



Article

The Impact of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

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Abstract

This study investigates the mechanism through which organizational culture influences organizational performance by examining employees of cultural and creative enterprises in central China. Employee engagement is introduced as a mediating variable within a structural equation model. Based on 371 valid questionnaire responses, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed for analysis. The results indicate that organizational culture has a significant positive impact on both organizational performance and employee engagement. Furthermore, employee engagement positively influences organizational performance and partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and performance. These findings contribute to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between culture and performance in the field of organizational behavior and offer practical implications for improving performance management in cultural and creative enterprises

Keywords: Psychological Capital; Employee Engagement; Job Performance; Self-efficacy.

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Introduction

Amid the accelerating transformation of the global economic structure and the continuous rise of cultural soft power, the cultural and creative industry has emerged as a new integrated sector that combines culture, technology, and industry [1]. It is increasingly recognized as a key driver of high-quality regional economic development. Positioned as a strategic hub connecting eastern and western as well as northern and southern China, the central region has witnessed rapid growth in its cultural and creative industries under the dual impetus of national policy support and urban branding. Several enterprises characterized by local identity and market potential have emerged. As market competition intensifies, organizational performance has attracted growing attention from practitioners and scholars as a core indicator of sustainable development. Among the various internal and external factors influencing organizational performance, organizational culture is widely regarded as a crucial intrinsic driver [2]. It shapes employees' values and behavioral norms and subtly influences cohesion, innovation capacity, and strategic execution [3]. However, the specific mechanisms organizational culture contributes to performance remain insufficiently explored. Recent research suggests that employee engagement may be a key mediating factor in this relationship [4]. Employee engagement refers to psychological investment, emotional attachment, and proactive behaviors employees demonstrate. It reflects their commitment to organizational goals and willingness to act accordingly, which may be a vital link between organizational culture and performance outcomes.

Based on this rationale, the present study aims to construct a structural model in which organizational culture functions as the antecedent variable, employee engagement as the mediating variable, and organizational performance as the outcome variable. The study uses empirical data collected from employees of cultural and creative enterprises in central China to investigate the causal paths and relational strengths among these variables. Specifically, it addresses the following four research questions. First, does organizational culture have a significant impact on organizational performance? Second, does organizational culture significantly influence employee engagement? Third, does employee engagement significantly affect organizational performance? Fourth, does employee engagement mediate the relationship between organizational culture and performance?

This study is expected to yield both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, introducing employee engagement as a psychological mechanism deepens the understanding of how organizational culture affects performance. It broadens the theoretical scope of organizational behavior and human resource

management research. On the practical level, the findings can inform the development of targeted management strategies for cultural and creative enterprises by emphasizing the importance of cultural construction and employee engagement in improving organizational performance and strengthening core competitiveness.

Literature Review

Definition and Connotation of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture refers to the system of shared values, beliefs, assumptions, and behavioral norms gradually developed and maintained within an organization over time [5]. It represents a collective framework through which members interpret their roles, understand organizational expectations, and make decisions in the workplace. As an implicit yet powerful dimension of organizational life, culture shapes how individuals interact with one another, how leaders manage teams, and how the organization responds to internal challenges and external opportunities [6]. Rather than being codified in formal documents, organizational culture operates through deeply embedded practices and symbolic meanings that influence strategic direction and everyday behavior.

One widely recognized approach to categorizing organizational culture is the Competing Values Framework developed by Cameron and Quinn [7]. This model organizes culture into four dominant types, each representing a distinct set of managerial assumptions and operational logics. Clan culture emphasizes interpersonal relationships, trust, and a family-like atmosphere where collaboration and employee development are prioritized [8]. Hierarchy culture values control, structured procedures, and clearly defined roles to ensure operational efficiency and stability [9]. Market culture focuses on goal achievement, external competitiveness, and performance measurement [10]. Adhocracy culture encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and innovation in dynamic environments [11]. Each cultural configuration shapes employee motivation and organizational behavior in distinct ways and offers a useful theoretical lens for evaluating the relationship between cultural traits and performance outcomes.

