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Organizational Culture as a Factor of Performance in Post-Integration Industrial Systems: A Case Study from the Pharmaceutical Sector

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Abstract: Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in post-acquisition integrations, particularly within complex industrial systems such as the pharmaceutical industry, where misalignment of values and procedures can compromise overall performance. The aim of this study was to identify the discrepancy between the perceived and desired organizational culture in a pharmaceutical company that underwent a process of acquisition and integration, as well as to examine the impact of these differences on employee motivation. The research was conducted using a case study approach, combining a quantitative survey based on Harrison's typology with qualitative interviews and observational techniques. The sample included 224 respondents from various organizational units. The findings reveal a dominant orientation toward task culture, alongside the presence of bureaucratic and power-oriented cultural elements, while employees clearly express a preference for more flexible and team-based structures. These discrepancies point to the importance of cultural transformation in improving motivation and organizational efficiency. It is concluded that aligning the actual and desired culture constitutes a critical strategic challenge for management during post-integration phases.

Keywords: *Organizational culture; post-acquisition integration; Harrison's typology; employee motivation; pharmaceutical industry; cultural misalignment; organizational effectiveness.*

1. Introduction

Organizational culture is one of the key factors shaping employee behavior, decision-making processes, the level of collaboration among employees, and the long-term performance of an organization. As a set of values, norms, attitudes, and beliefs that define "how things are really done" within an organization [1], organizational culture not only affects internal cohesion, but also plays a crucial role in an organization's ability to adapt to changes in its environment [2]. It permeates all aspects of organizational life and functions as an informal mechanism of control and guidance, directing employees toward the achievement of shared goals [3]. Culture can serve as a powerful source of competitive advantage [4], but also as a serious obstacle to progress and development if misaligned with the organization's strategy and the value orientations or expectations of its employees [5].

Modern management and organizational literature increasingly emphasizes the critical role of organizational culture in achieving business success. One of the most cited studies in this field, conducted by O'Reilly et al. (1991), demonstrated a clear connection between organizational culture and employee performance [6]. Specifically, employees who identify with the organization's values

and norms tend to show higher levels of commitment, productivity, and willingness to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals [7].

In the context of rapidly transforming markets, technological innovation, and changing ownership structures, the importance of organizational culture becomes even more pronounced - particularly in industries characterized by a high degree of regulation, responsibility, and precision, such as the pharmaceutical sector.

Despite the generally recognized significance of organizational culture, managers and decision-makers often overlook this aspect during strategic reorganizations such as mergers, acquisitions, and integrations. This is supported by Schraeder and Self (2003), who emphasize that organizational culture becomes especially salient during periods of major change, such as restructuring, acquisitions, and business expansion, when it can become a decisive factor for success or failure [8].

Empirical studies show that a significant portion of failed post-acquisition integrations stems from cultural misalignment [9]. Differences in values, communication styles, power dynamics, and leadership approaches can lead to conflict, decreased motivation, and loss of productivity [5]. Insufficient understanding of the existing organizational culture may result in numerous negative consequences, including internal conflict due to value clashes, lowered morale due to perceived disrespect or misunderstanding, resistance to change perceived as imposed, attrition of key personnel who no longer identify with the organization, and a decline in overall performance caused by disengagement, poor communication, and eroded trust within teams [10].

As Schein (2010) and Alvesson and Sveningsson (2015) argue, cultural misalignments are often the "invisible causes" of failed strategic change, as they remain beneath the surface of formal organizational structures [10, 11].

In industrial systems, especially those with high operational complexity, organizational culture is often linked to quality management, safety systems, operational procedures, and innovation capacity [2]. In this context, cultural analysis should not be seen as merely aesthetic or symbolic, but rather as a functional and operational component of overall organizational effectiveness [12]. This is particularly relevant in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, where standards and protocols cannot be effectively implemented unless they are supported by the underlying value orientations of employees.

