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## UNDERSTANDING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE THROUGH OCTAPACE PROFILE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The study was aimed at understanding the extent of OCTAPACE culture prevailing in the university. The study also emphasize on the comparative analysis of the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its OCTAPACE culture. The 40-item instrument used in this study is OCTAPACE profile proposed by Udai Pareek, which gives the profile of organization's ethos in eight values. These values are Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Authenticity, Proaction, Autonomy, Collaboration and Experimentation. A total of 60 university employees were selected for the study by the random sampling method. The study revealed that different dimensions of the OCTAPACE culture exist at varying levels in the university under study. So also the academic and administrative staff working in the university perceives the OCTAPACE culture differently.*

### KEYWORDS

OCTAPACE, Culture, University, academic and administrative staff.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The organizational culture is considered as an important aspect to enhance the organizational performance. According to Schein (1992) organizational culture is about the norms, values and beliefs that employees share in the organisation. In cognitive terms, organizational culture is often broadly defined as the shared values, beliefs, ideologies, and norms held by the organizational members that influence their behavior.

Any culture as well as organizational culture cannot be attained overnight. It is the manifestation of the values, traditions and beliefs which has been nurtured by the organisation throughout the years. Henry Mintzberg has rightly said that "Culture is the soul of the organisation --- the beliefs and values and how they are manifested. I think of the structure as the skeleton, and as the flesh and blood. And culture is the soul that holds the things together and gives it life force."

Organizations' are widely recognised in the public by the culture it has propagated. Every organisation is unique and therefore it has its own culture imbedded at the core of the organisation. It helps as a guide for the existing and newly joined employees to understand the way and style of the working in the organisation. It hypothesized to play a decisive role in the development of unique identity for any organisation and separates one organisation from the others.

Organizational culture is the values, traditions and beliefs of the organisation, which bestows the uniqueness to the organisation. Therefore it is identified by the Kreitner and Kinicki (2008) that "it is shared values and beliefs that underline a company's identity". Strong organizational culture builds up inherent strength in the organisation.

### OCTAPACE CULTURE

OCTAPACE gives us an eight dimensional look towards organizational culture. It measures the organization's values and beliefs in the following eight values. In the University setting this culture has multiple dimensions.

1. Openness- Openness is there when employees feel free to discuss their ideas, activities and feelings with each other. Openness is in both directions, receiving and giving. Both these may relate to ideas (including suggestions), feedback (including criticism), and feelings. The outcome is receiving without reservation, and taking steps to encourage more feedback and suggestions from students, colleagues and others.
2. Confrontation- It is bringing out problems and issues in to the open with a view to solving them rather than hiding them for fear of hurting or getting hurt. The outcome will be better role clarity, improved problem solving, and willingness to deal with problems, willingness of teams to discuss and resolve sensitive issues.
3. Trust- Trust is taking people at their face value and believing what they say. It is reflected in maintaining the confidentiality of information shared by others, and in not misusing it. The outcome of trust includes higher empathy, timely support, reduced stress, and reduction and simplification of forms and procedures.
4. Authenticity-It is resemblance between what one says and does. It depicts the genuineness and truthfulness of the employees. The outcome is the faith amongst each other and reduced distortion in communication between the members of the organisation
5. Proaction- It means taking the initiative, proper planning and thinking of alternative options and preventive measures before taking action. The outcome is it gives initiative to a person to start a new process, give a new thought or set a new pattern of behaviour.
6. Autonomy-It is giving freedom to plan and act in one's own sphere. The outcome is the mutual respect, individual initiative, willingness to take responsibility.
7. Collaboration-It is to seek help and also giving help to others to solve problems. It means working together. The outcome is the productive meetings, more joint decisions, more involvement of employees, and highest team spirit in the organisation.
8. Experimentation-It means using and encouraging to use new and innovative approaches to solve problems. The outcome is adopting innovative approach to the work, development of new ways, methods and procedure for improvement.