Within cultural and creative enterprises, organizational culture plays a particularly vital role due to the sector's dependence on creativity, adaptability, and knowledge exchange. In such organizations, cultural attributes often include a high tolerance for ambiguity, an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving, and a strong commitment to openness and participatory decision-making [12]. These elements help cultivate an environment where employees are empowered to share ideas, explore new possibilities, and contribute actively to organizational goals. As a result,

understanding the specific configurations and mechanisms of organizational culture in these enterprises is essential for explaining variations in employee engagement and organizational effectiveness. This perspective provides the foundation for the present study's focus on culture as a driving force in shaping employee behavior and enhancing organizational performance in creative sectors.

Theoretical Origins and Evolution of Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement was first introduced by Kahn (1990) [13], who described it as the extent to which employees invest their physical, emotional, and cognitive energies into their work roles to achieve alignment between personal identity and job responsibilities. This perspective established the psychological foundation for subsequent studies on engagement. Robinson et al. (2004) further conceptualized engagement as an internal state characterized by attentiveness, absorption, and a heightened connection to work tasks [14]. From another perspective, Demerouti et al. (2010) argued that engagement represents the positive counterpart of burnout, defining it as a vigorous and enthusiastic attitude toward work [15].

Building on these foundations, Schaufeli et al. (2003) defined employee engagement as a positive work-related psychological state composed of vigor, dedication, and absorption [16]. They developed the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to operationalize these dimensions, which has since become a widely adopted empirical tool. Vigor reflects high levels of energy and psychological resilience, manifested through persistence, a willingness to exert effort, and the capacity to remain active even when facing challenges. Dedication refers to a strong sense of enthusiasm and purpose toward work, pride, meaning, and responsibility for organizational and personal career goals. Absorption reflects the ability to concentrate deeply, remain fully immersed in tasks, and willingly embrace the complexities and challenges associated with the work. Together, these three dimensions illustrate a state of holistic psychological investment, reflecting the deep cognitive structures and behavioral tendencies that define employee engagement.

Following the research of Schaufeli et al., many scholars have expanded and reconstructed the concept of engagement. Some scholars view engagement as a multidimensional construct that integrates attitudinal and behavioral elements, including identification with organizational values, fulfilling role responsibilities, and team-oriented collaboration [17]. Other studies emphasize engagement as aligning employees' personal goals and self-realization with organizational objectives. This

perspective highlights that a sense of achievement, purpose, and role value are critical drivers for sustaining long-term engagement behavior [18].

Measurement and Influencing Factors of Organizational Performance

Organizational performance refers to an organization's ability and actual outcomes in achieving its strategic objectives within a given period. It encompasses financial indicators such as profit and market share and non-financial dimensions such as employee satisfaction, innovation capability, and customer loyalty, as proposed by Venkatraman and Ramanujam in 1986 [19]. In recent years, with the continued development of organizational performance research, non-financial performance metrics have gained increasing importance, particularly within service-oriented and knowledge-based organizations. In the context of cultural and creative enterprises, organizational performance emphasizes internal drivers such as innovation capacity, brand influence, and employee satisfaction rather than focusing solely on economic returns [20]. Previous studies suggest that organizational culture serves as a fundamental driver of performance by fostering an innovative climate and enhancing internal coordination, which indirectly contribute to improved organizational outcomes [21]. This study adopts a performance measurement framework centered on employee satisfaction and organizational innovation capability, aligning more closely with the characteristics and practical needs of cultural and creative enterprises.

The Relationship Among Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement, and Organizational Performance

Organizational culture is foundational in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, directly and indirectly influencing organizational performance [22]. Denison's empirical research demonstrated that cultures emphasizing participation, consistency, and adaptability enhance organizational effectiveness [23]. Similarly, Zhang et al. found that the clarity and alignment of cultural values positively affect both innovation and financial outcomes [24]. In the Chinese context, relationship-oriented cultures emphasizing trust and cooperation significantly influence employee behavior and performance results. In cultural and creative enterprises, organizational cultures characterized by innovation, openness, and participatory values foster creative expression and interdisciplinary collaboration, collectively enhancing overall performance.

Cultural environments promoting autonomy and individual expression tend to meet employees' psychological needs for self-fulfillment, fostering greater engagement [25]. Organizational culture thus not only provides normative guidance

for behavior and shapes employees' cognitive and emotional states, encouraging active involvement [26]. Previous studies have shown that inclusive and psychologically safe cultural climates enhance employees' sense of belonging and willingness to engage in their work [27]. Key elements such as shared values, human-centered management, and transparent internal communication are critical cultural drivers of employee engagement [28]. From a psychological perspective, employee engagement is closely tied to hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, which empower individuals to identify with organizational goals and persist through challenges [29].

