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The Impact of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance Through Trust: a study in the Arab real estate companies in Istanbul

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Abstract

This study explores how Hofstede's (1980) national cultural dimensions (Power Distance, Individualism, Collectivism, Femininity, Masculinity, and Uncertainty Avoidance) influence organizational performance, with a focus on organizational trust as a potential mediator. Data were gathered via a survey distributed to 403 employee-managers in Arabic real estate agencies in Istanbul. The results of the regression analysis indicate that cultural dimensions significantly and positively affect organizational performance, both directly and indirectly through enhanced organizational trust. These findings underscore the importance of cultural alignment and trust-building in strengthening organizational outcomes within multicultural business environments.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Organizational Trust, Organizational performance

1. Introduction

The dynamics of today's economy, such as globalization, technological progress, and changing customer's demands, drive competition among businesses (Walker, 2009; Crook et al., 2006; Teece, Pisano, and Shuen, 1997). A primary goal of strategic management is competitive advantage, which is reflected in superior economic performance.

In this situation, employee involvement is essential to the success of the company (Nier, 2009; Isa, Ugheoke & Noor, 2016). Employee performance and organizational success are significantly impacted by organizational culture (Durgadevi and Vasantha, 2017).

Turkey's real estate market contributes significantly to the country's economy by creating jobs and business possibilities in a variety of industries (EPRA Global REIT Survey, 2016). Positive socio-political ties and government initiatives, along with Istanbul's strategic location, draw Arab investment.

Managing trust across cultural differences becomes more important as workplace diversity increases (Schneider et al., 2013). Organizational cultures differ and have varying effects on performance; thus, there is no one-size-fits-all method to managing them (Iliuta, 2014). It is therefore wise to concentrate on developing a culture that supports increased performance.

In other words, Turkey has become a major player in the global real estate industry, drawing interest from investors and businesspeople. Cultural differences, however, make it difficult to launch new firms abroad.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how Turkish policies, regulations, and management practices affect Arab workers, as well as how Turkish culture is influenced by Arab and foreign businesses.

1.1 Organizational Culture

Schein (1985) defines organizational culture as the set of basic principles that a group develops to deal with external adaption and internal integration issues. These assumptions are regarded acceptable and are passed down to new members as the proper way to perceive, think, and feel.

Similarly, Hofstede (1984) defines culture as the mental programming that distinguishes one group from another. According to Ouchi (1985), organizational culture includes management's values, which shape patterns of activity, procedure, and conduct. Managers convey these beliefs through their behaviors, influencing future generations of employees.

Denis (1990) expands on organizational culture in her book, characterizing it as a coherent force that standardizes thought, feelings, and conduct inside a group, shared and distributed across the majority of persons, resulting in a distinct cooperative organism.

Culture is a multifaceted and complex notion that is difficult to define and understand. Researchers frequently simplify it by focusing on key traits referred to as culture orientations or dimensions. Various conceptual frameworks, such as those presented by Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), Hall (1976), Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993), and Schwartz (1992), identify essential orientations that can be used to evaluate cultural differences.

Trompenaars (1998) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1993) presented a novel model of culture. Their model examines differences in values and personal relationships across cultures and includes seven dimensions: universalism vs particularism, individualism vs collectivism, neutral vs emotional, specific vs diffuse, achievement vs ascription, attitudes toward time, and attitudes toward the environment.

The first five categories focus on interpersonal interactions, while the latter two are concerned with time management and society's relationship with nature. Trompenaars emphasizes the necessity of recognizing and resolving cultural challenges in order to reduce intercultural conflict. He proposes that culture is the way by which these issues are handled, with each country pursuing its own route toward its objectives. Trompenaars contends that successful businesses will effectively negotiate cultural differences, resulting in more harmony and profitability (Trompenaars, 1996).

Geert Hofstede (1980) developed the most commonly used model of cultural differences in organizational literature. Hofstede's approach, based on a survey of personnel from several nations working for major multinational corporations, proposes that different cultures can be recognized by their values. Some cultures value individual equality, whilst others emphasize hierarchies or power distances. Similarly, some cultures value predictability in everyday life and struggle with unexpected events, whilst others welcome ambiguity and change. According to Hofstede, understanding these value dimensions can provide substantial insights about organized behavior across cultures.

Hofstede's research entailed gathering IBM staff from over 60 countries to elaborate findings and analyze corporate culture based on these factors. His theory stands out for two reasons. For starters, it focuses on beliefs, assumptions, and moral principles rather than verbal or nonverbal communication. Second, Hofstede's methodical research projected these values onto a 100-point measurement scale, allowing for a comparison view across a diverse variety of civilizations. It is vital to highlight that Hofstede's hypothesis does not cover co-cultures.

