ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECONOMIC RECESSION : A STUDY ON THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN BANGALORE

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Abstract *: Organizational culture in a conducive working environment has been a key contributor for organizational success, growth and development. Culture of organizations vary widely depending on the nature of business, people deployed by them and on various other factors like ethical values, ethnic diversity, religion, economy, technological influence, strategic alliance to name a few. In recent times, with the global financial crisis, organizations have found it difficult to sustain a culture to engage their employees and create a work environment and culture that could foster growth and development. With reports of growing attrition and slowdown of business in other sectors, the hospitality sector has faced challenges to retain qualified and highly talented employees and at the same time meeting changing customer taste and preferences. The paper attempts to identify the opinion of employees working in 5 star deluxe hotels in and around Bangalore on their organizational culture and the various factors influencing culture, HR policies and working conditions in their organizations with respect to the recent economic crisis. The study has revealed interesting findings, where a majority of the respondents have expressed their satisfaction with their employers and the HR initiatives taken by them, although some were of the opinion that the recruitment drives undertaken by their organizations had slowed down. With respect to organizational culture and climate the study revealed that respondents were of the opinion that clan culture dominated their organizations followed by hierarchical culture. Clan culture was mainly facilitated by 'extension' motives, particularly by fostering a participative working environment. Hierarchical culture had been facilitated by 'control' motives, routine, highly structured and standardized procedures followed by most 5 star deluxe hotels.*

Key Words :
Organizational culture, ethical values, ethnic diversity, Clan culture, Hierarchical culture.

Introduction

Managing organizational culture in the background of the recent global economic melt down has emerged as a critical factor for any international business. For any organization to become successful in this highly volatile business environment, companies must ensure that their HR policies accommodate a culturally diverse workforce and balancing the needs of cost cutting and restructuring as strategic priorities for sustenance and growth. Addressing these challenges every organization in the recent economic crisis have realigned and fine tuned their people management systems so as to suit the challenges ahead. As a result of these changes, there is a need for researchers and academicians to understand whether there has been any impact of such changes on the organizational culture and working conditions. This paper makes an attempt to investigate employee perceptions on organizational culture prevailing in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore in the background of the recessive economic conditions. The study would be considered important in terms of considering the high attrition rates in the hospitality sector and reports of organizations being compelled to trim their workforce to cut down costs. Although several studies have been undertaken by eminent authors on organizational climate and culture assessment, little or no literature has been found in terms of those related to the hospitality sector

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particularly with reference to the recessive economic conditions. The present study has used the "Competing Values Framework developed by Cameron and Quinn (1999) and the Motivational Analysis of Organizational Climate (MAO-C) framework developed by Pareek, U., for analyzing the opinion of employees working in various 5 star Deluxe hotels in Bangalore on their organizational culture.

Review of Literature

Although the concept of organizational culture was popularized in the early 1980s, its roots can be traced back to the early human relations view of organizations that originated in the 1940s. Human relations theorists viewed the informal, nonmaterial, interpersonal, and moral bases of cooperation and commitment as perhaps more important than the formal, material, and instrumental controls stressed by the rational system theorists. The human relations perspective drew its inspiration from even earlier anthropological and sociological work on culture associated with groups and societies (Geertz 1973; Mead 1934; Durkheim 1964; Weber 1947, 1958). Attention to organizational culture lost ground as organizational science, and social science in general, became increasingly quantitative. To the extent that research on organizational culture survived, its focus shifted to its more measurable aspects, particularly employee attitudes and perceptions and/or observable organizational conditions thought to correspond to employee perceptions (viz the level of individual involvement, the degree of delegation, the extent of social distance as implied by status differences and the amount of coordination across units). This research, referred to as organizational climate studies, was prominent during the 1960s and 1970s (Denison 1990). The renewed interest in organizational culture that emerged in the late 1970s resulted in the four books mentioned above suggesting that a deeper, more complex anthropological approach was necessary to understand crucial but largely invisible aspects of organizational life. This renewed interest in organizational culture represented a return to the early organizational literature but it went far beyond this study in contributing important new insights and ways of thinking about the role, importance, and characteristics of organizational culture. Besides, research on the effect of culture on organizational performance and investigations into how organizational cultures are created, maintained, and changed received greater attention.

