

## Impact of Corporate Culture Towards Employee Belongingness: An Analysis of the Literature

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### ABSTRACT

Corporate culture plays a pivotal role in shaping employee belongingness, as alignment with organizational values enhances engagement, motivation, and productivity. This study aims to investigate the types of corporate culture implemented across organizations and analyze their impact on employees' sense of belonging. Using a systematic literature review, the study adheres to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Articles were sourced from reputable databases such as Scopus and ProQuest, yielding six relevant studies for analysis. The findings identified six primary types of corporate culture, particularly the informal communications, internal branding, employee-based brand equity, workspace preferences, activity-based work (ABW) space, and the informal bonding that all contribute positively to employees' sense of belonging. These cultures fostering employee performance and organizational commitment, improving sense of pride in the organization, promoting communal atmosphere, and Influencing Employees' Values and Behaviours. Notably, the review reveals a strong positive correlation between corporate culture and employees' sense of belonging highlighting its essential role in fostering a supportive and engaging workplace environment. These insights offer valuable implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and organizational effectiveness through strategic cultural initiati

## **INTRODUCTION**

Employee belongingness is a critical concept within corporate institutions. According to Kantos et al. (2023), belongingness fulfills essential psychological needs, including security and self-development, making it a vital factor in workplace dynamics. Qi (2024) highlights its significance, noting that belongingness contributes to improved mental health and a sense of safety. Similarly, Garg et al. (2018) emphasize that employees with a strong sense of belonging are more likely to exhibit positive organizational citizenship behaviors, such as assisting colleagues and committing to corporate tasks. This interconnectedness among employees enhances motivation and meaningfulness (Persson et al., 2018), which ultimately benefits the organization. Prieto and Talukder (2023) further assert that belongingness fosters employee happiness, reduces stress, and boosts productivity and efficiency. Moreover, Özsungur (2024) underscores how belongingness among employees and stakeholders enhances corporate responsibility, positively impacting both reputation and financial performance. These findings suggest that fostering a sense of belonging among employees is crucial for organizational success.

One significant factor influencing employee belongingness is corporate culture. Corporate culture encompasses the norms, values, and practices that shape employee experiences and interactions within the workplace. It can drive motivation, engagement, and retention. Riani et al. (2023) argue that corporate culture directly influences work motivation, which is positively correlated with employee performance. When employees resonate with an organization's culture, they are more likely to experience a sense of belonging, leading to increased engagement and productivity. Additionally, a strong corporate culture enhances employee attraction and retention (Prasetya & Kartikawangi, 2021). Communication and leadership style, key aspects of corporate culture, also play pivotal roles. Azmy (2019) explains that effective communication fosters employee engagement and retention, deepening their connection to the organization. Furthermore, leadership style significantly impacts belongingness; Michulek et al. (2023) note that positive leadership within a favorable corporate culture boosts employee engagement and performance, underscoring the importance of leadership in cultivating a sense of belonging.

Given the potential correlation between corporate culture and employee belongingness, a comprehensive understanding of corporate culture's characteristics and its contextual application is essential. Conducting a systematic literature review (SLR) is a valuable approach to aggregating and synthesizing diverse research on this topic. Unlike traditional literature reviews, SLRs are characterized by their objective, reproducible, and rigorous methodology, which enhances the consistency and validity of findings (Alshawabkeh, 2023). Despite the importance of this approach, systematic research on the influence of corporate culture on employee belongingness remains limited. For instance, Riani et al. (2023) examined corporate culture's effect on motivation and performance but lacked a systematic approach and excluded belongingness as a focal point.

Moreover, existing studies in this area are predominantly empirical, employing qualitative and quantitative methods. Katsaros (2022) utilized a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between inclusive leadership, employee participation in change, and workplace belongingness. Luo and Barnes (2020) assessed employee belongingness in the context of long-term sustainability in a case study of G Company in Bangkok. Gao et al. (2022) explored the impact of activity-based workspaces on employee belongingness. While these studies provide valuable insights, they do not systematically examine the interplay between corporate culture and employee belongingness.

