Organizational culture and its influence on the performance of higher education institutions: The case of a state university in Beijing

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Abstract

This study reports on the organizational culture and its influence on the organizational performance. It focuses on these six elements: environment, mission, leadership, information, strategy and socialization. The analysis of interviews with students and faculty members (at one higher education institution) indicated the congruence between the perspectives of students and those of the faculty members on some particular elements. In addition to confirming that most of the organizational culture elements are encouraging, the analysis also showed that all culture elements have a strong influence on the individual performance which in turn contributes to the overall performance of the university.

Keywords: organization culture; culture; higher education; China; performance

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1. Introduction

Before the foundation of the People's Republic of China, there were 205 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including public, private and foreign funding universities (Yu, 1994 as cited in Gu, Li, & Wang, 2009). China's higher education has been experiencing transformational stages during the reform period, and it is still transforming (Li & Xing, 2010). The number of Chinese HEIs is increasing considerably. According to the professional services Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) Company (2010), the number of future HEIs students in China is targeted to be thirty six million in 2020. This governmental commitment is promising; however, it is important to consider the administration of higher education in China. According to Gu, Li, and Wang (2009), models of higher education of China have vacillated between centralization and decentralization. Since 1985, there has been unified central leadership and shared administration between central and provincial governments (MOE, 2006 as cited in Gu, Li, & Wang, 2009). Moreover, Chinese higher learning institutions got autonomy in 1999. To this end, the Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China, Article 37 states that higher learning institutions "independently decide on the setting up and personnel employment of such internal organizational structures as teaching, scientific research and administrative functional departments in the light of actual requirements and in accordance with the principle of streamlining and efficiency…" (MOE, 1998, p. 8). In such an educational system where institutional autonomy is promoted, organizational culture is more valued. For instance, Owoyemi and Ekwoaba (2014) reported that when an organization is productive and its performance is increasing, organizational culture should be encouraged then.

Organizational culture has emerged as a topic of central concern within the business community for the last ten years (Tierney, 1988). Accordingly, the number of studies on organizational culture is increasing. Fleury (2009) pointed out that culture is fairly a well-known topic in the academic agenda, being discussed in day-to-day debates within organizations. However, further studies are always needed as human beings are dynamic and therefore their beliefs and experiences are changing and should be regularly studied (Muthanna, 2011) accordingly. The study of an organization's culture is important for the implementation of an organization's strategies (Bashir, Jianqiao, Abrar, & Ghazanfar, 2012). Organizational culture is, most of the time, the element that drives the organization forward. It creates an operational environment in which every employee strives to achieve the goal set by the organization (Tănase, 2015). Some authors like Antić and Cerić (2008) mention that it is almost impossible to analyze modern organizations without mentioning their organizational cultures. However, various authors define 'culture' differently. As a result, organizational culture faces many challenges and it is not an easy task to define this term (Antić & Cerić, 2008). Although organizational culture is a widely used term, it seems to give rise to a degree of ambiguity in terms of assessing its effectiveness on changing variables in an organization (O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008). To truly understand the term of 'culture', we need to understand the beliefs of those organization's affiliates (Schein, 1990). Schein characterizes culture as the learned values, beliefs, and assumptions that become shared and taken for granted as the organization continues to be successful.

Understanding culture is important for the employees, the stakeholders, and the organization in general. Desson and Clouthier (2010) stated that culture shapes what the organization considers to pass a right decision; what employees consider behaving appropriately and how they interact with one another; and the attitude of outside stakeholders towards the organization. Moreover, understanding of culture will assist administrators in spotting and resolving potential conflicts and in managing change more effectively and efficiently (Tierney, 1998). Like other organizations, the importance of culture in higher education institutions is critical. To this end, Tierney (1998) clarified that studying the cultural dynamics of educational institutions and systems helps

understand and, hopefully reduce adversarial relationships. Cognizant of these facts is pertinent to conducting research on organizational culture and its influence on Chinese universities. Therefore, the main leading questions for this study are the following:

➢   How is the organizational culture experienced by Brown University faculty members and students?

➢   How do faculty members and students of Brown University describe the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance?

2.   Literature Review

In this brief critical review of literature, the authors present the most important theoretical perspectives regarding the conceptualization of the organizational culture, and its prominent six elements.