The human relations perspective drew its inspiration from even earlier anthropological and sociological work on culture associated with groups and societies

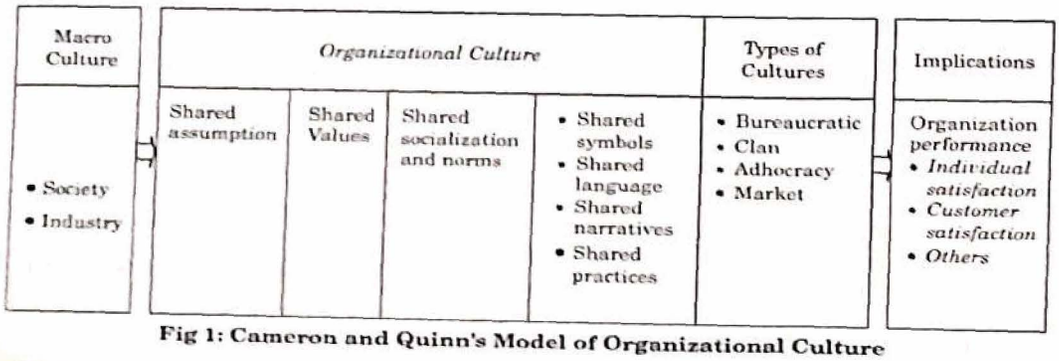


Fig 1: Cameron and Quinn's Model of Organizational Culture

The literature on organizational culture is as relevant to public science management as it is to the management of private sector business organizations. Given a rapidly changing environment and continuing insights into organizational effectiveness, science organizations, as most other organizations, are seriously rethinking what they do and how they can best define and accomplish their goals and objectives. Once the goals are defined, it is necessary to address the type of culture that is necessary to advance these goals and objectives and ensure the successful implementation of the necessary changes. In addition, studies on organizational effectiveness have been increasingly emphasizing the importance of culture in motivating and maximizing the value of its intellectual assets, particularly its human capital.

The advent of the computer has provided additional convenient metaphors for explaining the impact of culture on individuals.

The perceived impact of organizational culture on individual behavior has been articulated for many years. M. P. Carrol observed in 1982 that culture - like morals, laws, and customs - shapes behavior, and is something that older generations hand down to younger ones (Carrol, 1982). Hofstede linked culture to a collective programming of the minds of one group that differentiates them from other groups. He believes this programming derives from one's social culture. (Hofstede, 1991) The advent of the computer has provided additional convenient metaphors for explaining the impact of culture on individuals. Hall linked culture to a large complex computer that programs the responses and actions of people. He argues that individuals must learn the programs of their organization's culture if they are to make the system work. (Hall, 1987).

Cameron and Quinn (1999) have developed an organizational culture framework built upon a theoretical model known as the "Competing Values Framework". This framework refers to whether an organization has a predominant internal or external focus and whether it strives for flexibility and control. The framework is based on four dominant culture types, namely, "Clan, Adhocracy, Market and Hierarchy" (Figure 1).

Clan Culture: This culture refers to a very friendly work place where people share a participative working relationship and perform together as an extended family.

Adhocracy Culture: It refers to a dynamic entrepreneurial and creative place to work where people stick their necks out and take risks for achieving higher performance goals.

Market Culture: This culture refers to a result oriented organization whose major concern is getting the job done where people are competitive and goal-oriented.

Hierarchy Culture: It refers to a formalized and highly structured work place where procedures govern what people do. Bureaucratic work relationships form one of the main hallmarks of organizations having this type of culture.