### THE NEED OF UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL

India is having the third largest university system in the world playing important role in the development of India as a dominant nation. Over the years, considerable progress has been made in higher education in the country. India has moved from an "elite" system of higher education to a "mass" education system. From 26 universities and 695 colleges at the time of independence, we have risen to 574 universities and 35539 colleges today. This is a 20-fold and 46-fold increase in the number of universities and colleges.

Unfortunately, the quality of higher education in India has not been aligned with the quantitative developments taken place during last 60 years. Hence no any university (with third largest university system in the world) in India has acquired place in the top 200 universities of the world. Therefore the quality of higher



education has become a major concern today. The quality of higher education depends firstly on the quality of its academic, administrative staff and students and secondly on the infrastructure and other things. As such all the organizational policies, procedures should be clearly directed towards attaining highest performance of all the relevant facets.

The organizational performance depends largely upon understanding by the employees the true spirit of the organization which has its roots in the culture it has cherished. It is truly observed that (John E., Karlewski, Terence D. Wingert, Michel H. Barbouche, 1996) culture serves as one of the most effective managerial control mechanism in the organisation because performance standards are enforced by the employees rather than top-down bureaucratic rules and regulations.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Krishna and Rao, (1997) carried out a comprehensive empirical study in BHEL, Hyderabad and found that openness in the organization is encouraging factor for middle and senior level managers. Venkateswaran, K.P. Sai (1997) in his study based of a large sector heavy engineering organisation located in Karnataka, found that, to a large extent, a favorable OCTAPACE culture was prevalent in a public sector undertaking in India. Alphonsa (2000), in his survey of private hospitals found that the perception of the supervisors about the OCTAPACE culture is satisfactory. Mufeed & Gurkoo (2006) attempted to study whole range of HRD climate in universities for which the University of Kashmir, Srinagar was selected as the main focal point of study. It is found that employees in general perceived moderate OCTAPACE culture. Mufeed SA, (2006) in his study found the existence of poor OCTAPACE culture in the hospitals. Srimannarayana M. (2007) conducted a study in local bank of Dubai and found that a good OCTAPACE culture was prevalent in the organization. Saxena and Tiwari (2009), in their study concluded that the OCTAPACE culture in Public sector banks is average and the perception of employees do not differs significantly on the basis of gender, qualification and designation but it differs significantly on the basis of age. Dr. S. Sarswati (2010), in her study established that OCTAPACE culture in software organizations is better than those in manufacturing organizations. Benjamin Akinyemi (2011) in his study of HRD Climate found higher level of OCTAPACE culture in the telecommunication company than that of insurance company.

The review of literature above highlights the important role played by OCTAPACE culture in the successful performance of organizations and is positively linked with organizational and employee performance. However, very few researches have been undertaken to study OCTAPACE culture in universities and higher educational institutions.

## OBJECTIVES

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the OCTAPACE culture in general at the university under study.
2. To study the difference in perceptions of academic and administrative staff within the University towards the OCTAPACE culture.
3. To provide meaningful suggestions for the development of organizational culture.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the basis of above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypotheses 1. There is having Excellent OCTAPACE culture for the academic and administrative staff in the university under study.

Hypotheses 2. There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its OCTAPACE culture.

Hypotheses 2(a). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Openness culture.

Hypotheses 2(b). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Confrontation culture.

Hypotheses 2(c). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Trust culture.

Hypotheses 2(d). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Authenticity culture.

Hypotheses 2(e). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Proactivity culture.

Hypotheses 2(f). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Autonomy culture.

Hypotheses 2(g). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Collaboration culture.

Hypotheses 2(h). There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its Experimentation culture.

### TOOL FOR MEASUREMENT

To identify the organizational culture at the University, the OCTAPACE instrument was used to collect data. This is a 40-item instrument, developed by Uday Pareek and is the proper instrument to study the organizational culture. As the first 24 questions measure the individual perspective of how much a particular item is valued in an organisation and the remaining 16 questions relate to beliefs that are widely shared in the organisation. As many as 8 dimensions were considered to study the organizational culture of the university.

### SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

The OCTAPACE instrument was administered on a sample of 60 employees (30 academic staff and 30 to administrative staff). Their responses were collected in their language of preference (Marathi or English). The questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents by the researcher. The precise instructions were given on the questionnaire to facilitate easy, timely and correct responses.