Moreover, empirical evidence consistently links high levels of engagement with improved organizational outcomes. Sypniewska et al. found that employee engagement is significantly and positively correlated with productivity, customer satisfaction, retention, and profitability [30]. This relationship is particularly prominent in enterprises requiring frequent collaboration and creative input, such as those in the cultural and creative sectors. Engaged employees demonstrate higher quality and initiative in their work and actively contribute to knowledge innovation and cross-functional collaboration, thereby promoting long-term performance. As Rich et al. highlighted, engaged employees exhibit continuous motivation and creative problem-solving, strengthening organizational innovation and adaptability [31].

Recent literature has increasingly emphasized the mediating role of employee engagement between organizational culture and performance. Saks proposed that engagement is a psychological transmission mechanism that transforms organizational resources into tangible performance outcomes. According to the Job Demands-Resources model, cultural resources such as supportive values and empowering practices enhance employee engagement, improving organizational effectiveness [32]. In the Chinese context, empirical studies have confirmed that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and innovation performance, suggesting that engagement is a crucial explanatory variable linking cultural inputs to performance outputs.

Research Hypotheses

In summary, prior literature consistently supports close relationships among organizational culture, employee engagement, and organizational performance and highlights the potential mediating role of engagement. However, empirical studies focusing on cultural and creative enterprises in central China remain limited, especially in systematic modeling and verification of the interaction mechanisms among these three constructs. Based on the reviewed literature and identified research

gaps, the following hypotheses are proposed for empirical testing using a structural equation modeling approach:

- H1. *Organizational culture has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.*
- H2. *Organizational culture has a significant positive effect on employee engagement.*
- H3. *Employee engagement has a significant positive effect on organizational performance.*
- H4. *Employee engagement mediates the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance.*

Research Methodology

This study aims to explore the mechanism through which organizational culture influences organizational performance in cultural and creative enterprises via employee engagement. An empirical analysis was conducted using cultural enterprises in Henan Province as representative cases of the central region of China. A quantitative research method was adopted, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was employed to conduct path analysis and test the proposed hypotheses. The model examines the structural relationships among organizational culture, employee engagement, and organizational performance, as well as the mediating effect of engagement.

The target population consisted of full-time employees working in various sub-sectors of the cultural and creative industries in Henan Province. These sectors include advertising design, cultural media, performing arts, animation and gaming, and cultural tourism operations. Online and offline data collection methods were used to ensure a broad and representative sampling. Three hundred eighty-two questionnaires were distributed, and 371 valid responses were collected, yielding a response rate of 97.1 percent. Regarding demographic characteristics, the respondents displayed considerable heterogeneity across variables such as gender, age, education level, years of work experience, marital status, and income level. This diversity enhances the explanatory power and generalizability of the study's findings.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information, organizational culture, employee engagement, and organizational performance. The organizational culture section was developed based on the Competing Values Framework proposed by Cameron and Quinn and was adapted to reflect the specific managerial characteristics of Chinese cultural enterprises [33]. The employee engagement section was adapted from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed

by Schaufeli and colleagues, including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions [34]. Organizational performance measurement was grounded in the subjective performance evaluation framework proposed by Venkatraman and Ramanujam and further expanded based on the non-financial performance indicators suggested by Kaplan and Norton [35][36]. This section emphasized employee satisfaction, innovation capability, process efficiency, and corporate social responsibility. All measurement items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree, where higher scores indicate stronger agreement.

The study strictly adhered to academic research ethics. All questionnaires were completed voluntarily with informed consent from the participants. No personally identifiable information was collected during the survey. All data were treated with strict confidentiality and used exclusively for academic research. The entire research process ensured anonymity, objectivity, and scientific rigor.

Results Analysis

A total of 371 valid questionnaires were collected for this study. The demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows. Regarding gender, 47.71 percent of the respondents were male, and 52.29 percent were female. Most participants were between 26 and 35, accounting for 78.44 percent. Regarding education level, most respondents held a bachelor’s degree, representing 66.04 percent of the sample.