To address this gap, the current research will employ a systematic literature review methodology following the PRISMA guidelines to explore how different types of corporate culture are implemented within organizations and assess their impacts on employee belongingness. This systematic approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between corporate culture and employee belongingness, offering valuable insights for both academic and practical applications.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section delves into the concept and significance of corporate culture, offering a comprehensive understanding of its definition and the numerous benefits it brings to organizations. Corporate culture plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational behavior, influencing employee satisfaction, and driving overall business performance. Additionally, this section explores the different types of corporate culture, providing an in-depth analysis of key models such as power culture, role culture, task culture, and people culture. Each of these cultural types will be discussed in detail below.

### **Definition Corporate Culture**

Over time, researchers and business leaders have recognized that corporate culture is a critical organizational competency that enhances operational efficiency, establishes company differentiation, and secures competitive advantage (Cucek & Mlaker Kac, 2020). Corporate culture is inherently intertwined with the culture of the individuals within the organization. It can be viewed as a multifaceted concept encompassing knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and the various skills and habits individuals acquire as members of society (Michulek & Krizanova, 2023). Extending this understanding to include elements such as symbols, language, values, norms, mores, and the typical behaviors, interactions, and communication patterns of individuals, corporate culture emerges as a distinct construct (Gorton & Zentefis, 2019).

Tulcanaza-Prieto et al. (2021) define corporate culture as a collection of unique characteristics that vary across organizations, encompassing conventions, norms, rules, symbols, ideologies, beliefs, rituals, and myths. This conceptualization incorporates the collective mental programming of organizational members, reflecting the company's history and societal context. It highlights how corporate culture shapes member identities. Similarly, Harel et al. (2020) describe corporate culture as a shared set of values and beliefs among employees at all levels of the organization, manifesting in its operational traits. Corporate culture also extends to corporate values, rules, and behaviors toward

key stakeholders, including customers, business partners, suppliers, and shareholders, ensuring employees are aligned with the organization's principles and practices (Nadanyiova & Durana, 2019).

Kovalová and Mackayova (2014) further define corporate culture as a comprehensive concept encompassing perspectives that are deeply engaged with cultural and symbolic phenomena. Corporate culture encompasses norms and assumptions pertaining to social reality; it constitutes a system of symbols and meanings; it serves as a framework through which an individual delineates their environment, articulates emotions, and formulates judgments. Factors of organizational culture, including attitudes, norms, and assumptions, influence behavior and foster a sense of identity. These cover comprehensive viewpoints on how a firm impacts the environment, particularly concerning employees.

### **Type of Corporate Culture Implemented**

The first type identified is workspace preferences (Dalessandro & Lovell, 2024), where employees could choose their preferred work arrangements such as onsite, remote, and or hybrid. This flexibility enabled individuals to tailor their work environment to their needs. The second is informal communication (Guo & Ayoun, 2024), characterized by casual, non-hierarchical interactions beyond work-related topics. The third type is internal brand communication, brand-oriented training, and leadership, particularly in educational institutions (Amani, 2022). Faculty members aligned with the organization's brand values, fostering a unified identity and acting as brand ambassadors to external stakeholders. The fourth cultural aspect is activity-based workspaces (Shang et al., 2021). These unassigned seating arrangements encouraged employees to move between spaces designed for specific tasks like meetings, focused work, or casual discussions.

The fifth type, employee-based brand equity, closely linked to internal branding (Yang et al., 2022), emphasized employees internalizing the company's principles. This was reflected in brand loyalty, advocacy, and alignment with organizational values. Lastly, trust, equality, and informal bonding are highlighted (Filstad et al., 2019). This culture focuses on fostering trust and collaboration through informal interactions in shared spaces, promoting an inclusive and supportive workplace where employees feel valued and equal. These diverse corporate cultures illustrate the significance of tailoring practices to enhance employee satisfaction, collaboration, and organizational success.