At the theoretical level, organizational culture has been examined through various models and typologies. One of the most commonly applied frameworks in empirical research is Harrison's typology, which distinguishes four fundamental types: power culture, role culture, task culture, and person culture [13]. This classification not only enables the identification of dominant behavioral patterns, but also facilitates the analysis of alignment between the desired and existing culture, as well as understanding the cultural dynamics within organizational subunits. Unlike Hofstede's dimensions, which primarily focus on national cultures [14], Harrison's model has proven more suitable for mapping internal cultural differences within a single organization.

In addition to Harrison's framework, the model developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) offers a significant theoretical basis. Their Competing Values Framework (CVF) categorizes organizational culture into hierarchical, market, clan, and adhocracy types [15]. However, in the context of organizations that have undergone acquisitions, Harrison's typology allows for a more precise distinction between formal structure and informal cultural dynamics.

The critical contribution of existing studies lies in emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of internal cultural patterns and their impact on employee behavior during post-integration phases. In this regard, Buono (2003) highlights that successful integration requires not only technical and legal unification of systems, but also the emotional and symbolic assimilation of employees into a new value framework [16]. Likewise, Brodbeck et al. (2000) warn that ignoring micro-cultural differences within an organization can have effects similar to those caused by neglecting national cultural differences in international mergers [17].

At the national and regional level, research on organizational culture in the context of industrial systems remains limited. Pečujlija et al. (2012) point to the existence of pronounced differences between formal and informal structures in transitional enterprises, but rarely include deeper

empirical analyses of cultural patterns following acquisitions [18]. This study therefore seeks to fill a gap in the literature by offering an empirically grounded insight into the cultural reality of a transformed pharmaceutical organization.

The aim of this research is to identify the state of organizational culture in a pharmaceutical company that has undergone an acquisition and the integration of multiple business entities, to determine the gap between perceived and desired culture, and to examine the impact of these differences on employee motivation and performance.

The significance of the study lies in its practical applicability for managers in industrial and agri-engineering systems who face the challenges of integration, internal alignment, and performance improvement. Understanding cultural patterns and their influence on employee motivation can contribute to the development of more effective organizational change strategies, improvement of interpersonal relations, and increased process efficiency.

At the same time, this study contributes to organizational theory by offering empirical validation of Harrison's typology in the context of Southeast Europe, with particular emphasis on the pharmaceutical sector as a specific form of highly regulated industry. As several authors have noted, diagnosing organizational culture and aligning it with a company's strategic objectives is a crucial step toward long-term success. Therefore, the importance of this research is multifaceted, not only for the company itself, but also for all those seeking to understand how culture can be used as a tool for managing change and improving business performance [19, 20].

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Sample

The research was conducted in a pharmaceutical company operating in the Southeast European market, which had undergone significant organizational changes due to acquisition and restructuring in the period preceding the study. The sample included a total of 650 employees from various hierarchical levels and organizational units within the company. Of the 650 employees who received the questionnaire, 224 responded, yielding a total response rate of 34.46%. When designing the sample, attention was given to ensuring representation from both executive and managerial positions, as well as balanced participation of employees from different organizational units that had emerged through the merger of previously independent business entities. This approach enabled an analysis of cultural patterns and potential differences between long-standing and newly integrated employees, as well as the identification of possible subcultures. Although unstructured, the sample was sufficiently broad to provide meaningful insight into the cultural dynamics of the system.

2.2. Methodology

The methodological approach was based on a case study design, utilizing a mixed-methods strategy that combined both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The primary research instrument was a questionnaire based on Harrison's typology of organizational culture, adapted to the specific characteristics of the observed organization. The questionnaire was distributed electronically, and data collection adhered to ethical principles such as anonymity, voluntary participation, and internal approval from company leadership. Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with three respondents. The survey was conducted electronically between March 24 and April 17, 2025. In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews with management, analysis of internal documents, and observation of the organizational environment were conducted, enabling data triangulation and a deeper understanding of cultural dynamics. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were categorized and processed using thematic analysis. This methodological design made it possible to identify both dominant cultural patterns and potential subcultural differences within the organization.

