

Research into the Effect of Corporate Culture on Operational Efficiency in the Turkish Ready to Wear Industry

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Abstract

Corporate culture, which is acknowledged as a company's identity, has started to gain more importance with the developments in recent years. The main reason for a company forming a genuine culture is the effectiveness of the culture on business life, employees and customer relations. It helps the firm to be well-known, and forms its values and relations with other organisations and individuals. Nowadays, the possibility of Turkish Ready to wear firms being able to compete both in national and international markets and being able to meet clients' „time, cost and quality” expectations is high. In this research, to reveal the relationship between corporate culture and operational efficiency in Turkish Ready to Wear industries, a survey was conducted amongst a total of 360 executives in 19 establishments, most of whom are in İstanbul. The results obtained were analysed using statistic package software - SPSS 16.0. for MS Windows

Key words: culture, corporate culture, productivity, ready to wear industry.

■ Corporate culture concept

The concept of culture is derived from „*cultura*”, which means „*crop*” in Latin, and with its most extensive meaning it contains every type of physical and intellectual aggregation that man reveals by creating diversity. In view of this aspect, every abstract and concrete experience man presents in his daily life can be evaluated within the concept of culture [2].

Corporations combining people who have different beliefs and values are places that bring people together in a common *cultural platform* for a certain purpose. Thus people of different values and beliefs have the opportunity to present themselves in a platform of corporate culture. Corporate employees compose the institutional system with physical and financial elements by coming together for a certain purpose. The institutional system is presented by the „*institutional culture*”, in which different beliefs, values, attitudes, ideas and morality exist together, being the common name for all these values. Corporate culture is all the legal and illegal rules which are shared by corporation members, determining their behavior. Corporate culture is a system of norms, behaviour, values, beliefs and habituation that directs the institutional attitudes of employees [23, 25] Factors affecting corporate culture can be listed as follows:

- Vision [27]
- Mission [26]
- Communication [9, 12]
- Motivation [5, 14]
- Strong leadership [16]
- Corporation History and Tradition [20]

- Technology, Products and Services [22]
- Costumers [1]
- Corporation Expectations [10]
- Data and Control Systems [5]
- Legislation and Environment [5]
- Award Systems [5]
- Way of Organisation [21]
- Goals, Values and Beliefs [3, 15].

■ Corporate culture and productivity

In today's increasingly competitive conditions, all establishments aim for productivity. In particular, it is the labour force that leads corporations to success. First of all, the employee should believe in the corporation and its purposes. The in-house communication process is gaining importance especially in terms of employee adaptation to the establishment. Especially in the Ready-to-Wear Industry, when today's competition requirements are taken into consideration, is the competition strategy of low price / cost advantage not valid anymore. Instead, the organisations which are at home with technology, aiming to improve themselves, aiming to be the best, having multiple capabilities and team awareness, which are capable of flexible production, keeping stock in low numbers, having high model diversity, obtaining the quality level desired, and delivering within the time requested shall outclass their competitors [6, 7, 18].

Main factor defining the performance capacity of an organisation

The attitudes of workmen towards the management of an organisation and to-

wards the labour they perform can be defined as „moral”. In terms of general expression, the moral degree of an organisation can be understood by the quantity and quality of goods and services produced. Morale is an emotional phenomenon and from the point of an employee, it means being satisfied with the job performed, being proud of the working team, being contented with the payment received and promotion possibilities, as well as identifying oneself with the organisation's aim [11, 16]. A low level of morale has negative effects on the organisation's success. Distinctive consequences of employees' dissatisfaction are low efficiency and decreasing productivity. Additionally, misuse of workmen's qualifications, and producing low quality products and services can be counted among the consequences [5, 13].

Consequently, as the high morale of employees is reflected in the quality and quantity of goods and services produced, the efficiency of the organisation will increase [19].