Regarding work experience, 79.52 percent had between four and ten years of service. Married employees made up 78.71 percent of the total sample. Monthly income was mainly concentrated in the range of 3501 to 7000 yuan, comprising 77.09 percent of the participants. Overall, the sample demonstrates a reasonable and balanced demographic structure, providing a solid foundation for the analysis in this study.

Table 1: Frequency Analysis Results

Name	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	177	47.709	47.709
	Female	194	52.291	100.000
Age	≤25	29	7.817	7.817
	26-30	146	39.353	47.170

	31-35	145	39.084	86.253
	≥36	51	13.747	100.000
	Junior College and Below	53	14.286	14.286
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	245	66.038	80.323
	Master's Degree	57	15.364	95.687
	Doctorate and above	16	4.313	100.000
	≤3 Year	29	7.817	7.817
Years of Service (Tenure)	4-6 Years	159	42.857	50.674
	7-10 Year	136	36.658	87.332
	≥11 Year	47	12.668	100.000
Marital Status	Unmarried	79	21.294	21.294
	Married	292	78.706	100.000
	3500 Below	18	4.852	4.852
Monthly Income Level (Pre-tax)	3501--4500	157	42.318	47.170
	4501--7000	129	34.771	81.941
	7001--10000	51	13.747	95.687
	10000 Above	16	4.313	100.000
Total		371	100.0	100.0

Measurement Model Assessment

This study evaluated the quality and adequacy of the measurement model through a systematic examination of reliability and validity. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients and composite reliability values. As shown in Table 2, all constructs demonstrated Cronbach's alpha values above 0.87 and composite reliability values exceeding 0.92. These figures are well above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 in academic research, indicating high internal consistency and measurement stability across the scales. Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted [37]. The AVE values for organizational culture, employee engagement, and performance were 0.748, 0.802, and 0.742, respectively. Each value surpassed the benchmark of 0.50, demonstrating that the latent constructs could explain more than half of the variance in their observed indicators and thus provide strong evidence of convergent validity [38].

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Analysis

	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
OC1 <- OC	0.887	0.944	0.954	0.748
OC2 <- OC	0.901			
OC3 <- OC	0.898			
EE1 <- EE	0.871	0.876	0.924	0.802

EE2 <- EE	0.862			
EE3 <- EE	0.859			
EE4 <- EE	0.864			
EE5 <- EE	0.854			
EE6 <- EE	0.874			
EE7 <- EE	0.869			
OP1 <- OP	0.847	0.950	0.958	0.742
OP2 <- OP	0.869			
OP3 <- OP	0.868			
OP4 <- OP	0.846			
OP5 <- OP	0.853			
OP6 <- OP	0.881			
OP7 <- OP	0.861			
OP8 <- OP	0.863			

To further assess the discriminant validity among the constructs, this study applied both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio method. As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the results based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion indicated that the square roots of the AVE values for each latent variable were greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients. This satisfies the standard for acceptable discriminant validity. In addition, the HTMT values were 0.781 between employee engagement and organizational culture, 0.742 between employee engagement and organizational performance, and 0.756 between organizational culture and organizational performance. All values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming the constructs' distinctiveness [39]. These findings demonstrate that the measurement model in this study possesses satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 3. Fornell and Larcker Discriminant Validity

	EE	OC	OP
EE	0.865		
OC	0.71	0.895	
OP	0.703	0.69	0.861

Table 4. HTMT discriminant Validity

	EE	OC	OP
EE			
OC	0.781		
OP	0.742	0.756	

Structural Model Assessment

Following verifying reliability and validity in the measurement model, this section evaluates the structural model to examine the relationships among latent variables, explanatory power, and the model's overall fit. Key indicators assessed in this section include the coefficient of determination R^2 , collinearity diagnostics using the Variance Inflation Factor VIF, the significance of path coefficients, and the effect size f^2 . These indicators are employed to evaluate the research model's structural soundness systematically.

First, regarding the model's explanatory power, R^2 measures the extent to which exogenous variables account for the variance in endogenous variables. As shown in Table 5, the R^2 value for organizational culture predicting employee engagement is 0.504, indicating that organizational culture explains 50.4 percent of the variance in employee engagement. Furthermore, organizational culture and employee engagement account for 56.7 percent of the variance in organizational performance, as reflected by an R^2 value of 0.567. According to established evaluation standards, both R^2 values fall within the range of moderate to substantial explanatory power, indicating that the model demonstrates good fit and predictive capability [40].