Moreover, Charles Handy offers a detailed framework for categorizing corporate culture into four distinct types: power culture, task culture, role culture, and people culture (Janicijevic, 2013). This study focuses exclusively on power culture, as it is the most relevant to the existing body of literature. The figure below shows the characteristic of power culture.

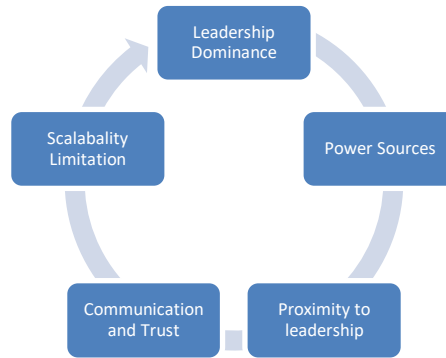


Figure 1. Key Characteristics of Power Culture

Power culture is defined by a centralized authority where the leader holds the majority of power, often derived from their charisma or control over key resources. The influence of other members is largely determined by their closeness to the leader. This culture relies on communication, mutual trust, and a high degree of adaptability, which allows for flexibility and quick decision-making. However, it also features low formalization, with minimal emphasis on structured systems, procedures, or formal limits on actions. While power culture can be effective in smaller organizations due to its simplicity and reliance on strong leadership, it often proves inefficient in larger businesses where centralized management struggles to address the complexities of scale.

A strong corporate culture such as power culture fosters a sense of belonging among employees by creating an environment in which they feel connected to the organization's values and mission (Azmi, 2019). This belongingness enhances their emotional and professional investment in the workplace. When employees perceive themselves as integral members of the organizational fabric, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and engagement, which positively influences their productivity and commitment (Riani et al., 2023). Furthermore, a culture that actively promotes inclusion, collaboration, and mutual respect can deepen this sense of belonging. Employees who feel valued and appreciated within their corporate environment are more likely to align their personal goals with the organization's objectives, thereby strengthening both individual and collective performance.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research utilized a systematic literature review (SLR) to explore the research topic comprehensively. As noted by Okoli and Schabram (2010), the primary purpose of an SLR is to systematically synthesize existing research to address practical inquiries. An SLR validates current practices, resolves discrepancies, identifies emerging trends, examines conflicting findings, and provides actionable recommendations for improved decision-making (Munn et al., 2018). The study was guided by a research question focusing on corporate culture and employee belongingness, with relevant literature sourced from prominent databases such as Scopus and ProQuest. To ensure methodological rigor and transparency, the study adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. According to Abelha et al. (2020), many SLRs lack robust scientific methodologies; the PRISMA framework addresses this by providing a standardized checklist to validate empirical findings. Liberati et al. (2009) describe PRISMA as a framework designed to enhance transparency and precision while minimizing the risk of bias in systematic reviews. The PRISMA process involves four key stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Scopus and ProQuest were selected for their complementary strengths. Scopus is renowned for its extensive journal coverage and is frequently utilized in bibliometric analyses (Singh et al., 2021). ProQuest, on the other hand, offers a vast collection of full-text journals spanning multiple disciplines, ensuring comprehensive access to relevant academic literature (Adhikari et al., 2020). To identify journal articles aligned with the research topic, a carefully curated set of keywords was developed, as outlined below:

Table 1. Keywords

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>The Structure and Configuration of The Keywords</b>
Corporate Culture Employee Belongingness	TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Corporate Culture” OR “Organizational Culture”) AND (“Employee Belongingness”) AND (“Sense of Belonging”)

Abelha et al. (2020) claim that systematic literature review research frequently lacks rigours in technique. In this context, PRISMA serves as a methodological norm. PRISMA is a methodological technique that enhances transparency and accuracy while reducing the likelihood of errors in systematic reviews, as defined by Page et al. (2021). Identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion comprise the four critical stages of PRISMA. The following phases are summarized in a PRISMA-based flow chart, as illustrated in the Figure 2.

