Resourcing	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination of workforce systems.
Investigate issues	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination and oversight to identify problems.
People Placements	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	structured coordination of staffing.
Procurement for Manufacture	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination of supply operations.
Procurement for Retail	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	structured operational oversight.
Strategy Implementation	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordination of organisational initiatives.
Enterprise & Supplier Development	Coordination & Oversight (HIER-2)	coordinating with suppliers
Accounting knowledge	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	technical standardisation and consistency of process.
Accuracy in transacting	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	procedural precision and compliance.
Bookkeeping Function	Consistency & Standardisation	standardisation and financial

	(HIER-3)	consistency.
Building Processes (SOP)	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	consistency through standard operating procedures.
Compliance with Industry Standards	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	maintaining consistent quality.
Creditor OPEX transactions	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	consistent financial recording.
Creditors Functions	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardised accounting processes.
Debtors Credit Applications	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardised financial process.
Debtors Functions	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardised accounting processes.
Leasing Accounting	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardised financial procedure.
Leasing Compliance	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	adherence to standards and regulations.
Process Knowledge	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardisation and procedural expertise.
Qualified Training Only	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	consistency and certified standards.
Structured Process & Policies	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	consistent and standardised process.
Technical Knowledge	Consistency & Standardisation (HIER-3)	standardised technical proficiency.
Conformative behaviours	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	stability and predictability.
Conforming to DC	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	consistent adherence to established norms.
Infrequent Sprints	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	stability and slower pace of change.
Seperate Persona to rest of business	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	stability and role clarity.
Strong Infrastructures	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	stable, predictable organisational base.
Task driven work - isolation	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	predictable, stable individual tasking.
Tasked-Based Work	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	structured, routine stability.
Supplier Relationships	Stability & Predictability (HIER-4)	stability in supply chain
Automation in Ordering	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	efficiency through system control.
Budget conscious	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	efficiency and control of spending.
Cost conscient Rewards	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control of expenditures and reward efficiency.
Debtors Credit Checks	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control to manage financial risk.
Doing things right first time	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	efficiency and control of quality.
Fear-based enforcements	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control through strict enforcement.

Fraud Prevention	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control and efficiency safeguarding assets.
Internal Audit	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	efficiency and control verification.
Managing Client Funds	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control and efficiency in financial stewardship.
Managing Company funds	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	efficiency and oversight of budgets.
Quality Assurance	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control of quality and performance.
Responsibility	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control and accountability in operations.
Robust Risk Assessments	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control and oversight of risks.
Safeguard assets	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	protection and efficiency in resource use.
SLA Volume Driven KPI	Efficiency & Control (HIER-5)	control metrics and efficiency targets.
Calling people out	Competitiveness & Dominance (MARK-1)	assertive, competitive accountability.
Competitive behaviour	Competitiveness & Dominance (MARK-1)	rivalry and drive to outperform.
Negotiation Skills	Competitiveness & Dominance (MARK-1)	competitiveness and assertive influence.
Quoting Prices	Competitiveness & Dominance (MARK-1)	competitive pricing and sales focus.
Inbound Issue Management	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	resolve issues tasks.
Ambition & Achievement Motivation	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	goal-oriented performance mindset.
Continuous Performance Management	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement tracking and performance improvement.
Deadline-Driven	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement focus on timely results.
External Gratification	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement motivation driven by external rewards.
Goal Congruence	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	alignment of goals for performance.
High Performance	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement-driven excellence.
Improve Performance	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	goal attainment and results improvement.
Individual efforts	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	personal achievement and contribution.
Instant gratification	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement orientation to immediate results.
Job Excellence	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement orientation and high standards.
KPI	Achievement & Performance	measurement of achievement and

	(MARK-2)	performance.
Performance-Driven	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement and goal orientation.
Recognising Performance	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	acknowledging achievement and results.
Review Performance	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	monitoring achievement levels.
Reward Good Behaviour	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	performance-driven reinforcement.
Task focussed	Achievement & Performance (MARK-2)	achievement through focused effort.
Ambition to succeed	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	determination and drive toward success.
Energetic Disposition	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	drive and determination to succeed.
Growth Mindset for success	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	determination to improve and achieve.
Job Proactiveness	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	drive and self-starting initiative.
Resilient Mindset	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	drive and persistence in adversity.
Self-Driven	Determination & Drive (MARK-3)	determination and personal drive.
Customer Complaint Management	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer value improvement.
Customer efficiency	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	focusing on profitable service efficiency.
Customer Focus	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	prioritising customer satisfaction and outcomes.
Customer Pleasing	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	direct orientation toward client satisfaction.
Customer satisfaction	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	goal of value and profitability through service.
Customer service escalations	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	managing value delivery to clients.
Enhance Customer Confidence	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer value and trust building.
Inbound Sales	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer-focused acquisition channel.
Maintain Customer Relationships	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer retention and value.
Maximise Profits through efficiency	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	profitability and performance outcome.
Outbound Calling	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer-oriented activity for acquisition.
Outbound Sales	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	value creation through market outreach.
Product Delivery	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer-focused value delivery.

