DOES CORPORATE CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE EMPLOYEE WORK PERFORMANCE? EVIDENCE FROM THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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Abstract:

Research background: Nowadays, corporate culture has become a strategic priority for companies. It is an important part of business, as it indicates the overall trend in employee behavior and work relations. At the same time, corporate culture helps employees understand the company, identify with the company's goals, and become part of the company. In addition, corporate culture affects work performance or the type of leadership used by company managers.

Purpose of the article: The main aim of our research is to find out whether corporate culture affects the work performance of employees and, at the same time, corporate culture influences employee work performance through leadership.

Methods: The reliability of the data was examined through reliability analysis. Subsequently, four hypotheses were confirmed. A mediation model was used to confirm the hypotheses. A mediation model is presented in statistics as a mechanism or process that tries to explain, name, or describe the observed relationship between an independent and a dependent variable through the inclusion of a third explanatory variable.

Findings & Value added: Based on the reliability analysis, we have shown that the data is reliable. Using the mediation model, we proved the truth of all four hypotheses. This was proven based on the p value and the lower and upper confidence interval results. All investigated factors were significant at the α 0.05 significance level. Therefore, it can be concluded that corporate culture has an impact on leadership. Corporate culture has an impact on the work performance of employees. Leadership has an impact on the work performance of employees. Leadership mediates the impact of corporate culture on employee performance.

Keywords: Company Culture, Leadership, Work Performance, Moderation, Reliability.

JEL Classification: C12, M12, O15,

1. Introduction

Culture is the sum of all human ideas, acts, and outcomes that are unconnected from our natural inclinations and can only be sparked by those who have undergone the process of learning. Organizational culture is at the heart of what makes them function. Activities that involve member injunctions and bans define the dos and don'ts that govern member conduct. As a result, culture encompasses what may and cannot be done, allowing it to be utilized as a guideline for organizational operations (Paais et al., 2020). A multidisciplinary notion, corporate culture lacks a standard definition, paradigm, or method (Lorincova et al., 2022).

To achieve company goals, such as creating the right work mentality with high dedication and loyalty to their work and providing leadership, direction, motivation, and proper work coordination from the leader to his subordinates, a business must be able to compare the perceptions or perspectives of employees and managers. It is difficult to develop employee job satisfaction since it requires consistency between work motivation, leadership, and the organizational culture of the firm, which may be well adapted and accepted by all employees (Paais et al., 2020).

The institution also must have an organizational culture that serves as a road map for ongoing activity performance, boosting staff productivity. An organization's values, beliefs, and operating procedures make up its organizational culture. This fact outlines the environment in which the employee works and the appropriate behavior required of him to meet the organization's specified goals. The objectives, vision, purpose, and development plans of an organization are reflected in its organizational culture, which is seen as a set of rules for that company's operations (Ha, 2020).

In general, corporate culture is beneficial to the development of the company. The foundation for establishing the perfect corporate environment is organizational culture, which encompasses larger and deeper features (Paais et al., 2020).

The validity of corporate culture and its influence on company performance, profitability, and sustainability is continually supported by authors like Deal and Kennedy (1982), Hofstede et al. (2007), Cheung et al. (2011), Coyle (2018), and others.

In several academic domains, there are international professional disputes about leadership. Whether leadership is universal or culturally distinctive is interesting to consider from a cross-cultural standpoint. Different leadership attributes can be exhibited in different cultures based on studies pointing to cultural variances in the conduct of leaders. Studies provide crucial insights into cross-cultural leadership in the sense that while people from different cultures may find a particular idea of leadership appealing, the values and behaviors they associate with leadership may be different (Yang et al., 2022).

Work performance may be impacted by self-efficacy, personality, work environment, independence and growth, work values, how much work interferes with family life and how much family life interferes with work, work motivation, work engagement, career competences, etc. (Michulek et al., 2022b).