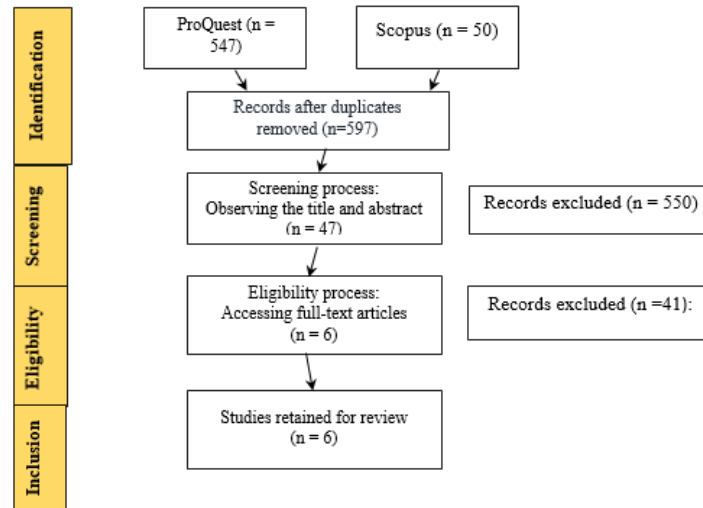


Figure 2. PRISMA Flow Chart for the Research Selection Procedure

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of a company is to cultivate a sense of belonging among employees, which has a significant impact on employee engagement, satisfaction, and overall organizational success (Chakraborty et al., 2014). It underscores the significance of initiatives that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness, which are essential for establishing an inclusive work environment in which employees feel valued and respected for their individuality. In this case, the role of corporate culture is critical to manifest the whole objectives of a company by considering the employees' viewpoints and comfort when working.

The following section will provide an in-depth discussion of the corporate culture implemented within organizations and their corresponding impact on employee belongingness particularly due to the power culture proposed by Janicijevic's theory (2013). This analysis will also draw upon relevant theoretical frameworks and existing literature to contextualize and support the findings. In addition, it will examine how these organizational cultures align with and contribute to broader theoretical perspectives on workplace dynamics and employee engagement.

### **The Impacts of Corporate Culture on Employee Belongingness**

The research identified four primary elements of power culture and its impacts on employee belongingness which include fostering employee performance and organizational commitment, improving a sense of pride in the organization, promoting a communal atmosphere, and Influencing Employees' Values and Behaviours as explained in the following paragraphs.

#### **Fostering Employee Performance and Organizational Commitment**

Informal communication facilitates the rapid and efficient spread of information within the workplace, which is crucial for promoting a sense of belonging. Caminong et al. (2023) suggest that organizations that prioritize open communication are more likely to cultivate an inclusive environment, which can positively impact employees' belongingness. Informal communication fosters

trust among employees, enhancing collaboration and problem-solving abilities within teams (Olckers & Enslin, 2016). Birhanu and Gugssa (2024) argue that organizations that nurture positive connections among employees are more likely to experience higher engagement and well-being. Informal communication, such as after-work conversations, can help employees build stronger bonds, particularly for new employees facing challenges integrating into the organization. As Endang et al. (2020) state, efficient internal communication is crucial in educational institutions for improving employee performance and fostering organizational commitment. Informal communication also supports staff engagement and creates a collaborative environment (Gafiatulina et al., 2020). The study confirmed that enhancing informal communication positively influences employees' sense of belonging to the organization (Guo & Ayoun, 2024).