2.1 Conceptualization of the Organizational Culture

Many authors have attempted to give their own definitions of the term 'culture'. The common foci are the appearance of terms such as assumptions, beliefs, and values in those definitions of culture. For understanding the organizational culture, it is essential to be acquainted with all its components. There is no agreement among authors as to what components should be considered in studying organizational culture (Wambugu, 2014). This is to clarify that different researchers have used and proposed different conceptual frameworks for studying organizational culture. For instance, Schein (1990) states that for analyzing the culture of a particular group or organization, it is desirable to distinguish between three fundamental levels: artifacts, values, and assumptions. Tierney (1998) reported that researchers need to consider which cultural concepts to utilize when they study a college or university. Tierney identifies environment, mission, leadership, information, strategy and socialization as essential concepts of university or college culture.
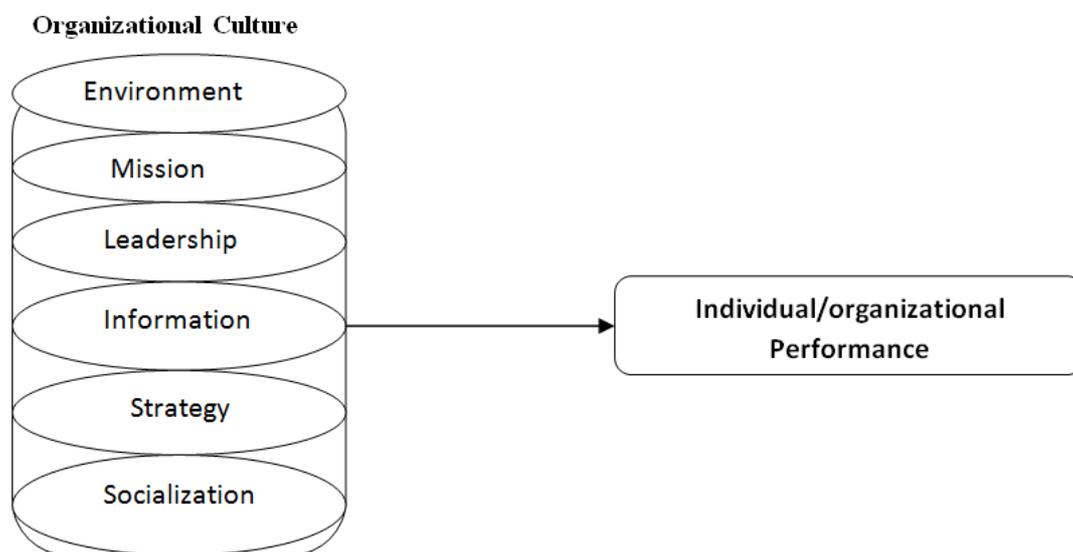
Source: Researchers' construction based on Tierney's (1998) conception of organizational culture.

Figure 1. Framework of the Study

Tierney believes that the above-mentioned concepts used to describe culture occur in organizational settings, yet the way they occur, the forms they take, and the importance they have, differ dramatically. However, Maassen (1996) criticized that Tierney did not operationalize each concept of culture although he provided diagnostic questions to assess each concept/ dimension of culture. However, by taking the Tierney's diagnostic questions as a hint and associating them with other works, the authors attempted to explain the concepts and

their influence on individual's performance in organizations below.

Environment - The World Health Organization (WHO) (2003) classified school environment as physical and psychosocial environment. WHO asserts that among others, warm, friendly, and supportive environment is important for enhancing the psychosocial environment. On the other hand, furniture, ventilation, lighting, protective equipment, and many others, wherein Chandrasekar (2011) referred to as the physical environment. The psychosocial work environment is the result of an interaction between the work organization and the individual. It is determined by the relationship among employees in a workplace (Eriksson, 1996 as cited in Karlsson, Björklund, & Jensen, 2012). The study conducted by Samson and Waiganjo (2015) confirmed that psychosocial aspects were an important factor in increasing the performance of employees while compared to physical environment. In turn, the employee's performance has repercussion on organizational effectiveness. Tierney (1998) suggests diagnostic questions to assess environment. Among these questions, one is 'what is the attitude toward the environment? Hostility? or Friendship? It seems that Tierney's organizational environment refers to the psychosocial environment. Similarly, this article is limited to the psychosocial environment.