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
EE	0.504	0.503
OP	0.567	0.565

Next, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to evaluate the measurement indicators and assess whether multicollinearity exists within the model. As presented in Table 6, all VIF values range between 2.3 and 3.5, below the conventional threshold of 5. This indicates no serious multicollinearity among the latent variables and confirms the structural stability of the model [41].

Table 6. Collinearity Statistics of Measurement Items

	VIF
EE1	3.137
EE2	2.929
EE3	2.865
EE4	2.897
EE5	2.808
EE6	3.167
EE7	3.043

OC1	2.272
OC2	2.479
OC3	2.409
OP1	2.767
OP2	3.19
OP3	3.176
OP4	2.823
OP5	2.954
OP6	3.474
OP7	3.065
OP8	3.07

In terms of path coefficients, this study applied the bootstrap method with 5000 resamples to estimate the path coefficients, standard errors, T-values, and P-values to assess the significance of the hypotheses. As shown in Table 7, the analysis results indicate that all paths reached a high level of statistical significance with P-values less than 0.001.

Table 7. Results of Significance Testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	STDEV	T statistics	P values
EE -> OP	0.430	0.429	0.064	6.751	0.000
OC -> EE	0.710	0.711	0.036	19.592	0.000
OC -> OP	0.384	0.385	0.064	6.013	0.000

Organizational culture significantly positively affects employee engagement with a path coefficient of 0.710 and a T-value of 19.592. Employee engagement significantly affects organizational performance with a path coefficient of 0.430 and a T-value of 6.751. Organizational culture also demonstrates a significant positive effect on organizational performance with a path coefficient of 0.384 and a T-value of 6.013. These results support hypotheses H1, H2, and H3, confirming that organizational culture not only directly enhances organizational performance but also indirectly strengthens performance by promoting employee engagement.

Finally, this study calculated effect size values to evaluate further the magnitude and contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variables. According to the evaluation criteria proposed by Cohen in 1988, which defines 0.02 as small, 0.15 as medium, and 0.35 as large, the effect size results for each path are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Evaluation of Effect Size (f^2)

f-square

EE -> OP	0.212
OC -> EE	1.018
OC -> OP	0.169

The effect size f^2 of organizational culture on employee engagement is 1.018, indicating a strong effect. The f^2 of employee engagement on organizational performance is 0.212, representing a medium effect. The f^2 of organizational culture on organizational performance is 0.169, also within the medium effect range. These findings suggest that the causal relationships among the variables are statistically significant and possess substantial explanatory power and practical effect strength. The structural model demonstrates good overall fit with strong path significance and moderate explanatory capacity. No multicollinearity is detected among the variables. The model is supported by theoretical rationale and empirical evidence, providing a solid foundation for subsequent mediation analysis.

Meditation Effect Testing

This study employed the Bootstrap resampling method to examine the mediating role of employee engagement between organizational culture and organizational performance. The analysis showed that organizational culture had a significant direct effect on performance and a significant indirect effect through employee engagement. The indirect path accounted for 44.3 percent of the total effect, indicating that employee engagement partially mediates the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance.

Research Conclusions and Future Outlook

This study was conducted using data from cultural and creative enterprises in central China, and a structural model was developed to examine how organizational culture influences organizational performance through employee engagement. The results indicate that organizational culture has a direct positive effect on performance and indirectly enhances it by increasing employee engagement. The findings contribute theoretically by expanding the understanding of how organizational culture affects performance and by validating the applicability of the UWES scale and the use of PLS-SEM in modeling mediation mechanisms. Practically, the study highlights the importance of building a cohesive and guiding organizational culture to stimulate employee involvement and underlines the key role of middle managers in reinforcing cultural values and motivating employee behavior.

Although this study has yielded initial theoretical and practical findings, it still has certain limitations, including a geographically concentrated sample, limited industry coverage, and the constraints of a cross-sectional design. Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample scope, incorporating longitudinal data, introducing moderating variables, or integrating qualitative methods to explore the deeper interactions among organizational culture, employee psychological mechanisms, and organizational performance.

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