Organizational Culture in the recessive economy

Although enough literature is available regarding organizational culture, little or no work has been reported particularly with respect to the recessive economic conditions. Economic crises are those times which

bring in uncertainty at the business as well as the organizational and individual level. Clients and customers lose their faith in organizations. Organizations are clueless about the corrective measures. CEOs feel the pressure in terms of cutting the cost, trimming the extra load of manpower ,and all these bring changes in the HR policies that affect the motivation and morale of an ordinary employee. Under these uncertain conditions, the need for efficiency does grow, however. organizations undergoing transformation or recovery from the economic downturn find it difficult to manage such challenges. Employee unions might turn violent escalating their demands, while termination and loss of jobs could worsen situations beyond the expectations of the managers. The ultimate casualty is perhaps the culture and the organizational climate that ultimately affect the customers and the business.

The present crisis requires HR managers to extract value from their human resources. The initiative could well depend on how the organization along with its leadership plays a strategic role to create that unique culture which would leverage talent growth and appreciate accomplishments and innovation. Hence, in spite of all the impending changes, corporations which are able to sustain their culture in the turbulent environment would emerge as winners. The hospitality sector is one such sector that has been reported to have adapted well in economic crisis, by extending better and more innovative customer services and; prime strength behind their success has been their ability to harness a culture constantly contributing to innovation and organizational growth.

Culture in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore

With Bangalore emerging as an international cosmopolitan city and the hub of business activities, the need for quality 5 star deluxe hotels has become important. Recently the new Bengaluru International Airport (BIA) at Devanahalli and the proposed infrastructural boom have further necessitated quality hotel business in and around the city. This would be required not only on account of tourist inflows but also because of the growing number of international visitors flocking the city for business activities. In this regard, organizational cultures have emerged to be one of the prime factors for maintaining **Total Customer Satisfaction (TCS)** and develop high performance organization model (climate). It can be mentioned here that for most 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore, organizational culture has played an important role: people philosophies are being managed for organizational growth and development, and is perceived to be an institution devoted to satisfying the needs and wants of their customers through programs that are clearly defined and pro-actively implemented.

Need of the study

Taking the above arguments into consideration, an attempt has been made through the study to investigate and understand the opinion of the employees working in various 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore with respect to their organizational culture in the context of economic recession. The study

Inspite of all the impending changes, corporations which are able to sustain their culture in the turbulent environment would emerge as winners.

would be beneficial for these organizations in the following ways.

- Understand the current role and standpoint of the employees on organizational culture and climate
- Understand whether the recent economic recession had brought any changes in the expectation of the employees
- Create a conducive environment and climate in the organization by identifying factors and issues that lead to organizational growth and development
- Facilitate the development of managerial capabilities of the employees to sustain and develop the desired organizational culture
- Enhance the level of team work and productivity in the organization

Issues influencing organizational culture in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore can refer both to the organizational process and perception of the people working in these organizations and to those entities or factors that directly or indirectly influence the same.

Objectives of the study

- To have a clear understanding of the culture and organizational climate of the 5 star deluxe hotels on the basis of employee perceptions
- To identify the preferred issues and factors influencing the culture and climate of these organizations.
- To identify whether there is an impact of the recent economic crisis on the culture and HR practices of the organizations
- To identify whether there is any association between culture types and factors influencing organizational climate

Scope of the study

Issues influencing organizational culture in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore can refer both to the organizational process and perception of the people working in these organizations and to those entities or factors that directly or indirectly influence the same. The study could well form the basis and foundation of a future organizational development strategy of these organizations and compare the same with that of other sectors of business.

Research Design

The study is based on descriptive research design and involved in administering questionnaire as a tool for research by taking the response of the employees working in various 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore. In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, the data was collected from both the primary and secondary sources :

Primary data : The primary data was collected by means of questionnaire administration. The respondents were contacted through personal interactions outside their organizations as well as through email and telephonic conversations/interviews.

Respondent opinion regarding impact of economic recession on HR practices was collected by conducting telephonic interviews.

Secondary Data: The secondary data was collected from internet resources, journals, magazines, etc.