■ Research studies

Purpose of the research

This research was done to make proposals for the Ready-to-Wear Industry and to reveal the effects of corporate culture on an establishment's efficiency. In addition to the main goal of this study, we aimed to determine the presence and level of relationship between the factors affecting operational efficiency and corporate culture.

For this research, benefiting from the data of the “İstanbul Chamber of Industry,

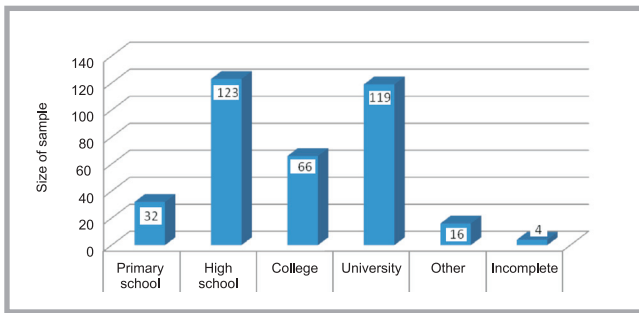


Figure 1. Educational background of executives surveyed.

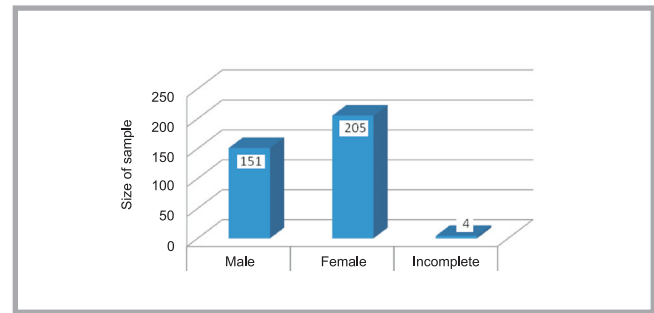


Figure 2. Gender of executives who participated in the survey.

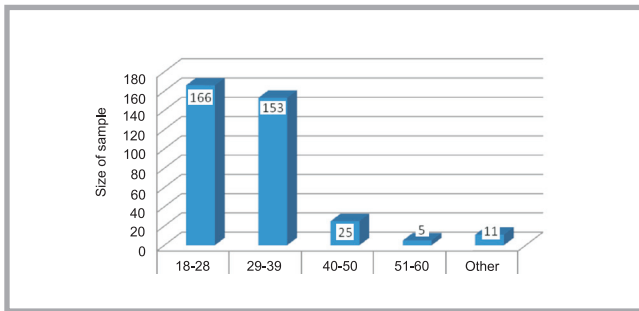


Figure 3. Age ranges of executives surveyed.

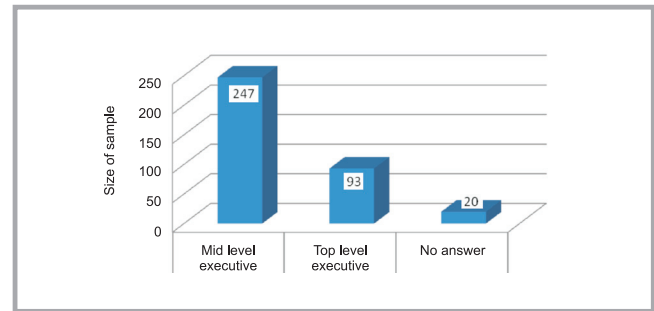


Figure 4. Position Distributions of participating executives.

Turkey's 500 Biggest Industrial Enterprises" in 2007, a total of 59 export firms were interviewed which are in the process of brandisation. 27 of them approved the questionnaire to be conducted, but only 19 of them were surveyed, and no feedback was received from 8 of them. As a consequence, this research was conducted by targeting middle and high level executives in 19 large and medium sized firms to determine the corporate culture.