### VARIABLES

Organizational culture as dependent variable was measured by eight OCTAPACE items and the eight independent variables of OCTAPACE were measured by the total 40 statements comprising 5 statements for each variable. The eight variables as defined by Pareek (2003) are: Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Authenticity, Proaction, Autonomy, Collaboration and Experimentation. Respondents rate their organisation on eight aspects, using a four-point scale. The score ranges from 4 to 20 on each aspect.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY MEASURES

The Chronbach's Alfa test was used to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used for the study and the alpha value found is .825. This indicates a good internal consistency, based on inter-item correlation.

TABLE 1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Chronbach's Alfa	No. of Items
.825	60

**OCTAPACE CULTURE PERCEIVED BY THE STAFF (ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE) IN THE UNIVERSITY UNDER STUDY  
TENTATIVE NORMS APPLIED TO THE OCTAPACE PROFILE**

These norms are used by the various researchers to quantify the OCTAPACE profile in different organizations under study. Score below 'low value' shown in the norms table of that particular dimension are rated as 'Requires improvement'. Score above 'high value' are rated as 'Excellent'. And scores between low and high value i.e. scores close to low value are rated as 'Good', and scores close to high value are rated as 'Very good'.

**TABLE 2: TENTATIVE NORMS APPLIED TO THE OCTAPACE PROFILE**

No.	Variables	Low	High
1	Openness	13	17
2	Confrontation	10	16
3	Trust	10	14
4	Authenticity	10	14
5	Proaction	12	18
6	Autonomy	11	16
7	Collaboration	13	17
8	Experimentation	11	16

Source : Primary Data

**TABLE 3: MEAN OF THE EXTENT OF EIGHT ASPECTS OF THE OCTAPACE CULTURE PERCEIVED BY THE STAFF IN THE UNIVERSITY UNDER STUDY**

No.	Variables	Mean score	Rating
1	Openness	14.41	Very Good
2	Confrontation	12.26	Very Good
3	Trust	11.78	Very Good
4	Authenticity	10.33	Good
5	Proaction	12.91	Good
6	Autonomy	11.83	Good
7	Collaboration	12.48	Requires improvement
8	Experimentation	13.00	Very Good

Source : Primary Data

It is evident from the mean score of the eight aspects the score of Openness at 14.41, Confrontation score at 12.26, Trust score at 11.78 and the score of Experimentation at 13.00 lies between low and high value of the norms table and also are better close to the high value of that particular dimension in the norms table and hence are rated as 'very good' in the university.

Authenticity score at 10.33, Proaction score at 12.91 and Autonomy score at 11.83 lies between low and high value of the norms table and are close to the low value of that particular dimension in the norms table and hence are rated as 'good' in the university.

Collaboration score at 12.48 lies below the low value of the norms table, and hence it is rated as it requires immediate improvement. It implies that the Collaboration is perceived to be at the lowest in the university under study.

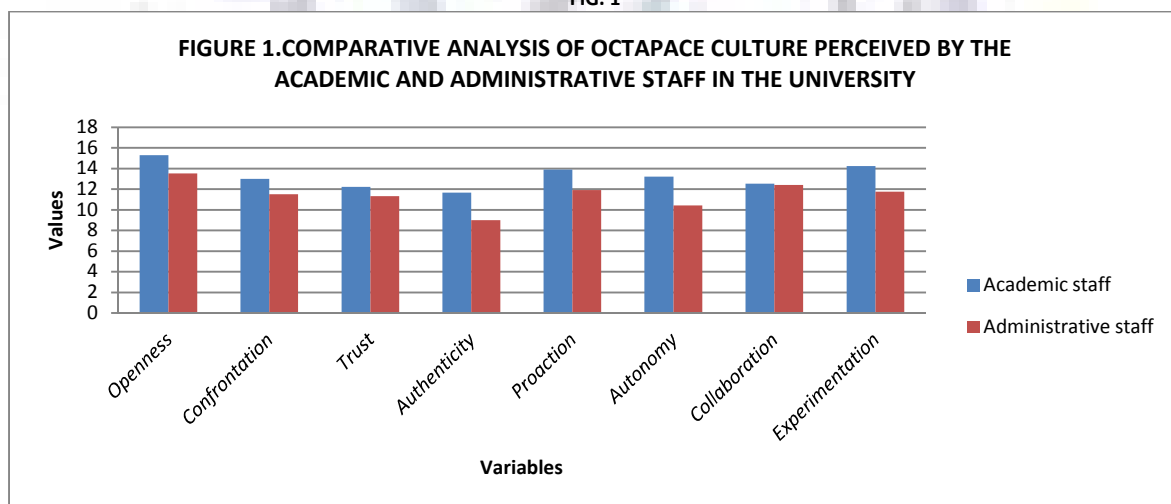
**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OCTAPACE CULTURE PERCEIVED BY THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN THE UNIVERSITY**