Culture assessment questionnaire : A culture assessment questionnaire was developed to evaluate the employee

opinions regarding the various issues influencing organizational culture using the Cameron and Quinn (1999) framework, (namely ***Clan Culture, Adhocracy Culture, Market Culture, and Hierarchy Culture).*** The questionnaire contained 24 questions with respect to various issues and elements influencing their organizational culture where the respondents were assessed on a five point Likert scale. The points were later converted into percentage scores. The tally of various questions corresponding to each of the culture types were as follows:

Hierarchy Culture : Qs 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21

Adhocracy Culture: Qs 2,6, 10, 14, 18, 22

Clan : Qs 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23

Market : Qs 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24

Motivational Analysis of Organizational Climate (MAO-C) Instrument : Motivational Analysis of Organizational Climate (MAO-C) framework developed by Pareek, U. (1986, 2002) is an instrument which employs 12 dimensions of organizational climate namely orientation, interpersonal relationship, supervision, problem management, management of mistake, conflict management, communication, decision making, trust, management of reward, risk taking, innovation and change and six motives of the respondents namely, affiliation, dependency, control, extension, expert influence, achievement. The questionnaire used in this instrument consists of 12 categories, each of which corresponds to one of the 12 climate dimensions and again each of the six statements represents one of the six respondent motives mentioned above. The respondents were asked to rank the statements in each category from 6 (**most** likely to be the situation in the organization) to 1 (**least** likely to be the situation in the organization)

The Population : The population of the study included all employees working in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore.

The Sample : The sample consisted of 100 employees from various 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore. The respondents were contacted through personal interactions outside their organizations as well as through email and telephonic conversations / interviews.

Sampling Method : Convenience sampling was used to collect the opinion of the respondents.

Data Analysis : The data collected from the study were analyzed by the use of SPSS and MS-EXCEL applications.

Limitations: The study had the following limitations :

- The study was limited to 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore; other organizations included in the hospitality sector were not considered.
- The study involved respondents who could be contacted or interviewed on the basis of availability and personal contacts.
- The sample did not represent all the hotels in Bangalore.
- A comparative study comprising different types of hotels was beyond the scope of the research.

The questionnaire contained 24 questions with respect to various issues and elements influencing their organizational culture where the respondents were assessed on a five point Likert scale.

- As the hospitality sector involves the employment of people with varied skills, working at various job levels, their perceptions regarding their organizational culture & climate could differ.

Respondent Profile

It is evident from the table 1 that 97% of the respondents were male and only 3% were females. Majority (85%) of them were in the age groups of 20-25 years, followed by 10% in the age group of 26-30 years. 5% respondents were in the age group of 30 and above. Majority (70%) of the respondents were working at the "Junior Management Level", whereas 30% were working in the "Middle Management Level". None of the respondents represent "Senior Management" designations.

Particulars		No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Gender Profile	Male	97	97%
		3	3%
Age Profile	20-25 years	85	85%
	26-30 years	10	10%
	30 and above	5	5%
Level of Designation	Senior Mgt Level	0	0%
	Middle Level Mgt	30	30%
	Junior Mgt Level	70	70%

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Majority of the respondents expressed high levels of disagreement regarding tension amongst top managers or changes in their attitudes or behaviors.

Respondent opinion regarding HR practices of their employers in the backdrop of Economic Meltdown

Respondents were contacted individually through telephonic conversations, and their opinions regarding the HR practices of their employers in the perspective of the economic meltdown were recorded. A structured questionnaire was used for this purpose. Figure 2 illustrates respondent opinion regarding the impact of economic recession on their organizations with respect to tension & apprehension amongst the top managers, with regard to recruitment & training initiatives, postponement of promotions/increments, organizational changes and changes in the attitudes of managers & supervisors.

It is evident from Fig 2 that, majority of the respondents expressed high levels of disagreement regarding tension amongst top managers or changes in their attitudes or behaviors. The same opinion was reflected in terms of organizational changes, postponements of increments/promotions. With respect to training activities undertaken by their employers, majority (85%) of the people were in disagreement that there was decrease in the training activities undertaken by their organization. Regarding recruitment, 30% of the respondents said that there was slowdown in the recruitment initiatives taken by their employers.