Product Knowledge	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	value and service competence.
Selling Products	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer and market-oriented activity.
Service Delivery	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	ensuring customer value delivery.
Service Excellence	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer performance and satisfaction.
Transparent Customer Communication	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	clarity in customer value delivery.
Upsale of Products	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	customer and profitability growth.
Value-adding Tasks	Customer Value & Improved Profitability (MARK-4)	activities enhancing customer or financial value.

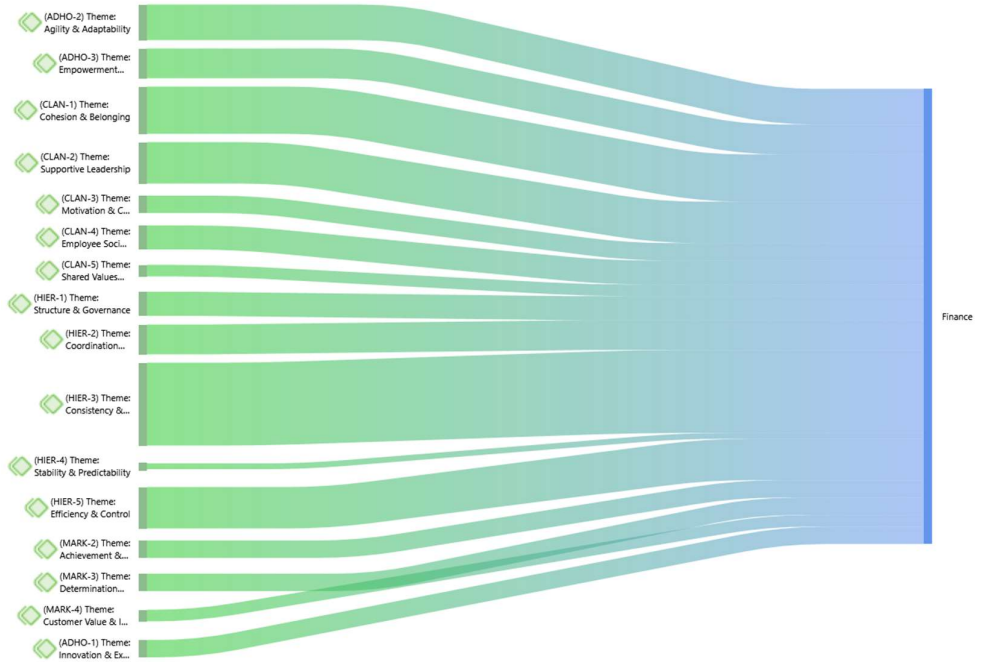
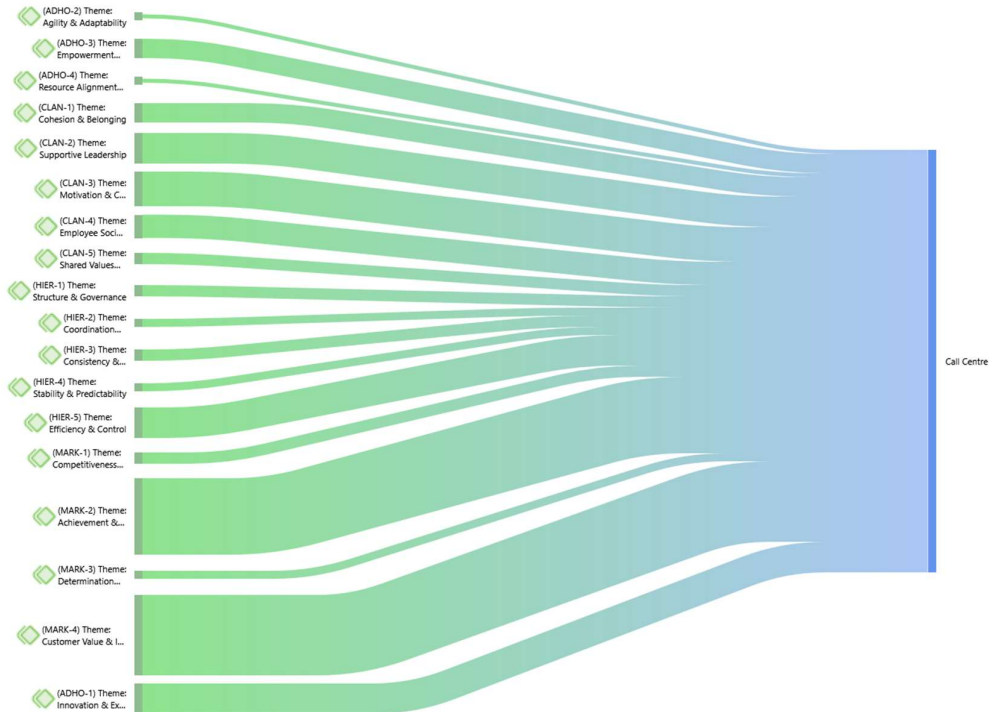
Appendix I: (RQ3) Themes compared to Departments