**TABLE 4: MEAN OF THE EXTENT OF EIGHT ASPECTS OF THE OCTAPACE CULTURE PERCEIVED BY THE ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN THE UNIVERSITY UNDER STUDY**

No.	Variables	Academic staff	Administrative staff
1	Openness	15.30 (Very Good)	13.53 (Good)
2	Confrontation	13.00 (Very Good)	11.53 (Very Good)
3	Trust	12.23 (Very Good)	11.33 (Very Good)
4	Authenticity	11.67 (Very Good)	9.00 Requires improvement
5	Proaction	13.90 (Very Good)	11.93 Requires improvement
6	Autonomy	13.23 (Very Good)	10.43 Requires improvement
7	Collaboration	12.53 Requires improvement	12.43 Requires improvement
8	Experimentation	14.23 (Very Good)	11.77 Good

Source : Primary Data

FIG. 1



**OPENNESS AND EXPERIMENTATION**

Academic staff score for the aspect of Openness at 15.30, is very close to the high value in the norms table and rated it as 'very good'. Contrarily, administrative staff score for the Openness is at 13.53 and is very close to the low value and rated it as 'good'. It implies that academic staff is more comfortable and feel free to share their ideas, activities, and feelings with each other without defensiveness than the administrative staff in the university. The academic staff score for the Experimentation at 14.23, is very close to the high value in the norms table and rated it as 'very good'. Contrarily, administrative staff score at 11.77 is very close to the low value and rated it as 'good'. It means the culture of using and encouraging to use new and innovative approaches to solve problems is perceived as 'very good' by the academic staff and the same is perceived by the administrative staff as 'good' in the University.

**CONFRONTATION AND TRUST**

Academic staff score for the Confrontation aspect at 13.00 and of administrative staff at 11.53, also the academic staff score for the Trust at 12.23 and of administrative staff at 11.33 lies between the high and low value of the norms table and hence rated by both as 'very good' in the university.

**AUTHENTICITY, PROACTION AND AUTONOMY**

As per the Table 4 above academic staff score for the Authenticity is at 11.67 and of the administrative staff is at 9.00, Proaction Score for the academic staff is at 13.90 and of the administrative staff is at 11.93 and academic staff score for the Autonomy is at 13.23 and of the administrative staff is at 10.43. It implies that the Authenticity, Proaction and Autonomy score of academic staff lies between the high and low value of the norms table and hence rated by them as 'Very good'. However the administrative staff score for the above three aspects lies below the low value of the norms table and hence rated by them as 'it requires improvement'.

**COLLABORATION**

The academic staff score for the Collaboration at 12.53, and of the administrative staff at 12.43 is below the low value of the norms table. It implies that the Collaboration is perceived to be at the lowest by both the academic and administrative staff in the university and requires 'immediate improvement'.

**HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

**HYPOTHESIS-1.** There is having excellent OCTAPACE culture for the academic and administrative staff in the university under study.

As has already been discussed through Table 3, OCTAPACE culture in the university under study was found to be 'Very good' for four aspects, "Good" for three aspects and "Requires improvement" for the one aspect namely collaboration. Therefore the hypothesis that, there is having Excellent OCTAPACE culture for the academic and administrative staff in the university under study is rejected for all the dimensions.