The principal aim of this research is to find out whether corporate culture affects the work performance of employees and, at the same time, whether corporate culture influences employee work performance through leadership.

The paper is divided as follows: The introduction is devoted to the concepts of corporate culture, leadership, and work performance and to their mutual relationships proven in research from different authors. The methodology section portrays the used methods of mediation and reliability analysis. In this section, we established hypotheses too. The result is a part where we present our findings. The discussion is devoted to comparing the findings of this research with

the results of other authors. The last part is the conclusion, which consists of a summary of findings, research limitations, and future research by the authors.

1.1 Corporate culture

Organizational culture is a phenomenon that describes the distinct identity of a certain organization. According to some definitions, "culture" refers to a company's organizational structure, its employees' collective programming, or the significance of specific concepts to its constituents. Because it is founded on established norms and values that are expressed in an organization's organizational procedures, organizational culture serves as both a distinctive distinguishing trait of an organization and an indicator of the many ways in which a given corporation runs (Bulinska-Stangrecka et al., 2021).

In the 1980s, corporate culture became a prominent study topic and management strategy in the USA in response to allegedly successful Japanese rivals (Tse et al., 2022). It is a type of occurrence that occurs in everyday life when people's opinions and ideals have an impact on how employees behave (Chen et al., 2021).

An organization's mission, goals, practices, knowledge, and habits are reflected in its corporate culture, which is a complex collection of actions. Corporate culture is described as a set of values, beliefs, conventions, and behaviors that influence interactions between employees and management as well as with outside parties in the management literature (Hasan 2022). A growing corpus of research demonstrates that business culture fosters resilience in times of crisis while lowering risk-taking (Hirtle et al., 2020) or unethical behavior (Li et al., 2021; Graham et al., 2021).

An understanding of organizational culture is that it is a set of common beliefs that members of a group have developed based on their personal experiences (Bulinska-Stangrecka et al., 2021). Corporate culture is a set of shared fundamental beliefs that an organization has used to solve its problems with external adaptation and internal integration. These beliefs have proven to be effective, so they should be taught to new employees as the proper perspective, way of thinking, and way of feeling with regard to these issues (Isensee et al., 2022).

In the opinion of Lorincova et al. (2020), this reflects the character of the company. A proper corporate culture should be an overview of how the organization as a whole and its individual workers have behaved and acted to achieve both the company's strategic goals and the personal objectives of the employees. In general, it is thought that perceptions of climate serve as a mediating factor in the relationship between organizational traits and worker attitudes, motivation, and output.

Corporate culture, which is regulated through peer influence and the social construction of reality in contrast to formal control mechanisms codified in the form of rules and procedures, fosters positive feelings of solidarity and a greater sense of autonomy among individuals within the organization (Li et al., 2021).

It is clear that corporate culture influences employee work satisfaction and mental health as well as preventing disputes, ensuring continuity, facilitating and making coordination and control easier, and reducing employee uncertainty. Additionally, it may serve as a major motivator and competitive edge (Lorincove et al., 2020).

According to Guiso et al. (2015), corporate culture centers around teamwork, integrity, a sense of humility, and working with the end customer and is the secret ingredient for client acquisition.

Despite the variations in how corporate culture is defined, most authors include a few universal traits in their descriptions. Patterns of fundamental presumptions about employee conduct, values that influence behavior by drawing a line between what is acceptable and what

is not, and symbols that communicate values to staff members are some examples (Lorincova et al., 2022).

1.2 Leadership

Since the core duties of an entrepreneur are believed to be leadership, opportunity discovery and creation, opportunity action and commercialization, and opportunity identification and creation, leadership has always been an essential component of entrepreneurship (Audretsch et al., 2022).

In teams, the primary responsibility of the leader is to take care of everything that must be done for the team to succeed (Marques-Quinteiro et al., 2022). According to Whales et al. (2022), leadership is exhibited through interactions between people that are founded on long-lasting bonds.