Frequently, organizations have identified the necessity of a high level of work engagement and a strong organizational commitment as critical success factors for achieving improved performance (Rafiei et al., 2014). In the affective dimension, both engagement and organizational commitment are pertinent variables that have a strong positive correlation with the performance of employees; however, the normative commitment has a modest relationship (Cesário & Chambel, 2017). Two critical constructs are essential for comprehending the knowledge management process: organizational commitment and employees' job engagement. Actually, an organization that neglects the commitment and engagement of its employees is at risk of experiencing a decline in both individual and collective knowledge. Similarly, an organization that lacks an effective knowledge management process cannot guarantee that its employees are highly engaged or committed to their work (Gangai & Agrawal, 2015).

### **Improving Sense of Pride in the Organization**

Internal branding and employee-based brand equity, identified as the second and third corporate culture aspects, both emphasize internalizing organizational principles, reflected in the brand. These concepts are vital to influencing employees' sense of ownership and pride in the organization. Sultana (2018) highlights that effective internal branding enhances employees' sense of belonging by positively influencing their brand commitment and engagement. Familiarity with the brand and its principles encourages employees to identify with it, fostering a stronger sense of community and emotional attachment (Yang et al., 2022). Internal branding activities such as training courses and brand-focused events also improve staff relationships and interactions. For instance, brand appreciation days and festivities provide opportunities for employees to interact and share brand-related experiences (Xiong & King, 2020). Employee-based brand equity refers to the value employees contribute to the brand through their behaviors and attitudes, including their brand identification and commitment to fulfilling the brand promise (Liu, 2022). Research indicates that employees' sense of belonging increases when they feel integral to the brand's success (Yang et al., 2022), which leads to greater job satisfaction and encourages behaviors such as brand advocacy and organizational citizenship (Van Nguyen

et al., 2019). The study further confirmed that internal brand communication, brand-oriented training, and leadership focused on brand values positively influence employees' sense of belonging, particularly for teachers who align with their institution's values.

Additionally, Welander et al. (2017) confirm that the job resources at the organizational level are more strongly related to organizational pride than to workgroup pride, and that employees' perceptions of their job resources at the workgroup level are more strongly related to workgroup pride than to workgroup pride. It is proposed that organizational pride is a more specific potential emotional consequence of interaction and actual accomplishment, rather than the generalized emotional state that affective organizational commitment is conceptualized as well. Besides, pride significantly influences employees' attitudes and behaviors, particularly on the variable of organizational commitment (Brosi et al., 2018). There is a greater need for consideration of non-monetary motivational factors, such as dignity. Although this concept is of great importance in both scientific research and practical organizational environments, studies and research on the relationship between the two variables have been conducted only in a rudimentary manner (Aschenbrenner, 2018). Given this, it is imperative to comprehend the importance of pride and its consequences, particularly in terms of organizational commitment. To establish, maintain, and cultivate pride within the organization, the leader of the organization must develop a comprehensive and extensive strategy.

#### **Promoting Communal Atmosphere**

Another identified corporate culture, activity-based work (ABW) space, significantly impacts employees' belongingness. ABW spaces foster collaboration and community, which is essential for enhancing belongingness. Appel-Meulenbroek et al. (2011) suggest that ABW promotes spontaneous interactions and informal communication, crucial for relationship building. Informal bonding often occurs in ABW settings, where casual meetings and activities are encouraged. Haapakangas et al. (2018) explain that ABW settings facilitate easy communication and engagement across departments, promoting a communal atmosphere with spaces designed for social interaction, such as lounges or collaborative areas (Tiara & Gamal, 2021). Finally, trust and informal bonding, such as shared lunches, were also identified as significant cultural elements influencing belongingness. Lunch breaks, for example, offer employees an opportunity for deep conversations, strengthening relationships (Sianoja et al., 2017). These interactions, occurring in a relaxed environment, foster trust and camaraderie, which are essential for creating a positive work environment where employees feel valued and connected (Sianoja et al., 2022). This type of culture can also promote the communal atmosphere within the organization.