Method of research

A questionnaire consisting of two parts was prepared. The first part was designed to distinguish the demographic qualities of the participants, while the second part, in which a five point likert scale is taken as a basis, consisted of questions to measure participants' attitudes and behavior relating to corporate culture and productivity. These questions can be classified into seven main categories:

- Determination of the effects of the establishment's work environment
- Determination of employees' sense of corporate culture, their loyalty to the corporation and their coalescence tendency
- Determination of the cooperation and sociality among employees
- Productivity of the organisation
- Productivity and corporate culture
- Technological developments
- Education performance.

First of all, to determine validity and reliability, the questionnaire prepared was conducted in an establishment which had similar characteristics to the target group. After the questionnaire was conducted, a Spearman-Brown Reliability Coefficient and Validity Coefficient was calculated. The result was that the validity of the test was 0.86 and the reliability - 0.92 [4].

Evidence of the research and analysis

The result of the questionnaire conducted was interpreted as bidirectionally:

- Statistical Descriptive Analysis,
- Statistical Interpretive Analysis,

Results of statistical descriptive analysis

a) Executives' educational background

As seen in **Figure 1**, 8.9% of them graduated from elementary school, 34.2% from high school, 34.2% from an Academy, 33.1% from college, and 4.4% have a doctorate or master's degree. 1.1% did not answer this question.

b) Gender range of the executives

As seen in **Figure 2**, of the participants 56.9% were woman, and 41.9% were men. 1.1% of participants did not answer this question.

c) Range of executives' age groups

When **Figure 3** is examined, it is determined that 46.1% are between the ages of 18 - 28, 42.5% is between 29 - 39, 6.9% is between 40 - 50 and 1.4% is between 51 - 60. 3.1% did not answer this question. As seen in the table, the existence of

young employees in the Ready to Wear Industry continues.

d) Distribution of the numbers of mid and top level executives

Figure 4 position distributions of participating executives. 69% of the participants belong to the mid-level, and 26% to top level management. 5% of the participants did not answer this question.

Results of interpretive statistical analysis

The interpretive statistical analysis was examined in two parts. First of all, an evaluation was carried out by means of a frequency test of the answers. Secondly, to determine the relationship between the measurement of corporate culture and productivity management, a Chi-Square test was conducted.

a) Results of frequency test

When **Table 1** is examined, the following can be concluded:

- 68.4% of participating executives expressed that they had team work in their corporation; headquarters does not make the decision by itself but all together.
- 57% of participating executives stated that to find a solution in their company, they met and discussed.
- 62.5% of participating executives said that their owners made spatial arrangements to increase employees' productivity.

Table 1. Collective results of survey questions' frequency values.