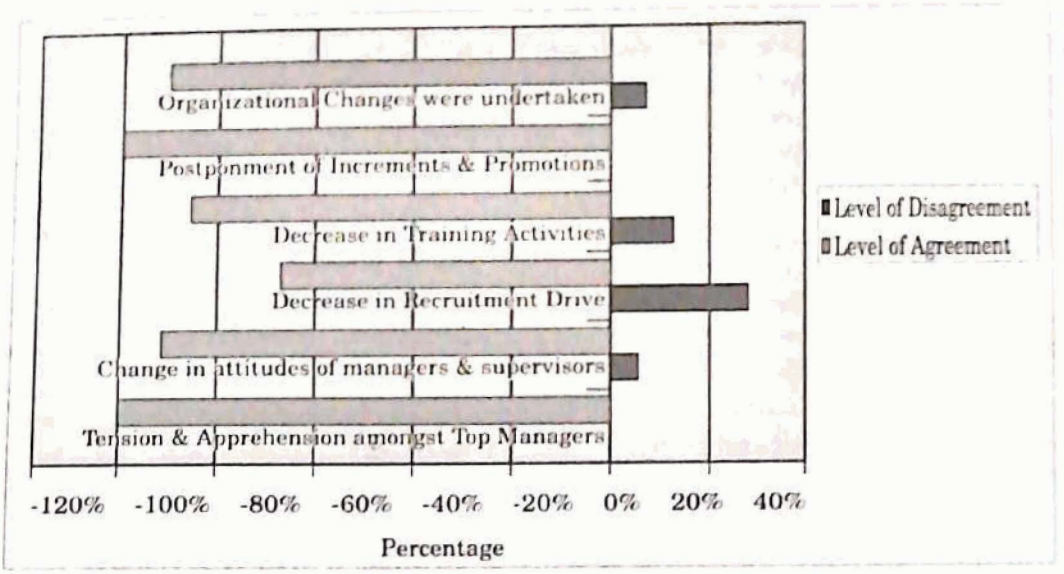


Fig 2: Respondent opinion regarding HR practices of their employers in the perspective of Economic Meltdown

Analysis of respondent opinion on the basis of MAO-C instrument

Using the MAO-C instrument, the mean scores of the responses were computed from the opinion given by the employees working in various 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore. On the basis of the mean scores of the responses given by the employees, a MAO-C matrix was developed. The matrix (as revealed in Table 2) helps to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of the organizational climate as perceived by the respondents. The instrument assumes that the cut-off mean score is 50. If the score for a particular motive is greater than 50, the organizational climate can be interpreted as relatively strong for that given motive, whereas if the score is less than 50, the climate can be interpreted to be relatively weak corresponding to that motive. Among the strong motives, highest scores can be identified as the "dominant" scores whereas those nearest to the dominant scores could be identified as "backup" strong motives.

As revealed in Table 1, it is evident that, the dominant motive as per respondent's opinion was "Achievement" with an average score 62 followed by "Affiliation" with an average score of 61.35. According to Pareek, U., (1986, 2002), it can be mentioned that the first three climate motives in the MAO-C Matrix, namely Achievement, Expert Influence and Extension can be identified and interpreted as **useful and functional motives** whereas the next three, namely, Control, Dependency and Affiliation can be interpreted to be **"Dysfunctional"** for the organization. On the basis of this, the motives identified in Table 1 can be interpreted as (Table 3):

Functional Motives:

Achievement, Expert Influence, Extension

Dysfunctional Motives: Control, Dependency, Affiliation

Among the strong motives, highest scores can be identified as the "dominant" scores whereas those nearest to the dominant scores could be identified as "backup" strong motives.

Dimensions of Organizational Climate	Motives							
	Achievement	Expert Influence	Extension	Control	Dependency	Affiliation	Dominant	Backup
1. Orientation	30	68	11	30	50	72	72	68
2. Interpersonal Relationship	57	24	60	48	10	60	60	57
3. Supervision	40	45	75	20	10	90	90	75
4. Problem Management	70	27	60	15	24	60	70	60
5. Management of Mistakes	32	50	132	10	32	27	132	50
6. Conflict Management	40	10	60	108	16	51	108	60
7. Communication	48	10	70	36	22	96	96	70
8. Decision king	80	12	60	30	20	72	80	72
9. Trust	90	40	13	36	20	75	90	75
10. Management of Rewards	102	56	12	52	20	75	102	75
11. Risk taking	60	90	20	70	10	33	90	70
12. Innovation & Change	95	84	30	40	10	24	95	84
Total Scores	744	448	603	495	244	735	Overall 744	Overall 735
Average	62	37	51	42	20	61.25		