In addition to planning, organizing, and regulating, leadership is one of the most fundamental and crucial aspects of business management that aids in goal achievement (Kosiciarova et al., 2022). Leadership is the capacity of the leader to persuade and guide followers to accomplish organizational goals (Diana et al., 2020). Klein (2019) stated that leadership style can be considered a consistent pattern of behavior played by leaders to influence others.

In today's fast-paced and fiercely competitive environment, leaders must be innovative to thrive and compete. As a result, leadership actively contributes to influencing, adjusting, reshaping, and innovating society (Vargas, 2015). Every stage of life offers opportunity for people to develop as leaders through experiences and endeavors of daily living (Eva et al., 2021).

According to Kiersch et al. (2021), the roots of character-based leadership development take place in the pursuit of self-awareness. This result expands on earlier empirical findings that character-based leadership growth among executives and global leaders is correlated with self-awareness.

The impact of empathy, as an emotional quality or as it is expressed by a leader, on outcomes is an intriguing subject. Jian (2022) provided more detail on this subject, describing how the leadership practice of developing empathy is based on relational ethics and occurs in discussion with a collective other as well as in synchronous dyadic practice.

The study of leadership is extensive. Anders (2021), for instance, discusses the creation of a comprehensive theoretical framework and practical design for leadership development that includes evidence-based communication interventions that address the context of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and strategic communication to support both authentic leadership and transformational leadership capacities.

Gardner et al. (2021) claim that through upholding fundamental values and principles, leaders attempt to control the stresses and temptations of organizational life. If they are successful, they may serve as an example for others to aspire to the same degree of interpersonal sincerity.

Day et al. (2021) discuss the negative aspects of leadership. They are cognizant of the reality that many leaders in higher positions are unethical from a leadership standpoint. These people frequently utilize coercion, dominance, or manipulation to further their agendas.

1.3 Work performance

According to Akob et al. (2020) or Haerani et al. (2020), individual performance affects organizational performance. The output of an employee will influence organizational performance, which means that employees' individual and collective conduct has some control over the performance of the organization since motivation has an impact on it.

According to Diana et al. (2020), performance refers to the work results attained by employees both individually and collectively within an organization. Employee performance is the job that they do to carry out their tasks in line with their responsibilities. The capacity, perseverance, and independence necessary to accomplish the organization's vision, purpose, and goals must be demonstrated within a certain time frame, without breaking the law, and in line with morals and ethics. Performance is influenced by several elements, including leadership, company culture, and work environment.

In much research, work performance is regarded as one of the most crucial dependent variables. Generally speaking, an individual's job performance refers to the quantifiable actions and outcomes that help them achieve a particular objective. Additionally, knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, and personality qualities are linked to job performance (Viswesiaran et al., 2000).

Many factors can affect work performance. The authors investigated, for example, durability (Walpita et al., 2022; Kappagoda et al., 2014), internal marketing communication (Michulek et al., 2022a), kitting (Tetik et al., 2021), "green" office buildings (Elnaklah et al., 2020), communication barriers (Michulek et al., 2022b), learning orientation (Haldorai et al., 2021), use of social networks at work (Jia et al., 2020), or sleep depth (Okajima et al., 2021).

Oswald et al. (2022) discovered, for instance, that collaborative learning positively influences individual job performance, individual job performance positively influences individual motivation to learn, and collaborative learning fully mediates between individual motivation to learn and individual job performance. As a result, factors like motivation or using coworking spaces can affect performance.

The ability of people to apply their knowledge and abilities to the necessary task has a substantial impact on how well they perform at work. Additionally, a variety of elements, including a worker's demographic, psychological, and economic traits, have an impact on their work behavior and actual work performance (Bagum et al., 2021).