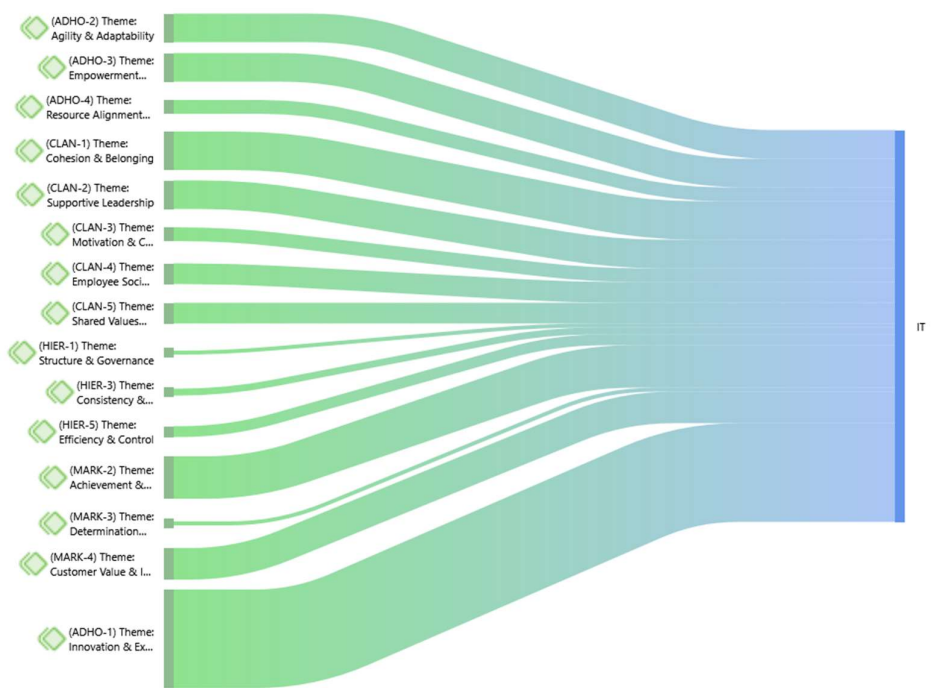
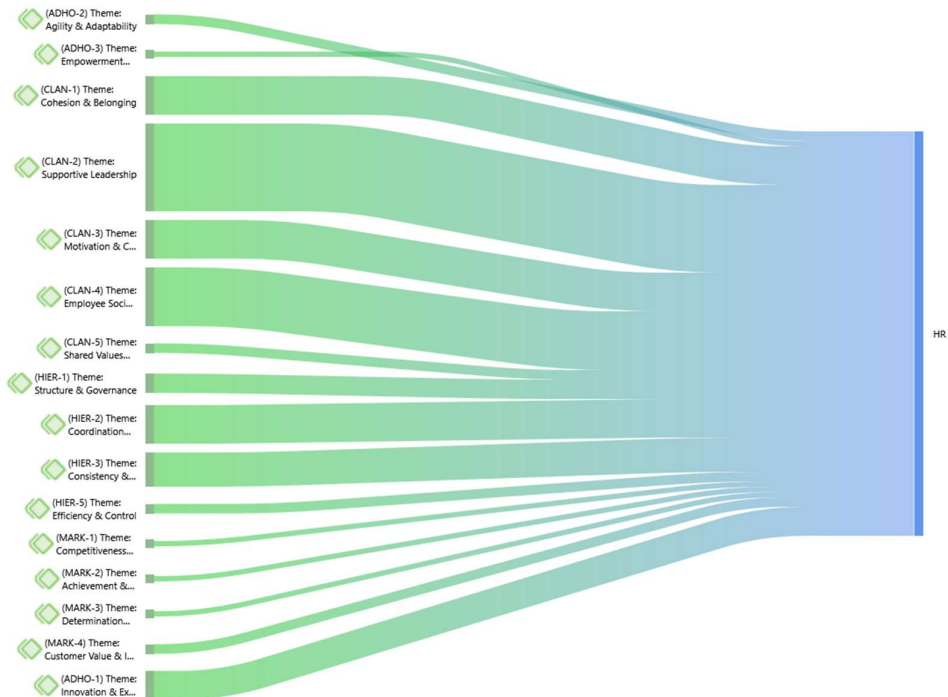
	Call Centre Gr=161; GS=3	Finance Gr=135; GS=3	HR Gr=120; GS=3	IT Gr=140; GS=3	Marketing & Sales Gr=140; GS=3	Procurement Gr=106; GS=3	Totals
(ADHO-1) Theme: Innovation & Experimentation Gr=61; GS=17	8	3	6	28	9	7	61
(ADHO-2) Theme: Agility & Adaptability Gr=29; GS=11	1	6	2	8	9	3	29
(ADHO-3) Theme: Empowerment & Autonomy Gr=29; GS=9	5	5	1	8	9	1	29
(ADHO-4) Theme: Resource Alignment & Customer Acquisition Gr=7; GS=5	1	0	0	4	0	2	7