	Questions	1		2		3		4		5	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Mission, assets and goals are explained to all employees by the top management of establishment.	24	6.7	31	8.6	30	8.3	145	40.3	130	36.1
2	Goals have an approachable and advance meaning in today's marketing\business environment and are applied in an intentional way.	18	5.0	35	9.7	60	16.7	134	37.2	113	31.4
3	Cultural analysis was conducted by taking main subjects into account and emphasising important points.	38	10.6	39	10.8	94	26.1	114	31.7	75	20.8
4	Weakness which hinders necessary service quality for clients is known and all efforts to avoid it are endeavored.	15	4.2	25	6.9	25	6.9	112	31.1	183	50.8
5	To provide a better service, necessary equipment is supplied and technology is followed, both of which are used effectively.	8	2.2	29	8.1	14	3.9	104	28.9	205	56.9
6	Active participation of employees/workmen in the decision process is undertaken.	35	9.7	42	11.7	69	19.2	132	36.7	82	22.8
7	Changes in the structure of the establishment are comprehensibly regulated in written form.	35	9.7	35	9.7	43	11.9	122	33.9	125	34.7
8	Duties commissioned to me are not coherent with my job description\status.	32	8.9	52	14.4	36	10.0	79	21.9	161	44.7
9	Our managers have improved projects by explaining the goals and projects to us, commenting on them and taking our opinions about them, and thus we are informed.	54	15.0	30	8.3	51	14.2	120	33.3	105	29.2
10	There is strong communication and interaction between the administration and employees.	31	8.6	39	10.8	45	12.5	128	35.6	117	32.5
11	Rewards are easily understood and evaluated by all employees.	67	18.6	53	14.7	102	28.3	76	21.1	62	17.2
12	Employees believe they shall fulfill their goals and the rewards given are appreciated.	42	11.7	43	11.9	81	22.5	91	25.3	103	28.6
13	New ideas, techniques and approaches cannot be produced, but a solution is created by trying the ideas in order with personal influence.	56	15.6	83	23.1	76	21.1	75	20.8	70	19.4
14	There is no team work or common duties; everyone works for the centre, all decisions are determined from the centre.	45	12.5	46	12.8	23	6.4	56	15.6	190	52.8
15	Experience is gained by winner's demolishing the losers.	33	9.2	34	9.4	58	16.1	41	11.4	194	53.9
16	Action is taken swiftly towards a possible solution; however, in the case of it not being appropriate, another one quickly takes its place.	118	32.8	105	29.2	60	16.7	46	12.8	31	8.6
17	Instead of written communication, verbal is preferred. Reports and archives are not kept.	23	6.4	51	14.2	29	8.1	50	13.9	207	57.5
18	Executives are the most informed and experienced staff in the establishment. However, there is no sharing with other employees of the company.	45	12.5	83	23.1	61	16.9	77	21.4	94	26.1
19	Executives respect the employees; everything is done within a plan and distribution of tasks.	31	8.6	36	10.0	49	13.6	108	30.0	136	37.8
20	Executives want to reach a solution directly; there is no conversation, discussion or communion.	43	11.9	75	20.8	37	10.3	60	16.7	145	40.3
21	In the establishment, the trial and error method is preferred to tackle a problem.	47	13.1	94	26.1	69	19.2	58	16.1	92	25.6
22	The executive has his own authority; he does not work within a task distribution.	55	15.3	74	20.6	57	15.8	51	14.2	123	34.2
23	Despite the information of researches obtained through reports, when deciding whether to take an order or not, the opinions of the employer's close friend is more dominant and determinant.	30	8.3	49	13.6	104	28.9	41	11.4	136	37.8
24	Everyone wants to see that the solution to a problem is the consequence of his/her success.	119	33.1	108	30.0	54	15.0	34	9.4	45	12.5
25	In-house conversation and any kind of equipment and management in the process of sharing should be used effectively.	19	5.3	35	9.7	46	12.8	107	29.7	153	42.5
26	Necessary spatial arrangements and physical conditions in these arrangements are regulated in an appropriate way to increase productivity.	47	13.1	39	10.8	49	13.6	107	29.7	118	32.8
27	There is not a significance difference between my wage and performance. My wage is satisfactory.	80	22.2	58	16.1	58	16.1	106	29.4	58	16.1
28	My wage and extra bonus enhance my productivity, motivation and loyalty to the job.	64	17.8	45	12.5	41	11.4	92	25.6	118	32.8
29	Though this work is performed thanks to us and though we provide great profit to the employer, he does not share the profit of the increase in productivity with us; this makes our motivation decrease.	54	15.0	64	17.8	62	17.2	63	17.5	117	32.5
30	Though I have had significant innovation, creation or a solution for the organisation, the management has not rewarded me or rewarded me too late, thus hindering my creativity and desire.	36	10.0	65	18.1	78	21.7	49	13.6	132	36.7
31	I can propose anything related to my job to my administration, when he/she takes my proposals under consideration, he will give me the right to speak.	25	6.9	18	5.0	53	14.7	107	29.7	157	43.6
32	Our administrator wants to have all the authority and desires to dominate over us. This situation makes me annoyed and decreases my productivity.	49	13.6	75	20.8	42	11.7	52	14.4	142	39.4
33	Though I work harder, longer and am more adaptable, someone who has lesser characteristics is promoted.	25	6.9	26	7.2	69	19.2	42	11.9	197	54.7
34	No matter how hard I work, unfortunately I will never be promoted.	47	13.1	49	13.6	50	13.9	31	8.6	183	50.8
35	I do my job willingly. Thus, I contribute to my establishment, fulfilling my desires at the same time. I find the opportunity to renew myself.	14	3.9	24	6.7	32	8.9	78	21.7	212	58.9
36	Our establishment gives priority to employees' happiness and working harmoniously in a peaceful environment rather than earning money. In any case, as our productivity increases, more profit is made.	56	15.6	52	14.4	78	21.7	89	24.7	85	23.6
37	When a new model is starting to be produced, the management brings all employees together and informs us. They train us for unfamiliar conditions.	71	19.7	51	14.2	54	15.0	90	25.0	94	26.1
38	I am in fear of losing my job anytime. My executive frightens me by saying he could easily find another to replace me.	27	7.5	28	7.8	33	9.2	57	15.8	215	59.7
39	Our establishment sometimes has experts in his field to increase our productivity, efficiency, motivation etc. with the help of some training.	81	22.5	32	8.9	51	14.2	83	23.1	113	31.4
40	Although I had a good education, I do work of a lower standing and feel it is getting dull.	39	10.8	52	14.4	64	17.8	62	17.1	143	39.7
41	We are not informed about a modification in the establishment.	59	16.4	68	18.9	46	12.8	58	16.1	129	35.8
42	Our company helps to build team spirit with social activities such as meetings, various tournaments, feasts and trips.	102	28.3	36	10.0	40	11.1	72	20.0	110	30.6
43	I believe that I work in a place that makes me happy and reinforces my hopes about the future.	48	13.3	32	8.9	89	24.7	93	25.8	98	27.2
44	I do the same job frequently. I am bored. I feel worthless.	25	6.9	44	12.2	56	15.6	46	12.8	189	52.5
45	I am not good for this establishment. This working environment does not give me the opportunity to enhance my abilities.	26	7.2	26	7.2	44	12.2	64	17.8	200	55.6
46	I work so much that I have no social life at all.	66	18.3	94	26.1	52	14.4	63	17.5	85	23.6
47	There is always someone interfering even in the sphere of my own responsibility. I cannot use the full extent of my individual abilities.	43	11.9	59	16.4	57	15.8	60	16.7	141	39.2
48	I dislike being told what to do every time.	65	18.1	63	17.5	42	11.7	45	12.5	145	40.3
49	Any action that causes employees to be restless and sad is taken into consideration and improved.	57	15.8	42	11.7	95	26.4	101	28.1	65	18.1
50	My establishment attaches importance to the satisfaction of employees as well as customer satisfaction.	57	15.8	43	11.9	62	17.2	111	30.8	87	24.2