2. Methodology

The data were collected via an online questionnaire, with a minimum sample size of 384 respondents. This sample was calculated with a margin of error of five percent and a confidence level of ninety-five percent of the total number of 4,413,260 inhabitants of the Slovak Republic over the age of 18. The total number of responses received was 389. The data was collected from August 1, 2022, to October 1, 2022. The results were then processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 statistical program.

489 individuals who work for enterprises in the Slovak Republic and represent different economic sectors filled out the questionnaire. Of the total number of respondents, 240 (49.08%) were men and 249 (50.92%) were women. The sample's gender distribution was equal. There were the fewest replies (18–25), with 102 (20.86%). There were 153 responders (31.29%) at the age 26-45 and 234 (47.5%) who were over the age of 46. The most of respondents work in industry supply of electricity and gas- 56 (11.45%); construction industry- 49 (10.02%) or transport and storage- 47 (9.61%). An overview of the composition of enterprises by size can be seen in Table 1.

We will perform a reliability analysis right away to confirm the data's dependability. We are interested in replies as a whole when analyzing reliability, not in specific responses. Individual question groups can be combined to create a homogeneous whole on the basis of prior research or analyses, such as principal component analysis, factor analysis, and others. We will then employ mediation analysis.

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Table 1- Multiplicity of company according to size of company

| Size of company	Multiplicity	Multiplicity in percentage
Mikro	167	34.15%
Small	106	21.68%
Medium	88	18.00%
Large	128	26.18%

Source: Own processing

The relationship between two other variables is said to have a "link" thanks to a variable of the mediator kind. The mediator is frequently thought of as a mechanism that affects one variable while influencing other variables. The researcher may look at whether a third variable could explain or account for the link between these variables when testing for a mediator effect.

In statistics, a mediation model is defined as a method or process that uses the addition of a third explanatory variable to attempt to explain, name, or describe the observed link between an independent and a dependent variable. It is also frequently referred to as the variable mediator. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables is explained by the mediator variable.

Based on this, we decided to conduct a mediation analysis, with the help of which we wanted to reveal whether corporate culture affects work performance and, at the same time, whether corporate culture affects work performance through leadership. For a better idea, the given relationship is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1- Hypothesis model
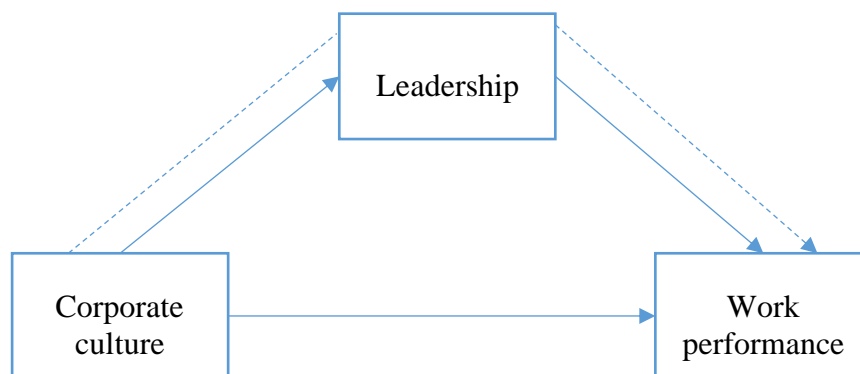
Source: Own processing

It is also necessary to establish the hypotheses of our research. The hypotheses were established as follows:

H1: Corporate culture has a statistically significant impact on the work performance of employees.

H2: Corporate culture has a statistically significant impact on Leadership.

H3: Leadership has a statistically significant impact on the work performance of employees.

H4: Leadership mediates a statistically significant impact of corporate culture on employee performance.

3. Results

The results of the reliability analysis showed us that the data can be considered reliable as the result of Cronbach's Alpha is at the level of 0.837, as we can see in Table 2. As authors dealing with statistics, consider values higher than 0.65 or 0.8, depending on the author. The result of the analysis meets both of the mentioned values. It is true that the closer the value of Cronbach's Alpha is to 1, the higher the reliability. We can also see from this table that we examined three variables, namely the level of corporate culture, the level of leadership, and the level of work performance.