Mission - Mission and vision statements have been accepted as an indispensable part of the strategic management and planning for all types of organizations (Darbi, 2012). Similarly, Dermol (2012) emphasizes that the mission statement has a potential to direct the behavior in an institution, serving as a managerial tool. He described that mission and vision statements impact on strategy and most other aspects of the organizational performance. The literature has depicted the impact of these organizational statements on organizational cultures, both positively and negatively (e.g., Fayad, 2011). In the positive sense, Tierney (1998) recognizes the organizational mission as a dimension to understand the organizational culture. To this end, Tierney suggests certain diagnostic questions to assess organizational mission as one dimension of culture. These are: How is mission defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there between mission and practice? These questions are important for studying mission and vision statements.

Leadership - Based on the university case studied by Tierney (1998), the role of the symbolic communication reinforced by tangible, constructive change, provides valuable clues about the effectiveness and the organizational culture. Vickrey (n.d.) states that communication is the process by which leadership is exercised and it is not merely a tool of erstwhile leaders or something leaders do or do not have at their disposal, such as their IQs, heights, personalities, or skills with word-processing equipment. With communication and symbolic interaction, leaders should also work with employees to realize the implementation of what they communicated. It is imperative for employees to witness leadership [which] "walking the talk". In doing so, the people process culture will be established which is characterized by formation of a strong, positive belief in people and sustained a high level of performance and profit over an extended period of time (Kersten & Walter, 2013). Hence, "People Process Culture leaders at all levels create environments that foster communication, build trust, and facilitate teamwork" (Carr, 1999, as cited in Schnacky, 2008, p. 15). What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders? These are diagnostic questions proposed by Tierney (1998) to assess the leadership dimension of organizational culture. Therefore, in relation to the leadership dimension of culture, this article puts more emphasis on a leader's symbolic interaction with the people around them and the availability of tangible and constructive changes in the organization as perceived by students and faculty members.

Information - Tierney (1998) suggests three diagnostic questions to assess information as a dimension of the organizational culture, namely: 'What constitutes information?, Who has it? And how is it disseminated?' Some authors explicitly call this dimension as 'Information Culture' (e.g. Brown, 1990; Choo, Bergeron, Detlor, & Heaton, 2008). According to Choo (2013), the information culture as a dimension of the organizational culture represents "the assumptions, values, and norms that people have about creating, sharing, [and] using information" (p. 776). He points out that it would have its own effect on the organizational behavior and effectiveness. Although the information culture is a concept that is open to different interpretations, the focus of this article is on students and faculty members' perceptions on the types of information being disseminated, the

ways of information dissemination, and the ones who have information at the university sample case.

Strategy - According to Ulwick (1999), strategy is "… a plan that describes what an organization proposes to do to achieve a stated mission" (p. 4). He emphasizes the importance of an effective strategy formulation process to enable an organization to generate strategies and solutions that would support its strategic position. Further, Skøien (2014) argues that the biggest portion of the organization strategy focuses on strategy formulation processes, but not that much on how employees in the organization perceive the strategy and strategy formulation processes. However, people's perceptions of reality have a greater influence on their behavior than the reality itself (Phasinsaksith, 2014). This implies that employees' perceptions on the strategy and its formulation processes have a strong impact on the actors' behavior. To this end, Alvesson (2002) recommends a cultural view of strategy in order to understand the organizational strategy and to consider the strategy as a cultural manifestation. Some organizational culture theorists (e. g. Tierney, 1998) include strategy as a dimension of the organizational culture, and recommend researchers to investigate peoples' perceptions on "how are decisions arrived at?"; "which strategy is used?" and "who makes decisions?"

Socialization - Organizations have their own ways of doing things and it is imperative to introduce them for the newcomers of the organization. Socialization is referred to as a process of supporting individuals in finding ways to become members of a social group in order to be acquainted with how things work in that social group and contribute to the success of the group (Arnett, 2015). The organizational socialization is a course of action to enable new employees to get organizational knowledge and skills and it is a process by which new employees get information of the norms and roles essential to work within a group or organization (Njegovan & Kostic, 2014). Therefore, the organizational socialization helps newcomers to adjust to the new task, the work group, and the organization.

The organizational socialization is receiving more attention by the organizational researchers. Saks and Ashforth (1997) stated that "… resurgence of interest in organizational socialization has resulted in more published studies than in any previous … period". Tierney (1998) argues that socialization should be studied as one dimension in studying the organizational culture and he proposes the following diagnostic questions: "how do new members become socialized?", how is [socialization] articulated?, and what do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?". These diagnostic questions are used to investigate socialization as one dimension of the organizational culture in this research.