Table 3: Interpretation of motives as per Dominant and Back-up scores

Dimensions of Organizational Climate	Dominant Motive	Backup Motive
Orientation	Affiliation	Expert Influence
Interpersonal Relationship	Affiliation Extension	Achievement
Supervision	Affiliation	Extension
Problem Management	Achievement	Affiliation
Management of Mistakes	Extension	Expert Influence
Conflict Management	Control	Extension
Communication	Affiliation	Extension
Decision Making	Achievement	Affiliation
Trust	Achievement	Affiliation
Management of Reward	Achievement	Affiliation
Risk Taking	Expert Influence	Control
Innovation and Change	Achievement	Expert Influence

Discussions

Although expert influence and achievement has been found to be the back up motives for orientation and interpersonal relationships, it becomes quite evident perhaps that there is a lack of involvement of the senior managers and executives in grooming the youngsters in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore which could have contributed to create a better working environment in these organizations. Similarly for the dimension of supervision, expert influence should have been the more desired motive in place of affiliation. Extension should have been a dominant motive for supervision rather than being a backup motive. It is encouraging to note that the respondents perceived that achievement and extension were the dominant motives for problem solving and management of mistakes. Regarding conflict management extension motive should have been identified as a dominant motive rather than being a backup motive. Control as a way of conflict management is not a permanent and long term solution for improving organizational climate and inculcating a conducive work culture. The same could be applicable for the dimension communication where extension should have been the dominant motive rather than being the backup motive. With respect to the dimensions namely decision making, trust, management of reward, risk taking and innovation & change, motives as those of achievement and expert influence have been identified as the dominant motive which clearly depicts that these motives have contributed to create a positive working environment for these organizations.

Although expert influence and achievement has been found to be the back up motives for orientation and interpersonal relationships, it becomes quite evident perhaps that there is a lack of involvement of the senior managers and executives in grooming the youngsters in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore which could have contributed to create a better working environment in these organizations.

Respondent opinion on Organizational Culture

Figure 3 depicts the overall mean scores of the culture types identified by the respondents on the basis of the questionnaire administered on them.

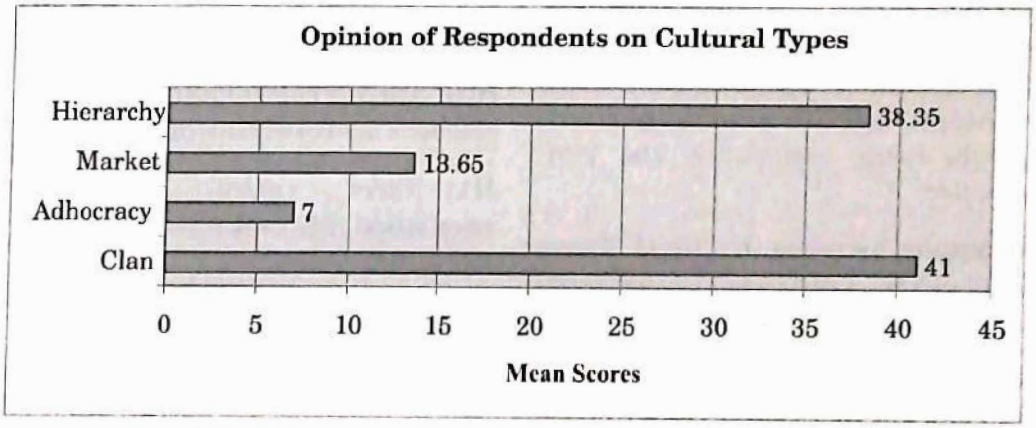


Fig 3: Respondent opinion on Cultural Types

It is evident that a majority of the respondents were of the opinion that their organizations had a clan culture (mean 41.0) which means that the organization emphasizes on maintaining a friendly work- place where people share a participative working relationship and perform together as an extended family. For 5 star hotels where sensitivity towards customers is an essential competency, this culture rightly matches with their business profile and operational processes.