Table 2- Results of Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.837	3

Source: Own processing

We have to determine which of the three variables—the level of corporate culture, the level of leadership, and the level of work performance—will be the dependent, independent, and mediating variable, and at the same time, the variables will also be marked with a symbol. We present our decision in Table 3.

Table 3- Variable type

Variable name	Variable type	Note
Corporate culture	Independent variable	X
Work performance	Dependent variable	Y
Leadership	Mediator variable	M

Source: Own processing

Table 4 shows us the influence of corporate culture on leadership. From the table, we can see that the value of the coefficient is 0.663 and the standard deviation is 0.041. However, we are most interested in the value of p. This value is at the level of 0.000, which is less than the level of significance α 0.05 at which the given analysis is performed. Looking at the upper and lower confidence intervals, we see that they are greater than zero, so it can be argued that it is significant at the α 0.05 significance level. From this, it can be concluded that hypothesis H1 is valid and therefore corporate culture affects leadership.

Table 4- Influence of Corporate culture on leadership

Outcome Variable: Leadership						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.592	0.351	0.801	262.914	1.000	487.000	0.000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.186	0.168	7.046	0.000	0.856	1.517
Corporate culture	0.663	0.041	16.2145	0.000	0.582	0.743

Source: Own processing

Note: R-sq:R-squared; MSE:Mean squared error; F: F-value ; df1: Degrees of freedom 1 ; df2: Degrees of freedom 2 ; p:p-value of test; se: Standard error ; t: t-value of test ;LLCI: Low confidence interval, ULCI: Upper confidence interval.

Table 5 shows the influence of corporate culture on work performance and, at the same time, the influence of leadership on work performance. From the table, we can see that the value of the coefficient for corporate culture is 0.4918 and the standard deviation is 0.0353. However,

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we are most interested in the value of p. This value is at the level of 0.0000, which is less than the α 0.05 significance level at which the given analysis was performed. When we look at the upper and lower confidence intervals, we see that they are greater than zero, so it can be argued that this variable is significant at the α 0.05 significance level. From this, it is possible to conclude the validity of hypothesis H2. Corporate culture has an impact on the work performance of employees.

The value of the coefficient for leadership is 0.2639, and the standard deviation is 0.0315. The P value is at the level of 0.000, and, at the same time, the values of the lower and upper confidence intervals are higher than zero, so we can conclude that leadership is significant at the significance level α 0.05. From this, it is possible to conclude the validity of hypothesis H3. Leadership has an impact on the work performance of employees.

Table 5- Influence of Corporate culture and Leadership on Work performance

Outcome Variable: Work performance						
Model Summary						
R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.749	0.561	0.387	310.395	2.000	486.000	0.000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	1.133	0.123	9.216	0.000	0.891	1.374
Corporate culture	0.492	0.035	13.950	0.000	0.423	0.561
Leadership	0.264	0.032	8.377	0.000	0.202	0.326

Source: Own processing

As we can see from Table 6, the overall effect of variable X (corporate culture) on variable Y (work performance) is at the level of 0.667. After adding the mediator M (leadership), the effect dropped to 0.492, which is what the direct effect tells us. When we look at the indirect effect, the value is 0.175. Since the upper and lower bootstrap confidence intervals do not include zero, we can conclude that the role of the mediator is significant at the significance level α 0.05. This confirmed our hypothesis H4, and thus leadership mediates the influence of corporate culture on employees' work performance.

Table 6- Effects of X on Y

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0.667	0.030	21.958	0.0000	0.6070	0.726	0.705
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
0.492	0.035	13.950	0.0000	0.4225	0.561	0.520
Indirect effect (s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Leadership	0.175	0.027	0.122	0.230		
Completely standardized indirect effect (s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Leadership	0.186	0.028	0.130	0.242		

Source: Own processing

Note:BootSE:Bootstrap standard error; BootLLCI: Bootsrap low confidence interval; BootULCI:Bootsrap upper level interval .