Schwartz (1997) explicated that understanding how cultural values shape the interpretations of work requires considering culture-level rather than individual-level dimensions. He distinguishes between individual and culture-level value dimensions, defining values as guiding principles that influence the actions, evaluations, and explanations of social factors such as organizational leaders and policy-makers (Kluckhohn, 1951; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Because cultural value priorities are commonly shared, leaders in various social institutions can rely on them to select socially appropriate behavior and justify their decisions to others, such as engaging in war or disciplining employees. These applications of the cultural values approach offer insights into work centrality, societal norms about working, and work values, indicating the potential of this approach for understanding work-related aspects across different cultures.

Table 1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Power distance	It is the degree to which managerial and staff behavior is affected by a harmonious integration of formal and informal planning and activities, demonstrating the level of tolerance for an unequal distribution of authority.
Uncertainty avoidance	It is the extent to which people see uncertain situations as frightening
Masculinity-Femininity	It is characterized by a focus on caring and nurturing rather than achievement driven by competitiveness, assertiveness, and ambition
Individualism vs Collectivism	It refers to the degree to which a culture prioritizes individual interests over those of the group, seeking a balance between them, while Collectivism depicts a society where individuals are deeply ingrained in tight-knit groups that provide lifelong support in exchange for unwavering loyalty.

1.2 Organizational Performance

Performance remains a difficult topic among researchers, with different definitions and assessments used across firms (Barney, 1997). Perotti and Javier (2002) equate performance with a program's 3Es (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness), whereas Daft (2000) defines organizational performance as the achievement of goals through resource use. However, conceptual and measurement challenges remain in defining organizational success (Heffernan & Flood, 2000).

Academics generally associate performance with transactional efficacy and effectiveness toward organizational goals (Stannack, 1996; Barney, 1997), whereas Richard et al. (2001) distinguish performance from productivity, emphasizing that performance measures include outcome-oriented behaviors, training, and leadership development.

Organizational performance includes meeting internal and stakeholder expectations in order to thrive and expand (Pandey & Dutta, 2013), making optimal use of organizational assets (Sangiorgi & Siboni, 2017), and adjusting to environmental changes (Derek, 1998).

Individuals' motivation to attain organizational goals is also important (Mathis & Jackson, 2011), with a focus on collaborative efforts toward goals (Bernadin & Russell, 1993).

Organizational performance is influenced by a variety of elements; economic models stress market issues, whereas organizational models emphasize human resources, culture, and leadership. Dessler (2012) defines performance aspects as quality, quantity, supervision, presence, and creation, whereas Bernadin and Russell (1993) include timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and interpersonal influence. Performance is fundamental to management studies and correlates with organizational performance (Anitha, 2014).

Griffin (2003) defines organizational performance as an organization's ability to meet the needs of stakeholders while ensuring its survival, which includes factors other than profitability, such as market share and product quality. According to him, numerous factors influence organizational performance in different ways, either increasing or detracting from it.

1.3 Organizational Trust

Trust is a multidimensional topic with many views. Rousseau et al. (1998) define trust as a psychological state, whereas Coleman (1991) and Tyler (1996) approach it from a cognitive standpoint.

Despite varying definitions, trust is commonly regarded as a critical factor influencing corporate identification, communication, employee satisfaction, and performance. It promotes organizational change by encouraging openness and information sharing, which leads to better teamwork, leadership, and goal achievement.

Rousseau et al. (1998) define trust as the willingness to accept vulnerability in exchange for favorable expectations of another person's behavior. Fukuyama (1995) defines it as the expectation of honest and cooperative behavior in a society. While Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) define it as the willingness to be vulnerable in anticipation of the other party's activities, independent of monitoring skills.

Trust, is characterized by several fundamental elements:

- Trust is expressed as an optimistic expectation about a person's behavior
- It generally occurs when people are vulnerable about their interests.
- Trust is based on the acts of people and their demonstrated reliability.
- Trust is strongly tied to voluntary cooperation rather than coercion, which promotes mutual benefits through collaboration.

The importance of organizational trust has received increased attention in recent years, as indicated by various research and reviews (Tan & Lim, 2009; Cook & Schilke, 2010; Kramer & Lewicki, 2010). Scholars have highlighted the impact of trust on organizational learning, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal trust in creating a learning environment (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Dymock, 2003; Hoe, 2007).

According to Hoe (2007), lack of trust can lead to individuals being defensive in decision-making, stifling organizational development. Song, Kim, and Kolb (2009) said that, high levels of interpersonal trust encourage information sharing and cooperative activities, which strengthen the organizational learning process. Lagrosen (2012) emphasizes the role of trust-building in effective organizational learning.

1.4 The Relationship between Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions and Organizational Trust

The present study examines the influence of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on organizational trust, specifically focusing on masculinity-femininity, power distance, collectivism-individualism, and uncertainty avoidance.