3. Results

This section presents the key findings of the organizational culture study conducted in a pharmaceutical company following an acquisition process, with a particular focus on the differences between the perceived and desired culture and their impact on employee motivation and engagement.

3.1. General company information

The company “KP-A,” where the research was conducted, operates in the pharmaceutical industry within the Southeastern European market. The company underwent an acquisition process, which resulted in the consolidation of several smaller business units into a single integrated system. This process was accompanied by a series of organizational changes, including management restructuring, the redefinition of internal procedures, and changes in decision-making processes.

“KP-A” employs over 700 workers with diverse educational and professional backgrounds, including those who were part of the original organization prior to the acquisition, as well as newly hired or transferred personnel from the acquired companies. This personnel and organizational heterogeneity created a complex cultural structure characterized by pronounced differences in perceptions, values, and habits, thereby providing a fertile ground for conducting research on organizational culture and its impact on internal processes.

3.2. Distribution of respondents

The number and share of respondents in organizational units and other groups can be seen in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by structural units.

Organizational Unit	Sample	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Information Technology (IT)	36	25	69%
Human Resources (HR)	44	16	36%
Marketing and Sales (M&S)	106	25	24%
Finance and Accounting (F&A)	46	10	22%
Quality Control (QC)	108	46	43%
Production and Procurement (P&P)	210	95	45%
Legal Department (LD)	26	3	11%
Research and Development Center (R&D Center)	60	4	7%
Automated Warehouse (AW)	14	0	0%
Σ	650	224	

Table 1 shows that, at the level of organizational units (departments), the most active respondents were from the Information Technology Department, which accounted for 69% of the unit’s sample. This was followed by respondents from the Production and Procurement Department with 45%, the Quality Control Department with 43%, and the Human Resources Department with 36%. In the Marketing and Sales Department, 24% of those included in the sample responded, while the Finance and Accounting Department had a modest response rate of 22%. Even fewer respondents participated from the Legal Department (11%) and the Research and Development Center (7%), whereas no employees from the Automated Warehouse responded to the survey.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Groups.

Section	Group	Number of Respondents	%
Professional position in "KP-A"	Managers (senior managers and lower-level managers)	28	12.5
	Employees without subordinates	196	87.5
	Σ	224	100,0
Form of employment	Full-time employees in office/production facility	163	72.8
	Part-time employees working in the office or remotely (from home)	61	27.2
	Σ	224	100.0
Mode of Joining the Company	Joined KP-A through transfer from another organizational unit	154	68.8
	Voluntarily joined KP-A (self-initiated)	70	31.2
	Σ	224	100.0

It is noteworthy that among the respondents, there were significantly more full-time employees than those working part-time (Table 2), despite “KP-A” being a successful adopter of remote work, with many employees performing their tasks temporarily or permanently from home. The number of respondents in other groups corresponded to the size of these groups (fewer managers than employees without subordinates, and more individuals who joined through internal transfers than those who joined voluntarily).

3.3. Differences Between Actual and Desired Organizational Culture – Application of Harrison’s Typology

During the analysis, it became evident that, at the company level, the actual organizational culture did not differ significantly from the desired culture (Table 3). Both the actual and desired cultures were task-oriented, with corresponding average scores of 2.89 and 3.20, respectively. The power culture received the lowest average score in both cases.

Table 3. Comparison of Actual and Desired Organizational Culture at “KP-A”.

Culture Types	Actual Culture Average Score	Desired Culture Average Score
Power-oriented	1.71	1.30
Role culture	2.87	2.65
Task-oriented	2.89	3.20
Person-oriented	2.53	2.85

The results of the research conducted among employees of the company “KP-A” are graphically presented according to Desmond Graves’ model and indicate a discrepancy between the culture perceived as dominant in the daily functioning of the organization and the culture employees consider desirable (Figure 1). This difference was analyzed through four dimensions of Harrison’s typology: power culture, role culture, task culture, and person culture [21].