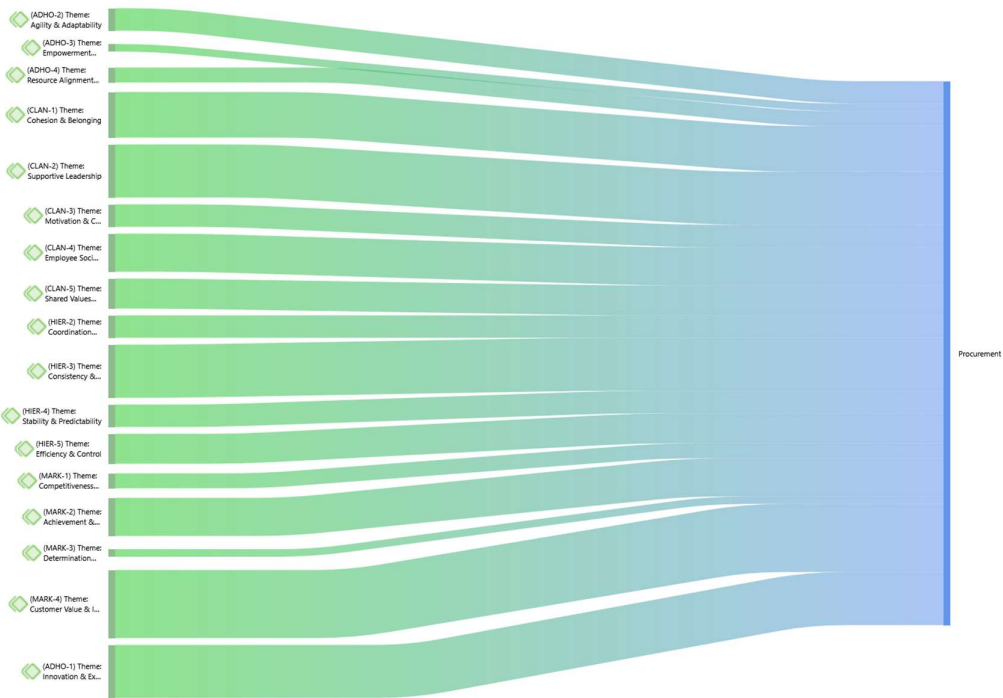
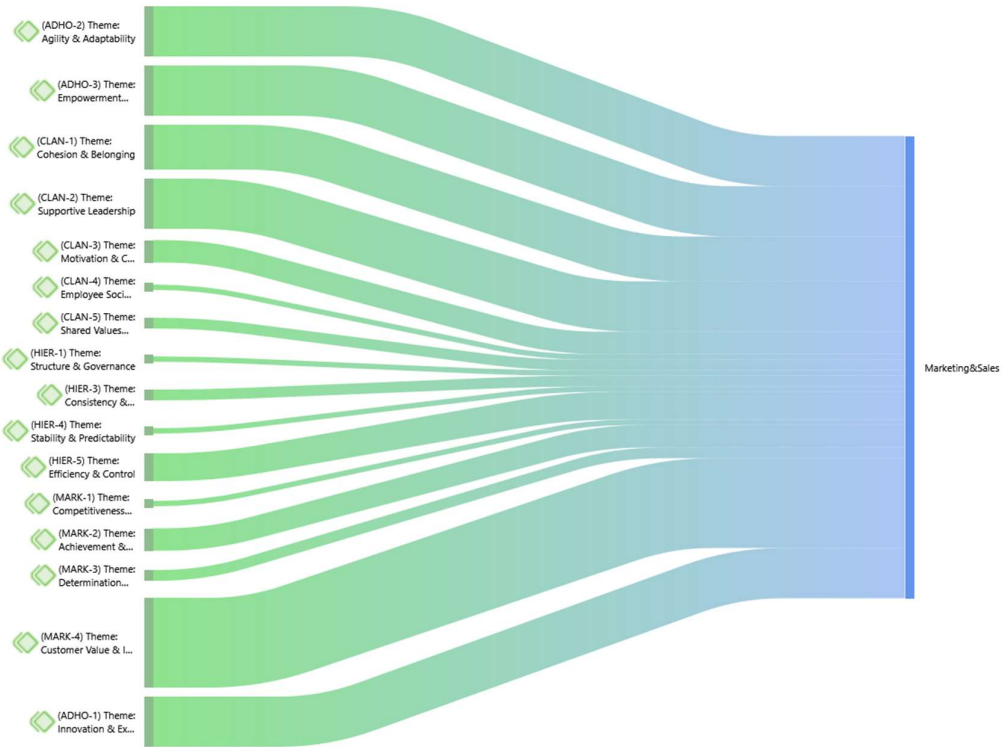
(CLAN-1) Theme: Cohesion & Belonging Gr=46; GS=17	5	8	8	11	8	6	46
(CLAN-2) Theme: Supportive Leadership Gr=57; GS=14	8	7	18	8	9	7	57
(CLAN-3) Theme: Motivation & Commitment Gr=31; GS=11	9	3	8	4	4	3	31
(CLAN-4) Theme: Employee Social Development Gr=34; GS=11	6	4	12	6	1	5	34
(CLAN-5) Theme: Shared Values & Respect Gr=19; GS=11	3	2	2	6	2	4	19
(HIER-1) Theme: Structure & Governance Gr=13; GS=12	3	4	4	1	1	0	13
(HIER-2) Theme: Coordination & Oversight Gr=18; GS=12	2	5	8	0	0	3	18
(HIER-3) Theme: Consistency & Standardization Gr=35; GS=15	3	14	7	2	2	7	35