Collectivism vs Individualism and Trust: Collectivism, which refers to the degree of interdependence between individuals, has been linked to higher levels of trust in cultures that value relationships and interdependence. This shows a positive association between collectivism and trust, with collectivist cultures generating more trust because they place a premium on interpersonal relationships.

Power Distance and Trust: Power distance is the acceptance of hierarchy in relationships. High power distance cultures are more inclined to tolerate hierarchical systems, which might affect trust levels. According to studies, trust develops differently in high power distance cultures, with supervisory supportiveness and communication influencing trust levels.

Uncertainty Avoidance and Trust: Uncertainty avoidance expresses people's discomfort with ambiguity. High uncertainty avoidance cultures may foster trust through processes such as prediction and intentionality, as people seek predictability in their relationships. The findings show that uncertainty avoidance has a favorable effect on certain aspects of trust.

Masculinity vs Femininity and Trust: The perception of trust is influenced by masculinity, which is associated with achievement and competitiveness. Cultures with masculine qualities may place a higher value on performance-oriented trust elements. According to research, in strong masculine communities, trust may be built on calculative and capacity processes, indicating a focus on incentives and abilities.

1.5 The Role of Organizational Culture on Organizational Performance

To remain competitive in today's economy, firms must prioritize offering new goods and services (Hambrick, 2007; Hambrick and Mason 1984). Research shows a strong link between organizational culture and performance (Fusch and Gillespie, 2012; O'Reilly et al., 2014; Uddin et al., 2013; Childress, 2013). According to some research, there is a favorable relationship between company culture and financial performance. However, there is debate about the impact of a "strong culture" on performance (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Carroll, 1982; Saffold, 1988), with calls for a better understanding of the relationship (Denison, 1991; Gordon and DiTomaso, 1992; Kotter and Heskett, 1992).

Researchers have investigated various aspects of organizational culture, such as adaptability (Denison and Mishra, 1995; Wilderom and Berg, 1998), cultural practices (Hofstede, 1990; House et al., 2004; Pfeffer, 1997; Wilderom, 1998), and cultural components (Rousseau, 1990; Calori and Sarnin, 1991; Marcoulides and Heck, 1992; Petty et al., 1995; Koene, 1996). However, there are criticisms of the restricted emphasis on managerial perspectives when analyzing culture (Ashkanasy et al., 2000).

Productivity, profitability, growth, and other outcomes are all considered aspects of organizational performance. Market culture is strongly associated with economic success, as evidenced by various research (Berg and Wilderom, 1998). Employee empowerment, external attention, collaboration, human resource focus, and inclination for performance improvement are all important markers of how organizational culture affects performance (Unger et al., 2014). Finally, recognizing the relationship between organizational culture and performance is critical for meeting strategic objectives and remaining competitive.

1.6 Relationship between Organizational Trust and Performance

Organizational trust is widely regarded as critical to business success, as it promotes internal coherence and allows for effective functioning (Argyris, 1964; Zand, 1972; Scott, 1981; Gambetta, 1988). Trust enhances performance and effectiveness, whereas distrust reduces product or service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, & Winograd, 2000; Johnson & Auh, 1998). favorable employee attitudes towards work, motivated by trust, have a favorable impact on customer satisfaction (Morrison, 1995; Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997).

However, empirical data on trust's direct impact on organizational performance is mixed (Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Katsikeas, Skarmeas, & Bello, 2009). Organizational learning capability is also a component that influences organizational performance. Trust can promote employee risk-taking and collaboration (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; La¨msa¨ & Pucetaite, 2006), but it can also have negative effects on performance (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Nooteboom, Berger, and Noorderhaven, 1997; Gargiulo and Ertug, 2006).

As a result, the relationship between organizational trust and performance is complex, with trust possibly serving as a double-edged sword (Gaur et al., 2011). It is proposed that the impact of trust on performance is mediated by other firm capacities, such as organizational learning, rather than having a direct influence (Gaur et al., 2011). Thus, more research into the mechanisms by which trust operates and its relationship with other organizational capabilities is required to understand its true impact on performance.

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

The field research investigates the direct influence of organizational culture on organizational performance and its indirect effect through organizational trust among employees and managers in Arab real estate agencies in Istanbul.

The study is based on a model developed by a thorough examination of previous studies. Independent variables include cultural dimensions (power distance, individuality, collectivism, femininity, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance) and organizational trust. It implies that organizational culture has both direct and indirect influences on organizational performance, as mediated by organizational trust. The conceptual model illustrates how these elements interact to influence organizational performance among employees and managers in Arab real estate agencies in Istanbul.

Research has consistently demonstrated the link between culture and performance (Lim, 1994). This linkage has been linked to the long-term competitive advantage of organizational competencies, notably in contacts with competitors (Garcia-Falcon and Saa-Pere, 2002). Academics and practitioners have highlighted the need of regulating culture based on performance levels. Understanding the relationship between culture and trust is thought critically since it helps improve manager-staff relations and decision-making, particularly in industries such as real estate. For example, understanding how culture promotes performance via organizational trust can assist real estate managers in determining the relationship between national culture and performance.