According to the respondents, “KP-A” is dominated by a formalized, task-oriented culture, where, according to Harrison (1992), teamwork, goal achievement, and high internal motivation are important [13]. At the same time, the role culture, characterized by a high degree of formalization and centralization, with an emphasis on working according to precise rules and procedures, was

perceived similarly. The role culture was followed by the person culture, which values individuals and interpersonal relationships. The least dominant culture was the power culture, where leaders are dominant and privileged.

The most desirable culture was generally considered to be task-oriented, implying teamwork, flexibility, goal orientation, and a more horizontal distribution of responsibilities. Employees emphasized that such a model would facilitate communication, increase motivation, and enable faster problem-solving, especially in departments involved in product development and project management. Orientation toward the person and the role was also regarded as important.

Employees at “KP-A” rated power culture as the least appropriate, where, according to Harrison’s typology, privileged leaders dominate. In a power culture, people are motivated by rewards and punishments, and in the worst cases, leadership is enforced through fear.

An interesting finding is the presence of power culture in employees’ perceptions, which relates to centralized decision-making and reliance on the authority of individuals rather than team structures. Although this dimension is not dominant, its existence suggests the possibility of power concentration in the hands of a narrow group of managers, which may further contribute to feelings of alienation among lower-level employees [13].

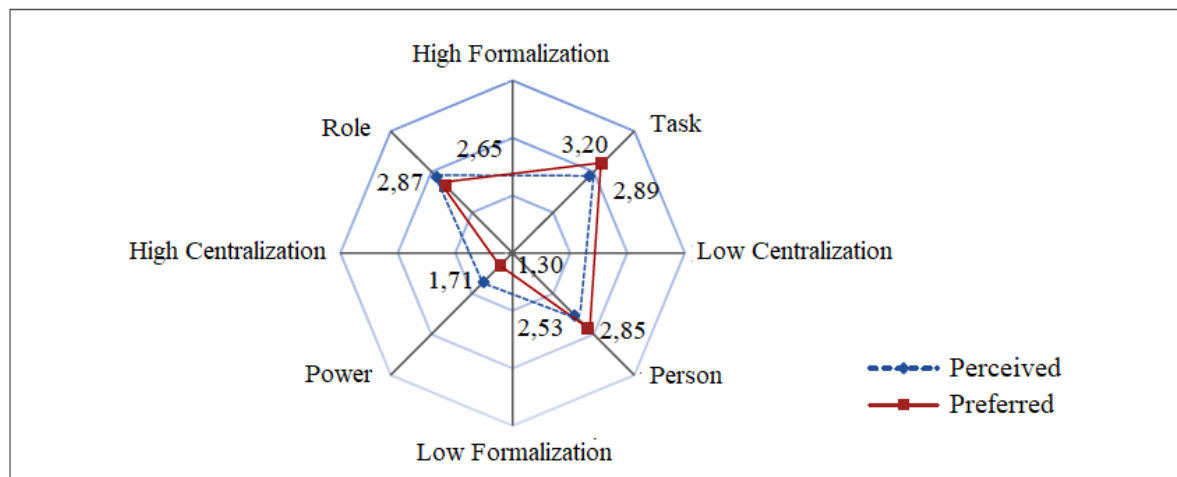


Figure 1. Actual and Desired Organizational Culture of KP-A According to Graves’ Model.

On the other hand, the person-oriented culture, although desirable among individuals in creative and expert departments (e.g., quality control, research and development), remains marginal. Employees recognize the importance of individual contribution, but within the current system, they do not feel that such contributions are institutionally acknowledged or rewarded.