3. Research Design

According to Stephens (2009), researchers' selection of research approaches depends on what the researchers are trying to find out. This study followed the qualitative approach that helps to understand, describe and explain social phenomena in their natural setting than in specialized research settings such as laboratories (Flick, 2007). Further, the context and cases should be seriously taken for understanding an issue under study while using qualitative research as an approach. In other words, case studies serve to comprehend certain contexts with systematic analyses (Muthanna & Miao, 2015).

The case study gives researchers the opportunity to maximize cultural and contextual realities in the study setting and helps to conduct depth analysis (Stephens, 2009).Therefore, with the aim of understanding the organizational culture in depth, this study employed the case study design to collect sufficient data from various sources (Muthanna & Sang, 2016). The study took one national key university in Beijing as the case. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity, the university has been given the pseudonym of Brown University.

In order to comprehend the organizational culture, the researchers found it important to include two groups of participants in the study (students and faculty members). In each group, there are four participants. The participants are purposively selected in order to obtain richness and relevant data. Moreover, the limited number of participants gave a good opportunity to focus upon a particular group of individuals and research setting to get more depth and quality data than increasing the quantity of units of data collection (e.g. Muthanna & Sang, 2016;

Stephens, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews were used for collecting data from all participants. Interview guides were prepared by the researchers. All participants responded to six set of questions comprising all the elements considered to understand organizational culture. According to Fontana and Frey (2005) "… interview aims at capturing precise data of a codable nature so as to explain behavior within pre-established categories" (p. 706). The interview guides differ from one group to another, as the two groups actually vary. Each interview took around 35 minutes.

The interviews were transcribed, categorized and analyzed using narrative analysis. Before data collection, the researchers set codes in advance on the basis of the study conceptual framework and the research questions. Wellington (2000) asserted that it is possible to have pre-established categories if they are derived from the literature review. Excerpts from the transcripts of interview have been used to describe the organization's culture and its influence on the organizational performance. All these above-mentioned processes reflect the quality of the trustworthiness of the collected data and narrative analysis used in qualitative studies, a concept similar to the validity and reliability terms in quantative studies.

4. Findings and Discussion

To answer the first research question: How is the organization culture experienced by Brown University faculty members and students? the researchers have focused on the following themes: environment, mission, leadership, information, strategy and socialization.

4.1 Environment

In relation to the environment of the university, both the students and faculty members witnessed that the environment is very friendly for them to study and work, respectively. Students emphasized that their professors are friendly with them and the environment at Brown University is friendly, and welcoming. One student said *"we don't feel uncomfortable with students and professors .... We have good relationship, I think"* (ST1). This indicates that the psychosocial environment is suitable for them. The mental health and well-being of young people can be affected by a psycho-social environment (WHO, 2003). Similarly, the faculty members responded that their relationship with one another is positive. However, some of them responded that they may be closely connected with some but not with some others. This is normal as it is sometimes hard to relate to some personalities (Muthanna & Sang, 2018a). In general, the interpersonal relationship is considered to be positive. Regarding the relationship among faculty members, one of the respondents described that "*colleagues are super friendly"*. Similarly one faculty member described the situation as below:

> *I don't think there is a problem of social relationship among Chinese people. We have different circles of friends, relatives, and associates. So this relationship merely reflected our relationship…I don't think faculty members have this type of problem. They communicate with each other and work together.* - TE1

Another respondent also said:

> *The relationship among faculty members at … [Brown University] is good, I think. To achieve your goal, you have to be good behaviorally.*- TE4

The formal relationship among faculty members, as an element of organizational culture, is found to be an important factor that could enhance faculty's perceptions of and responsiveness to innovation (Zhu & Engels, 2013). Similarly, Chandrasekar (2011) reported that employee's attitude at the workplace is affected by interpersonal relationships, among other factors.