On the other hand, respondents had also favored a hierarchical culture (mean 38.35) which shows that the organizations studied in the present study emphasize on routine, highly structured and standardized activities which make their work culture complex, repetitive and dependent on orders from higher authorities.

As evident above, respondents were of the opinion that their organizations had market culture (mean 13.65) which means that these organizations depended on result- oriented philosophies, where the major concern was to get the job done with emphasis on people being competitive and goal-oriented.

Relation between Cultural Types and motives contributing towards organizational climate

On the basis of the above findings an attempt was made to analyze whether there were any significant association (Table 4) between the cultural types identified by the respondents and the various motives contributing towards organizational climate.

Clan Culture and motives contributing towards organizational climate

Extension motive had significant association with clan culture ($\chi 2$ Calculated = 29.31, **P value= 0.002 < 0.05;** Hence **Ho is rejected at 5%** level of significance).

Ho: There is no significant association of extension motive with clan culture

H1: There exists significant association of extension motive with clan culture

As revealed in table 3, there were no significant association between clan culture and other organizational climate motives.

Clan Culture, Hierarchy Culture and motives contributing towards organizational climate

Control motive had significant association with hierarchy culture ($\chi 2$ Calculated = 43.27, **P value= 0.001 < 0.05;** Hence **Ho is rejected at 5%** level of significance).

Ho: There is no significant association of control motive with hierarchy culture

H1: There exists significant association of control motive with hierarchy culture

There were no significant association between hierarchy culture and other organizational climate motives.

Items	Achievement	Expert Influence	Extension	Control	Dependency	Affiliation
Clan Culture	χ^2 Calculated =19.67 P value=0.443	χ^2 Calculated =17.83 P value=0.339	χ^2 Calculated =29.31 **P value=0.002 Significant at 5% level**	χ^2 Calculated =19.654 P value=0.44	χ^2 Calculated=21.18 P value=0.314	χ^2 Calculated =39.627 P value=0.146
Hierarchy Culture	χ^2 Calculated=7.487 P value=0.785	χ^2 Calculated =8.735 P value=0.679	χ^2 Calculated =6.869 P value=0.579	χ^2 Calculated =43.27 **P value=0.001**	χ^2 Calculated=23.337 P value=0.159	χ^2 Calculated =8.764 P value=0.634

Table 4 : Association of various Climate Motives and Culture Types

Discussion : Based on the above findings it can be inferred that the profile of the two most dominant culture types identified by the respondents in their organizations could be depicted as follows in Table 5 :

Table 5 : Culture Types, Focus Areas and corresponding Climate Motives

Culture Type	Focus	Climate Motives
1. Clan Culture	• Friendly work relationships • Result orientedness • Customer oriented behavior	• Extension (association found significant) • Achievement (association not found significant)
2. Hierarchy Culture	• Routine, highly structured and standardized procedures • Emphasis on rules and regulations	• Control (association found significant) • Dependency (association not found significant)

It has become strategically important for corporations to sustain and develop organizational culture that values diversity and creates an environment catering to their growth and development.

Conclusion

Keeping the perspective of the recessive economic scenario where more and more organizations belonging to the service sector need to adopt to the challenging business environment and operate in a culturally diverse environment, it has become strategically important for corporations to sustain and develop organizational culture that values diversity and creates an environment catering to their growth and development. The study conducted with reference to the employees working in 5 star deluxe hotels in Bangalore has revealed that clan culture dominated these organizations followed by the hierarchical culture. Clan culture was mainly facilitated by 'extension' motives, particularly by fostering a participative working environment. Hierarchical culture had been facilitated by 'control' motives, routine, highly structured and standardized procedures followed by most of the 5 star deluxe hotels. With respect to the impact of economic recession,a

majority of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with their employers, although some were of the opinion that the recruitment drives undertaken by their companies had slowed down.

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