We recreated Figure 1, but now also entered the coefficient values and standard deviations into it, resulting in the path diagram shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2- Path diagram
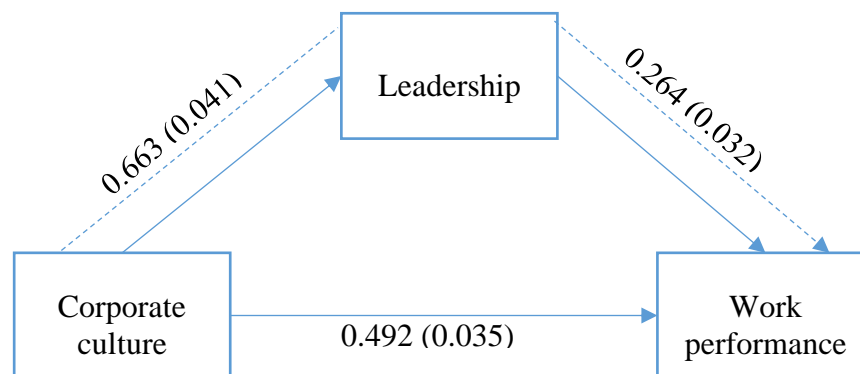
Source: Own processing

4. Discussion

In their investigation of the effects of crucial organizational characteristics (organizational culture and excellent leader performance) on the general job satisfaction of public relations professionals, Meng and Berger (2019) tested the combined mediating effects of work. They confirmed that business culture and leader effectiveness can have an impact on the engagement, trust, and job satisfaction of PR professionals.

The examination of the data revealed that while employee job satisfaction was not considerably impacted by organizational culture or work motivation, performance was positively and significantly impacted by both. Leadership does not affect performance, despite having a big impact on employee work satisfaction (Paais et al., 2020).

Al-Khajeh (2018) pointed out that organizational performance is associated with leadership style and has both positive and negative effects on performance. It depends on the type of leadership. For example, the autocratic and democratic styles had a positive effect, while the charismatic style had a negative effect. Saleem et al. (2020) revealed in their research the indirect influence of leadership on the work performance of employees. The results of Lai et al. (2020) were also similar.

According to Maamari and Saheb (2018), an effective leadership style combined with a positive company culture enhances worker performance. Diana et al.'s findings (2021), which showed that democratic leadership implementation supported by a positive organizational culture resulted in employees performing better, were similar.

5. Conclusions

A strong and attractive corporate culture is one of the most valuable assets in the competitive environment of today. The significance of a good corporate culture has been brought to light by a number of crises because it has a direct impact on the success of the company, its image, employee loyalty, and how customers view it.

In our research, we substantiated the validity and topicality of the investigated issue through the theoretical knowledge of a large number of foreign and domestic authors. Reliability analysis showed us that the data were reliable and were subsequently used for further research. We managed to achieve the set goal, and we proved that the corporate culture directly affects work performance, and at the same time, through the leadership style, it affects the work performance of the employees. We achieved the results using mediation analysis, and all four

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established hypotheses were confirmed. We compared the results of our research with the results of foreign authors' research, and we can conclude that we achieved the same results.

We can consider the fact that we focused on only two factors, namely corporate culture and leadership, as a limitation of the research. The fact that sectors of the Slovak economy, such as mining and quarrying, water supply, activities in the field of real estate, and others, were not represented can also be considered a limitation of the research.

We were able to demonstrate the impact of corporate culture on work performance and that leadership mediates the impact of corporate culture on work performance. We are aware that there are many other factors that influence work performance, as stated by the research of many researchers. In our future research, we want to deal with the investigation of other factors, such as motivation, work engagement, the occurrence of pathological relationships in the workplace, etc.

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