4.2 Mission

With regards to familiarization with the mission of Brown University, all respondents believed that the university mission is clear for many people who work and study at the university. However, only two of them correctly remember what it exactly says. The respondents claimed that they are not expected to exactly recite the mission of the university as stated at the university website and/or on other official documents of the university. But, most of them informed that as the history of Brown University is known to most of them, they believed that many staff members could know its mission. The faculty member respondents mentioned that the university has evolved from teachers' college, which provides training for generations of teachers, and currently it is a comprehensive university with special characteristics and a world-renowned research focus. Even though they believe that the mission is a reflection of a historical legacy of teacher's education, they reported that the current positioning of Brown University is that of comprehensive research university. It is true that organizational culture is a collection of meanings that is created within the organization by the influence of the social and historical processes (Zhu & Engels, 2013). Further, they stated that -as other universities do- their university has a broad mission. Some respondents including students described the university's mission in terms of what faculty members do. According to student respondents, professors are transferring not only knowledge to them but also necessary skills required for the world of work, and they are also aware that professors are highly engaged in research as well. Similarly, some faculty members mentioned that theoretically all faculty members are very aware that the first priority of the work is to provide quality teaching for students. Meanwhile, they need to think of their university as a research university, and must be productive in research. Although quite a good number of employees have firsthand knowledge of the existence of mission and vision, it is important to provide them with management needs (Darbi, 2012) as well. One respondent clearly mentioned**:**

> *The major responsibility of the faculty members is to conduct research measured in terms number of researches published and the amount of research grant they got. How you guide students throughout the process of research. These researches related activities are really the priority of Brown University. Definitely teaching is another priority.- TE4*

The above excerpt and responses from most of the respondents show that teaching, research, and services provision to the community are the functions that faculty members are expected to accomplish. This goes well with the notion that "Mission statement is a managerial tool which has the power of directing the behavior in a company" (Dermol, 2012, p. 321). Another respondent stated:

> *…. I can treat students in the way students should be treated and in the way the university does. If I thought I couldn't work in this institution; I couldn't teach in the way I want to teach; then I couldn't research in the way I want to research then I would leave the institution. - TE3*

In general, the respondents believed that the university is accomplishing its tasks in assonance with the expectations it reflects through its mission in relation to teaching, research and service to the community.

4.3 Leadership

In their colleges, the respondents perceived leaders to be the dean, vice dean, and department chairpersons. However, a few respondents believed that everyone could be a leader depending on what kind of expectation they set for themselves. So, they pointed out that as long as the university can create a kind of a decentralized system and encourage everyone to play the leadership role, quality and productivity of Brown University will be positively enhanced. The faculty member respondents mentioned that as some of the issues are decentralized, a member can work at their office without interacting with the dean, department chairs, and/or the program director. It rarely happens that they talk with the dean or relevant associate dean: such a talk is related what type of budget they can have, and how well they have performed. These types of interaction are primarily grounded in the need of the program rather than personal needs. One respondent clearly described the interaction as follows:

…there is no need for such kind of interaction for faculty members. In some circumstances, faculty members might also get to the dean's office to talk about some personal problems in terms of promotion and salary raise or about their expectations. - TE3

It seems to be clear that the faculty members have less interaction with their leaders and they independently accomplish their professional tasks. However, Kerr and Jermier (1978) argued that accomplishing activities independently and relying on professional orientation would reduce the effect of both relationship and task-oriented leadership (as cited in Bryman, 2007). The faculty members mentioned that they have a good relationship with the dean, meaning that the dean is accessible whenever they want to have a talk with them. But, all of the respondents did not deny that they were busy with attending meetings inside and outside of the university. Bryman (2007) argued that departmental leaders face the problem of maintaining a balance between academic identity they seek to have and the pressure from the top to view their leadership from a strategic and visionary point of view in leading their departments.

The student respondents described that although they feel that the department head is the leader, they rarely see them, and that their communication is confined to their professors. All of them described that they only saw the department head during orientation programs.

In terms of change, the respondents believed that every leader brings some types of change during their service as an academic leader. But, one respondent mentioned that "*the change may not be the one we want"* (TE1). This necessitates the need for studying the needs of the affiliates before putting a change on table (Muthanna & Sang, 2018a & b). The respondent went on to describe that "*after the assignment of the current academic leader, there are tangible changes in some aspects"* and mentioned "*curriculum revision in the current programs"* as an example. But as students have less communication with the department, they could not provide critical evidence about the changes happening in the department.

4.4 Information

Concerning the theme of information, the respondents stated that this is a bureaucratic organization which means that it is not likely that the president who directly talks with individual faculty members. The president directly communicates with the vice presidents and the vice presidents may communicate with deans and directors. The deans may directly talk with academic unit heads. Therefore, most of them said that they got information from department heads and deans. More specifically, most of the participants mentioned that they got information about department meetings from the department heads and similarly from their colleagues or associates using emails, phone calls, text messages or in person. They further informed that they may also get information through email from the secretary of the department when there is a meeting. Some mentioned that they can also get information via surfing the university's website.