**HYPOTHESIS-2.** There is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the university towards its OCTAPACE culture.

To test the hypothesis 2 and its 8 sub-hypothesis t-test is used to check the significance in the means of the samples from academic and administrative staff.

Since P-value corresponding to Openness (0.005<0.05), Confrontation (0.019<0.05), Authenticity (0.0050<0.05), Proaction (0.026<0.05), Autonomy (0.000<0.05), Experimentation (0.000<0.05), is less than 0.05 so at 5% level of significance we can say that Openness, Confrontation, Authenticity, Proaction, Autonomy, Experimentation differs significantly in academic and administrative staff. Therefore Hypothesis 2 that there is no significant difference in the perception of the academic and administrative staff working in the University towards its OCTAPACE culture is rejected for 6 dimensions of the OCTAPACE culture.

Since P-value corresponding to Trust (0.173>0.05) and Collaboration (0.811>0.05), is not less than 0.05 so at 5% level of significance we can say that Trust and Collaboration doesn't differ significantly in academic and administrative staff.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

1. From the analysis it is observed and inferred that Openness aspect which implies that staff in the university should be more comfortable and feel free to share their ideas, activities, and feelings with each other without defensiveness was rated at high both by the academic and administrative staff of the university. It can be suggested that this aspect should be maintained and also improve to lead to the excellent level. As Openness at work place acts as the strength for the development of other OCTAPACE culture values in the higher educational institutions.
2. Confrontation and Trust are perceived as very good by both the academic and administrative staff in the university. It can be suggested that the university should take steps to preserve and build up these cultural values among the staff to an excellent level.
3. The cultural ethos in the form of Authenticity, Proaction and Autonomy are perceived as very good by the academic staff in the university, however the administrative staff feel that these aspects of OCTAPACE culture requires improvement. A different perception amongst the staff about the similar elements puts the challenge before the authorities to remove the discrepancies. Especially for the administrative staff, the authorities should exhibit high level of Authenticity implying that what it says it means and what it means, it says. The culture of pro-activity resolving issues should also be encouraged and also to ensure that the administrative staff is given freedom to plan and act in their own sphere.
4. The aspect of Collaboration which implies to seek help and also giving help to others to solve problems and working together is perceived as very low both by the academic and administrative staff in the university. This aspect requires major revival steps.

**CONCLUSION**

The present study attempts to discover the OCTAPACE culture of the university- highest seat of higher education. The analysis shows that the Openness is valued most in and Collaboration is valued at low level in the university under study. Openness and Trust are perceived as very good by both the academic and administrative staff in the university and for cultural ethos in the form of Authenticity, Proaction and Autonomy the perception of the academic and administrative staff differ. Overall, the OCTAPACE culture perceived by the staff is good. However the management should work for developing the organizational culture to an excellent level that requires the culture of Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Proaction, Autonomy, Authenticity, Confrontation and Experimentation.

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## APPENDIX

APPENDIX I : SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

Variables	Group	Mean	SD	SE Mean	T value	P value
Openness	Academic	15.3	2.78	0.51	2.9	0.005
	Administrative	13.53	1.83	0.33		
Confrontation	Academic	13.00	2.46	0.45	2.42	0.019
	Administrative	11.53	2.22	0.41		
Trust	Academic	12.23	2.9	0.53	1.38	0.173
	Administrative	11.33	2.09	0.38		
Authenticity	Academic	11.67	2.84	0.52	4.78	0.000
	Administrative	09.00	1.11	0.2		
Proaction	Teaching	13.90	3.42	0.62	2.28	0.026
	Administrative	11.93	3.27	0.6		
Autonomy	Academic	13.23	1.99	0.36	6.18	0.000
	Administrative	10.43	1.48	0.27		
Collaboration	Academic	12.53	1.83	0.33	0.24	0.811
	Administrative	12.43	1.36	0.25		
Experimentation	Academic	14.23	3.15	0.57	3.83	0.000
	Administrative	11.77	1.59	0.29		

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