Thus, disruptive or inappropriate behaviors are present in the culture to varying degrees across the observed company. Given that the impact of organizational culture is most pronounced during periods of change and mergers, where inconsistencies in values and beliefs can be particularly traumatic at the individual, group, and organizational levels [9, 22], diagnosing the culture becomes crucial to ensuring the organization’s success during integration and transformation processes [19, 20]. Without understanding and aligning cultural differences, resistance, decreased motivation, and a decline in overall performance may arise [10].

Therefore, based on theory, in order to establish a strong culture that harmonizes employee behavior and stabilizes company operations, subcultures across all organizational units must be analyzed, and actions to change the organizational culture should be initiated where necessary.

Overall, the results confirm a structural misalignment between the existing and the desired cultural model. This gap not only points to an organizational imbalance but also potentially explains the lower levels of motivation and engagement expressed by some employees in certain organizational units. This highlights the need for cultural transformation to be treated as a strategic

priority in the organization's future development, rather than merely as an abstract or “softer” aspect of business.

3.4. Assessment of Employee Satisfaction with Organizational Culture at KP-A

Figure 2 presents the assessment of organizational culture by employees at “KP-A” at the company-wide level. The culture was characterized by a strong sense of cohesion, shared beliefs, values, and attitudes, as well as easy and pleasant communication among employees. The evaluation was conducted using a five-point Likert scale, allowing for five levels of assessment: “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “neutral,” “dissatisfied,” and “not satisfied at all.”

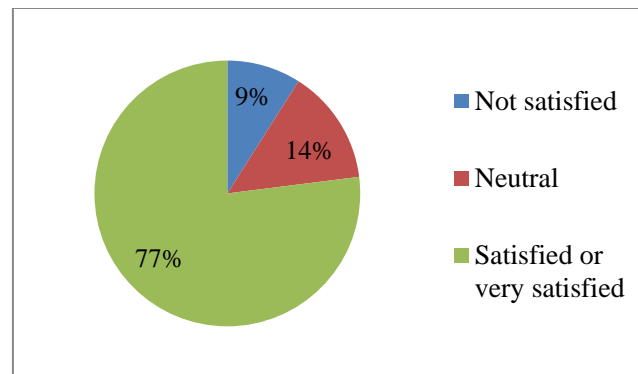


Figure 2. Employees’ Assessment of Organizational Culture at “KP-A” (All Employees).

Out of 224 respondents, 172 (77%) reported being “very satisfied or quite satisfied” with the organizational culture at “KP-A,” while 31 respondents (14%) rated the culture as “neutral” – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A total of 21 respondents (9%) indicated that they were “not satisfied” with the organizational culture, and no one selected the option “not satisfied at all” (Figure 2).

According to Schein (2010), a prerequisite for the holistic and effective functioning of an organization is a strong sense of cohesion among its members [10]. Organizational cohesion is reflected in commonly accepted values, norms, and beliefs shared by employees, which stem from a collective identity and mutual trust. The stronger the sense of belonging to the organization and its goals, the greater its internal coherence, which, in turn, enables better coordination, faster adaptation to change, and a stronger team spirit. Schein (2009) also emphasizes that culture functions as a “glue” that binds individuals into a unified system of action, and that cohesion represents its operational expression in everyday work and interactions [1].

The study shows that a very large proportion of employees were satisfied with the organizational culture. However, it can be said that the 21 employees (9%) who rated the culture negatively did not feel a strong sense of belonging or pleasant communication and perceived a lack of shared values and attitudes within the company. Schein (2010) emphasizes that in order for an organization to function successfully, the sense of cohesion among employees must be strengthened [10].

4. Discussion

The research revealed that the actual organizational culture at KP-A does not differ from the desired culture. Both the actual and desired organizational cultures are task-oriented, where teamwork and goal achievement are valued, and high internal motivation is supported by a decentralized management style and commitment at all levels of leadership. A study on organizational culture under conditions of market liberalization by Arsenijević et al. (2017) also showed the dominance of task and role cultures, along with identified subcultures of power and

support, indicating the complexity of the cultural structure during transformation processes [23]. However, within a task-oriented culture, young people with new knowledge may be perceived as a threat to older employees, as the contribution of senior staff may no longer be sufficient [24]. Goal achievement is based on a shared vision rather than on procedures and rules.