In further details, the participants reported that there are broadly two ways of getting information. Formally, they get information about policies, regulations, and guidelines during department meeting and informally, from their friends and associates. All the students discoursed that they rarely check the department's website for information, and they sometimes get information from some peers. Students who got the information early would disseminate the information by WeChat. But, as respondents indicated, there is a problem of getting the exact information from student peers. The students believe that the information senders are the departments, school/faculty and the university. It is believed that a formal communication system at the workplace enhances trust and loyalty among individuals and promotes better collaboration and relationship rather than informal communication does (Chanderasker, 2011).

4.5 Strategy

All study participants mentioned that most decisions are made by administrators without engaging faculty members in participation. In particular, when the decision relates to the school/faculty, the dean and associate

dean are responsible for making such a decision. This implies that there is no participatory decision making even at the department level. There is sometimes faculty assembly meeting at the institutional level to discuss the issues related to curriculum and housing. When there are such meetings, according to the respondents, some faculty members will be involved. If the issues are related to all members of the faculty, they would sometimes be called upon for attendance. However, the decision is generally not that much participatory made. In this sense, Brown (2001) asserted that "while centralized decision-making by administrators avoids the problems associated with collective decision-making, it also creates the potential for abuse by administrators". This is an issue that leaders need to critically think of so that strong decisions are reached.

As far as student's participation in decision making is concerned, they disclose that there is no opportunity for students to participate in decision making related to their own academic issues as stakeholders. One student participant said:

> *Classroom representatives don't communicate with the department head to discuss how the teaching learning process is going on, they sometimes discuss with professors on behalf of us to solve some problems including how to access books and articles.... Otherwise, we had discussion with the leader during orientation program only when we first arrive here. -* SE2

This above quote demonstrates that students -by no means- have a chance to participate in any discussion not alone in decision that directly influences their academic life during their stay in the university. While some universities allow students to participate in making decisions (e.g. Zuo & Ratsoy, 1999), our findings adversely report that students are detached from contributing to the process of decision-making.

The faculty member respondents stated that the decision making procedure is a bottom up process in terms of application. But in terms of decision making, it is thoroughly top down. They informed that the final decision is usually made at the dean level. One respondent mentioned that "*if one needs to set a program, one needs to seek approval from the department head, from dean and son on"* (TE1).

In order to describe the bureaucratic nature of decision making, one respondent (TE3) mentioned that "if I want to get promotion, I have to pass through all the necessary procedures and as a bureaucratic organization; my application should pass through different levels". Moreover, students believe that if they face problems related to academic issues, they have to undergo series of procedures. Nonetheless, they recognize that with the help of their friends and professors they get clear information about the procedures they have to go through to solve their problems. All this implies the absence of clear information for students, and their disallowance in participating in decisions related to their academic matters.

4.6 Socialization

All respondents stated that when new faculty members join the institution, they introduce them to the rest of the faculty members with respect to their educational background and to the unit/department to which they are assigned. Self introduction also follows this action. This introduction occurs during some other meetings and they described that there is no induction training at school and faculty levels. However, newly recruited faculty members are required to attend a kind of development program by the faculty development center at the institutional level. In this program, senior faculty members might be invited to give lectures or lead some workshops. One teaching respondent (TE4) mentioned that "*some new faculty members know only deans and departments' chairs. But, they will know other faculty members within a short period of time as there is a good interpersonal relationship among faculty members".* This indicates that the university attempts to provide induction training at the university level through the induction program at faculty/school/institute level which is beyond introducing the newly employed faculty members to others. Lichty (1999) argued that to abolish confusion and uncertainty of new faculty members concerning their work roles, college deans and department chairs should offer detailed information for the new comers before they start their new jobs.

Student participants recognized the orientation program they had during their arrival at Brown University. This orientation program, as they said, gave them a chance to be cautious and prepare themselves to solve social and academic problems they might face in the future. The orientation program seems to be well planned and organized for the benefit of students. Of course, the literature about orientation suggests that the program should be deliberately designed and implemented to facilitate a smooth transition to the institution (e.g. Hansen & Lowenkron, n.d.)