(HIER-4) Theme: Stability & Predictability Gr=7; GS=8	2	1	0	0	1	3	7
(HIER-5) Theme: Efficiency & Control Gr=29; GS=15	8	7	2	3	5	4	29
(MARK-1) Theme: Competitiveness & Dominance Gr=7; GS=4	3	0	1	0	1	2	7
(MARK-2) Theme: Achievement & Performance Gr=45; GS=17	20	3	1	12	4	5	45
(MARK-3) Theme: Determination & Ambition Gr=10; GS=6	2	3	1	1	2	1	10
(MARK-4) Theme: Customer Value & Improved Profitability Gr=59; GS=20	21	2	2	9	16	9	59
Totals	110	77	83	111	83	72	536

Appendix J: (RQ3) Themes compared to Departments (graphs per department)







Appendix K: (RQ4) Theme identifications from reason codes:

		o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness: Against DC - A DC reduces 'belonging ness" to organisation Gr=3	o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness: No Objection to DC - Our DC is the OC and it works (4) Neutral Gr=6	o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness: Pro-DC - distinctive DC does not have any adverse impact (2) Gr=5	o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness: Pro-DC - Focus on DC improves objectives more than OC (1) Gr=14	o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness: Pro-DC - Leading the DC makes DC improve objectives (4) Gr=5	o (RQ4) DC vs. OC effectiveness : Pro-DC - Poor communication/interest of OC and Corporate Vision (3) Gr=7	Totals
Respondent Transcript Gr=37	A	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=68	B	0	1	0	3	0	0	4
Respondent Transcript Gr=32	C	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Respondent Transcript Gr=59	D	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Respondent Transcript Gr=57	E	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=36	F	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=46	G	0	0	0	2	0	0	2

Respondent Transcript Gr=44	H	0	0	2	0	2	0	4
Respondent Transcript Gr=49	I	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
Respondent Transcript Gr=48	J	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Respondent Transcript Gr=44	K	0	1	1	2	0	1	5
Respondent Transcript Gr=41	L	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Respondent Transcript Gr=55	M	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=40	N	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=40	O	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Respondent Transcript Gr=44	P	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=26	Q	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Respondent Transcript Gr=37	R	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Totals		3	6	5	14	5	7	40