Behavior associated with task-oriented culture was generally preferred; however, according to the employees, behavior typical of role culture dominates in the company's actual practices. In this type of culture, work according to precise rules and procedures. i.e., bureaucracy, is emphasized. According to Harrison's theory, such a culture is characterized by low employee trust, strong control, and a perception that individuals are easily replaceable. Responsibility is delegated downward, reducing the need for constant managerial intervention. Achieving efficiency through rule-breaking is not acceptable. Procedures, roles, and chains of command are designed to ensure stability, but they may not provide a sufficiently rapid response to change. Opportunities for advancement are better secured for individuals in senior management. The advantages of such a culture include stability, order, rationality, and consistency, which support fairness and efficient operations [21].

Power-oriented behavior was not considered the most appropriate, but respondents believed that such behavior still exists. For example, subordinate employees recognize that people are influenced, guided, and directed by authoritative individuals who exercise power through praise and punishment. At the same time, there was a desire for people to be led by a shared commitment to goal achievement, rather than by leadership based on power and sanctions.

Findings from various studies on organizational culture have revealed that a wide range of issues related to work organization or integration are associated with different organizational mergers [9]. Kiefer (2002) emphasizes that during changes and mergers, "where inconsistencies in values and beliefs can be extremely traumatic at the level of the individual, group, and organization," the organizational culture is significantly affected, making culture diagnosis crucial for ensuring the success of a merging organization [22].

Based on theory, it can be suggested that lower employee ratings of organizational culture may result from cultural inconsistencies and conflicts related to the merger and changes in organizations or organizational units, or from the fact that employees have not yet adapted to the social system of KP-A and need more time to do so. To understand whether organizational members are indeed facing a cultural issue and to explain how changes have affected them and how they have integrated, Hofstede et al. (2010) recommend conducting interviews with relocated employees [10]. The theory also confirms the importance of stability versus uncertainty, suggesting that the more stable and coherent an entity is, the stronger the culture it can develop. At the same time, for newly hired or transferred employees, a relatively forced relocation may have posed a significant challenge, requiring them to adapt and integrate into the new social system.

In theory, one of the key bottlenecks in organizational research is considered to be respondents' willingness to answer all questions [25]. The author also viewed willingness to participate as the most complicated aspect of conducting the research. This concern proved to be justified. Employees from some organizational units either did not respond to the questionnaire or responded at very low rates, and those responses were therefore excluded from the analysis. Based on theory, the above may indicate that individuals who were transferred from other organizations or organizational units experience a sense of misalignment within KP-A or lack the trust and willingness to collaborate with their colleagues.

It was found that employees want to change existing behaviors across various areas and are internally motivated to pursue change and improve job satisfaction. Employees tend to accept task-related challenges, seeking the best possible ways to complete their work. However, they feel expected to operate within a role-based culture, where tasks must be performed strictly according to predefined rules and procedures. According to the respondents, the decision-making process is characterized by adherence to formal channels and procedural rules, yet there is a preference for a consensus-based approach that ensures employee understanding and support for decisions.

Respondents expressed a preference for being expected to show high internal motivation and competence, and indicated a readiness to take initiative and even challenge leadership views if

necessary for goal achievement. At the same time, they feel expected to carry out their duties responsibly and reliably, and to avoid actions that might surprise or embarrass managers. It is believed that employees joining KP-A must learn how to collaborate with colleagues, become team players, and develop working relationships with others. Moreover, employees prefer to have clarity about which resources are available to help them perform better, take initiative, and apply their skills and knowledge, findings that are also supported by Nikčević (2014) [26].