4.7 Organizational Culture for University Success

In this theme, the authors attempted to provide an answer to the second research question: How do faculty members and students of Brown University describe the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance? In relation to this question, the students and faculty members believed that the organizational culture has a contribution to the success or failure of an institution. This is in line with Schein's (2004) assertion that "organizational culture is an important issue in academic research and management practices as it is the most critical factor determining the success or failures of an organization" (as cited in Arifin, Troena, Djumahir, & Rahayu, 2014, p. 22). The study participants preferred to describe the influence of culture on the individual level performance rather than on the university wide performance. Hence, they believed that the organization culture is central and has a paramount importance for accomplishing their daily routines. Except for some components of the organizational culture, the respondents were willing to disclose the influence on their own performance. In relation to leadership as one component of the organizational culture, one faculty member (TE2) mentioned that "*whatever the leaders are doing, they give space for me to do the things I want to do. I appreciate that…most of the time I do not meet them in my way*".

Similarly, the student participants mentioned the contribution of socialization as an element of the organizational culture on their social and academic life. The interviewed students described that the well-organized socialization program has its own contribution to tackle their academic and social related problems they have been facing during their stay at Brown University. Some faculty members also witnessed the importance of the socialization program for new students to easily adapt with the system and start to accomplish their expectations. The professional socialization has "implications for the development of positive attitudes towards one's professional career and the ability to function within that profession" (Smith, Phillips, & Turner, 2007 as cited in Moscatelli, 2008, p. 7).

Regarding the environment of the university, the faculty members described that the friendly environment helped them to carry out their duties well. In other words, the psychosocial aspects are an important factor in increasing the performance of employees (Samson & Waiganjo, 2015). Students also appreciate the contribution of the good relationship they have with their peers and professors. Good relationship actually helps in happily working on achieving their educational tasks, and further leads to happiness outside of the classroom. Interaction with faculty has a positive influence on students' college experiences and outcomes (Padgett et al., 2010).

Furthermore, both students and faculty members discoursed that beside the friendly environment; information exchange; and socialization program in the university, having a clear mission along with expectations much contribute to accomplishing what is expected from them. However, in terms of participating faculty members and students in decision making in academic issues, they are not engaged in such activities. In general, they mentioned that the organizational culture in one way or another has an influence on their performance. In particular, one professor (TE1) stated "*the more positive one is, the better they become. If you can create a positive learning environment, it would be beneficial. The more supportive environment will be helpful for faculty members*". This clearly indicates how a conducive and supportive working environment could assist faculty members in accomplishing their responsibilities effectively. It is apparent that their successful accomplishment could contribute to the achievement of the university mission.

5. Conclusion

By focusing on the six elements of the organizational culture (i.e. mission, leadership, information, strategy and socialization), the study findings revealed that most of the elements of the organizational culture are encouraging towards the success of university missions and visions. More specifically, they inform that a friendly environment is of high value for both academics and students. While remembering the university mission statement is important, practicing it is more significant.

The informal way of disseminating information among students and faculty members is found to the active method for facilitating the rapid flow of information; however, this might also create information distortion. A well-organized socialization program is of high significance for students and teachers: this would give them some clues about how things work, and increase their awareness of the subculture that probably exists in specific university settings.

When students and/or faculty members have less chance to participate in academic decisions, this would in turn and in effect decrease their opportunity to know and believe in reforming changes related to their working environment. Moreover, when the academic leaders do not allocate some time for interacting with faculty members and students, the overall performance is not solid.   This said, all elements of the organizational culture have some degree of influence on the individual's performance which in turn could contribute to the overall performance of the university.

5.1 Contributions and Implications for Practice

This is a significant study as it reports on the concept of the organizational culture with its main elements. Understanding these elements and how they intersect with one another is very important for institutional leaders/administrators, teachers and students. Further, applying these six elements of the organizational culture strengthens the good relationships among the affiliates (students, teachers, and administrators) of the organization/university. Moreover, the study is also important in informing that a good performance of an individual will positively influence the rest of the affiliates and therefore there must be a strong collaboration among all organization/university affiliates regardless of their position or academic status. As a result, by reporting the perspectives of students and instructors on the organizational culture concept and its elements, the authors hope that university administrators would reconsider both teachers and students in the processes of making decisions. This will help implement decisions effectively; leading to better university performances and achievements.

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