Table 2. Results of chi-square test concerning a significance test of the cultural structure of the establishment and productivity management.

Questions on corporate culture	Questions on productivity management													
	Assymp. Sig. [2-Sided]. Values													
	12	23	27	28	29	30	32	35	36	39	43	45	47	49
1	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
2	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
3	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
6	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
7	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.003	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000
9	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
10	0.000	0.000	0.014	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
11	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
17	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.018	0.008	0.001	0.003	0.001	0.024	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
25	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
37	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

- 58.4% of participating executives stated that wages and extra bonuses increased productivity, motivation, and loyalty to and quality of work.
- 50.0% of participating executives expressed that profit made by increased productivity was shared with employees.
- 48.3% of participating executives said that their employers strived hard to create an environment in which employees can work happily and peacefully, thereby increasing their productivity.
- 54.5% of participating executives said that their employers got educational and technical support from senior consultants to increase productivity.
- 55.9% of participating executives said that their employers did not interfere with their handling and managing of affairs and that they could make their own decisions in their management domain, thereby helping them to use their individual abilities to achieve higher productivity.
- 73.4% of participating executives expressed that they were beneficial to the establishment and that the existing work environment allows them to enhance their skills.

b) Results of Chi-Square test

A Chi-Square test was used to determine if the relationship between two variables was statistically significant [8]. As the presentation of all the results of the test and question groups separately takes up a lot of space, results are given as a whole in **Table 1**.