According to the research, the organizational culture that would best suit KP-A is not yet fully developed. By fostering shared values and attitudes, a stronger sense of belonging to the organization can be achieved. The behaviors and values that employees wish to change have already been described. Since employees' assessments of the actual culture differ, at least to some extent, from their own preferences, inappropriate behaviors must be addressed through employee involvement, the creation of synergy, and motivation to ensure better interaction within the company.

Based on both theory and empirical evidence, it can be concluded that changing the organizational culture may be key to positively influencing company performance and employee satisfaction. As the company's success and development depend on a strong sense of belonging among its members and their willingness to support organizational goals, leaders should define an organizational culture that aligns with the values of all employees and take those values into account during its development.

5. Conclusion

The company "KP-A" has grown over the past decade amid a whirlwind of organizational changes. Reorganizations have been implemented both in structure and management, while goals and core values have been reformulated. However, achieving success and meeting objectives requires a strong organizational culture that motivates employees.

Organizational theory has shown that organizational culture is most influenced by changes and mergers, and that a strong sense of belonging among employees is a prerequisite for overall company effectiveness and success. Changes and mergers can have an extremely traumatic and, consequently, demotivating effect on employees.

To prevent negative impacts and ensure business success, diagnosing organizational culture is of great importance. Previous research on organizational culture has demonstrated its strong influence on company performance.

The results revealed that the actual organizational culture of KP-A does not differ from the desired culture. Both the actual and desired cultures at KP-A are task-oriented, emphasizing teamwork, goal achievement, and high internal motivation. At the same time, according to employee perceptions, the organization's actual behavior is dominated by role culture characteristics, where adherence to precise rules and procedures is important, and power culture behaviors were also identified. It became evident that employees with different backgrounds and positions perceive the organizational culture differently. This confirms the position of researchers such as Buono et al. (1989) [27], Hofstede et al. (2010) [10], and others that organizational mergers represent a serious challenge to organizational culture. The reason is that employees transferred to KP-A from other organizations rated the organizational culture lower or did not respond to the survey, and a lower rating or reluctance to cooperate indicates cultural inconsistencies or conflicts related to mergers and organizational changes.

It became clear that employees want to change existing behaviors on various issues, and to ensure better interaction within the organization, inappropriate behaviors must be changed through employee involvement, achieving synergy, and motivating employees.

Although the research provides valuable insights into the organizational culture of KP-A and its connection to business performance, it is necessary to highlight certain limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalizability of the findings. First, this is a case study of a single company, meaning the results cannot be automatically generalized to all companies in the pharmaceutical or other sectors. Additionally, the sample may have been subject to selection biases. A portion of

employees who joined the company through acquisitions showed a lower degree of participation in the research (some did not respond to the survey), which may indicate some response bias and limit the comprehensive view of subcultural differences. Moreover, since the study predominantly used self-report instruments (surveys and interviews), there is a possibility of social desirability bias affecting the accuracy of certain results.

In light of the identified limitations, numerous opportunities emerge for future research in the field of organizational culture, particularly within the context of the pharmaceutical industry and organizations undergoing transformational processes. Primarily, future studies should include a larger number of companies from the same or related sectors to enable comparisons and identification of patterns that transcend the specifics of a single organization. This would ensure greater external validity and generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, it is desirable to conduct longitudinal research that monitors changes in organizational culture over time, especially during phases of integration, restructuring, and strategic development. Such an approach would provide valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural change and its impact on organizational effectiveness, employee motivation, and business performance across different periods. Future research could also be expanded through a multimethodological framework, incorporating not only surveys and interviews but also observations in real work environments, analysis of internal communications, focus groups, and experiments involving organizational interventions. Additionally, combining multiple theoretical models of organizational culture would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of organizational values and norms. A particularly important avenue for further investigation is the examination of the influence of leadership and managerial styles on the formation and sustainability of organizational culture, as well as the relationship between cultural integration and the organization's innovative potential. In today's context of digitalization and hybrid work, it is also recommended to analyze emerging forms of organizational culture that develop in virtual or decentralized environments.

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