Additionally, in a communal relationship, employees assist one another without anticipating any in return, whereas in an exchange relationship, they anticipate a return on their favours. During an organizational relationship with its constituents, one party offers advantages to the other (Iqbal et al., 2018). This occurs because of the other party's prior provision of benefits or their anticipated future provision of benefits. As part of this reciprocal relationship, benefits are provided with the expectation of receiving them in return. Conversely, a communal relationship is characterized by the provision of benefits that are tailored to the requirements of the other party or to satisfy them, without the expectation of reciprocation (Atreja & Verma, 2024). Therefore, it is essential for companies to establish and maintain a communal relationship, which is akin to long-term exchange relationships, as it fosters a sense of belonging and enhances the long-term brand reputation. A communal relationship is essential for motivating employees to actively communicate and resolve issues within the organization, as demonstrated by empirical evidence (Moskovich, 2023).

### **Influencing Employees' Values and Behaviours**

Employee behavior is most significantly influenced by values, which are the fundamental level of organizational culture. Values encompass six dimensions, each of which symbolizes distinct components of organizational culture (LI, 2015). The first dimension is power distance. In culture, power distance is indicative of the structure and design of the organization, which in turn affects communication, attitude expression, and decision-making. Individualism and collectivism, which are the second dimension, have an impact on the working objectives of both individual and group work. This includes individual learning, ability, and values, which also have an impact on Conflict Resolution. The pursuit of working objectives is contingent upon gender characteristics, as indicated by the third dimension, masculinity and femininity. The motivational effects of the third dimension are demonstrated by those working objectives. The reward system, which is a component of human resources and practices, is also influenced by the dimensions of masculinity and femininity (Al-Sarayrah Safa et al, 2016). Uncertainty avoidance, the fourth dimension, demonstrates that this aspect of culture has the potential to both motivate and vanquish employees with job stress and challenge. The fifth dimension is long-term orientation. Numerous studies have demonstrated its influence on motivation, individual learning, and group decision-making. The sixth dimension, indulgence and restraint, delineates the employee's state of well-being. Even so, there is no evidence to suggest that this dimension influences employee behavior.

Similarly, corporate culture is a critical characteristic of an organization that is implied as the most fundamental aspect of organizational strategy (Bamidele, 2017). It enables the establishment of consistent employee behavior and assists new recruits in acclimating to the workplace and socializing in accordance with the organization's objectives. The efficacy and satisfaction levels of employees are significantly impacted by corporate cultures. Once employees are assured of their direct involvement in the organization, they are more likely to act with integrity and accountability in order to achieve organizational

objectives (Ahmad, 2020). Employees can enhance their ability to observe and query the expressive meanings of organizational rituals by observing the culture of the organization, which also provides a sense of distinctiveness to its members. Corporate culture provides employees with the opportunity to direct their dispositions toward work-related matters and to enhance their creativity, as they spend the majority of their lives working for organizations (Mdhlalose, 2024). Consequently, the efficacy of an organization is influenced by its culture. The welfare of a workplace is significantly influenced by its culture, both in the short and long term. Organizations that cultivate a positive culture experience an increase in their proficiency and performance.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study highlights the crucial role of corporate culture in fostering a sense of belonging among employees. Through a systematic literature review, four key types of corporate culture informal communications, internal branding, employee-based brand equity, workspace preferences, activity-based work (ABW) space, and informal bonding were identified as significant contributors to employee belongingness. These cultures FZstering Employee Performance and Organizational Commitment, Improving Sense of Pride in the Organization, Promoting Communal Atmosphere, and Influencing Employees' Values and Behaviours. The findings emphasize that alignment between organizational values and employee roles strengthens engagement, motivation, and commitment. Additionally, initiatives such as activity-based workspaces and brand appreciation events further support interpersonal relationships and inclusivity. This study provides actionable insights for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being and productivity through strategic cultural initiatives. Future research should examine how these cultural frameworks influence long-term organizational effectiveness and adapt to evolving workplace dynamics.

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