When **Table 2** is examined, as the significance values obtained meet the circumstance of $p < 0.05$ to the fullest extent, we can say that there is a relationship be-

tween the cultural structure of the establishment and productivity management.

■ Conclusion and suggestions

In this research, a survey was conducted amongst 360 mid-level and senior managers in a total of 19 medium and large-scale confection firms. The results obtained were analysed with SPSS 16.0 software. At the end of the analyses conducted, it was confirmed that the institutional cultural structure effects an establishment's productivity management and, hence, its productivity. The results of the Chi-Square test support this as well. The most important findings obtained through the analysis process of the survey conducted on executives of mid and senior levels are as follows;

- A performance evaluation and development system intended for adults will increase the skills and satisfaction level of employees as well as their performance. As a consequence of the development obtained, as specified above, the productivity of the establishment will also increase.
- Authority sharing by top senior executives is sure to be one of the most important factors supporting the formation of an organisational culture in establishments. While on one hand authority sharing causes employees to believe in and rely on themselves, on the other it gives rise to an increase in work productivity.
- Education intended for individual development, celebration repeated at certain periods and presenting awards to those working efficiently all strengthen one's sense of belonging to the establishment. As a consequence,

the ratio of employees frequently leaving their job decreases.

- The fact that educational and informative meetings are regularly held within any organisation plays an important role in increasing and strengthening the organisational culture. With the contribution of such meetings, a team spirit will also be ensured, which is sure to bring synergy and increase the productivity of the establishment.
- There should be a data processing system that is compatible with the organisational culture so as to monitor the productivity of the establishment.

To become successful in changing and developing competition circumstances, the ready-to-wear industry should attach importance to productivity, which is only possible with the participation of employees and striving for the common goal of the establishment.

In today's conditions, being competitive is not possible with cheap labour only but with the work of a well-educated, adapted-to-the-company workforce who is continuous, qualified, efficient and active.

Turkish ready-to-wear firms which are striving to sell products both in national and international markets should create a corporate culture and share it with their employees, providing continuous change and development.

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ERRATA

In issue No.5(88)/2011, vol.19, in the article of Selin Hanife Eryuruk, Fatma Kalaoglu and Murat Baskak 'Logistics Centre Design for the Turkish Clothing Industry' some misprints appeared: On page 21, Table 6 should be replaced by the Table given below.

We apologise to the authors and readers for this error.

Editor-in-Chief

Table 6. Facilities of a clothing logistics centre.

	Clothing facilities	OK (expert number)	OK, %	Outsourcing rate, %	Turkey clothing production, piece/month	Clothing logistic centre capacity, piece/month	Unit space, m ² /piece	Total space required for a clothing logistics center, m ²
First questionnaire results	Accessories production	3	15.00	99.00	137,965,615			
	Fabric warehouse and bonded warehouse	13	65.00	3.82				
	Packaging/hanging goods	13	65.00	11.76				
	Distribution preparation (Order preparation. product classification)	14	70.00	11.47				
	Finished product store	17	85.00	13.24				
	Inspection	16	80.00	58.97				
	Design offices	13	65.00	8.53				
	Trade centre-show rooms	15	75.00	3.53				
Representative firms	16	80.00	68.24					
Second questionnaire results	Cutting room	21	38.18	12.21	137,965,615			
	Sewing room	18	32.73	30.88				
	Printing workshop	20	36.36	87.35				
	Embroidery workshop	21	38.18	87.79				
	Pattern room	23	41.82	2.94				
	Accessories warehouse and bonded warehouse	40	72.73	3.53				
After production / before distribution operations	39	70.91	12.06	16,638,653	0.0053	88,185		
Laboratory	36	65.45	47.35	65,326,719	0.0004	26,131		
Total space								485,283