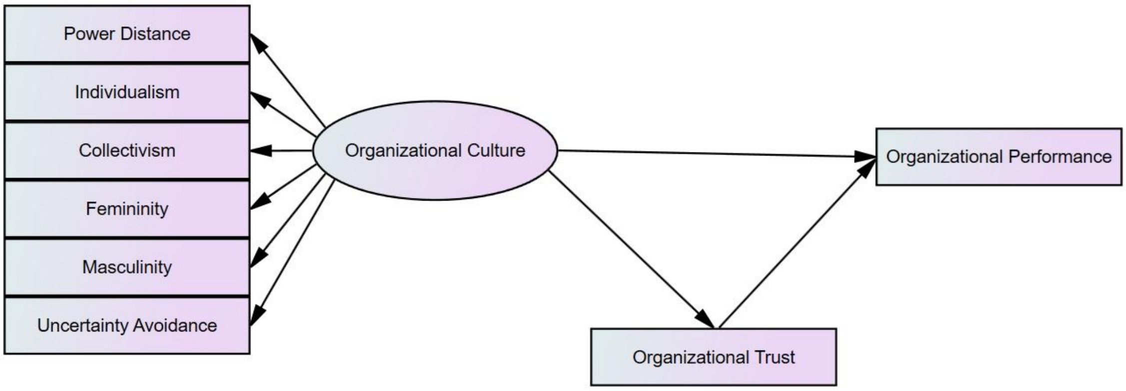

Figure 1. Research Model

The nine study dimensions—Organizational Culture (OC), Power Distance (PD), Individualism (IND), Collectivism (COL), Masculinity (MAS), Femininity (FEM), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Trust, and Organizational Performance (OP)— and hypothesis are examined using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)-Amos version 20 (Analysis of Moment Structure) program

The study used the two-step Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate measurement model fit and idea validity (Hair et al. 2014). CFA in the context of SEM reveals the link between factors and measured variables (Byrne, 2010). The overall model's goodness of fit was assessed using stand-alone fit indices such as Chi-Square (χ^2), RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation), and SRMR (Standardized root mean square residual). Additionally, incremental fit indices such as the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI) were used. The cut-off values for these fit indices were based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) recommendations.

2.2 Hypotheses

H1: There is significant impact of Organizational culture (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS AND UA) on Organizational Trust.

According to research, numerous elements of organizational culture, such as power distance, individualism, collectivism, femininity, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, positively influence organizational trust. This study, using a cross-cultural perspective, investigates how these cultural factors contribute to the building of trust in companies. Understanding the relationship between organizational culture and trust allows organizations to adopt effective trust-building methods in a variety of cultural circumstances.

$H1_a$: There is significant impact of Power Distance on Organizational Trust

According to the theory, workers are more likely to have trust in their leaders and the company in cultures or organizations with large power distance, where hierarchical authority is accepted. A sense of security within the established hierarchy, perceived equity in decision-making, and clear role expectations are some of the foundational elements that support this trust. The idea that power distance has a positive effect on organizational trust is supported by Dirks and Ferrin's (2001) research on the relationship between leadership and trust in organizational contexts, which offers insights into factors that influence trust dynamics. However, the authors do not directly address power distance.

$H1_b$: There is negative significant impact of Individualism (IND) on Organizational Trust.

According to the theory that individualism (IND) has a negative, significant impact on organizational trust, employees may have lower levels of confidence in their leaders and the organization as a whole in cultures or organizations where individualistic principles are prevalent. An emphasis on individual objectives over group cohesion, a lack of shared values and standards, and a lack of collaboration and cooperation among team members are some of the elements that may be responsible for this detrimental effect. (Hofstede, 1980)

$H1_c$: There is significant impact of Collectivism (COL) on Organizational Trust.

This theory suggests that there will be a notable impact on employees' trust in their leaders and the business as a whole in cultures or organizations where collectivist values are prevalent. This effect could result from elements including a strong focus on cooperation and group cohesion, shared accountability and responsibility, and a feeling of belonging inside the business. (Hofstede, 1980)

$H1_d$: There is significant impact of Femininity (FEM) on Organizational Trust.

It suggests that trust within an organization is greatly impacted by femininity (FEM). The degree to which employees trust their leaders and the organization as a whole tends to be significantly impacted by cultures or companies that prioritize female ideals such as nurturing, cooperation, and happiness (Hofstede, 1980).

$H1_e$: There is significant impact of Masculinity (MAS) on Organizational Trust.

This idea implies that organizational trust is highly impacted by masculinity (MAS). Employee trust in leaders and the organization as a whole tends to be significantly impacted by cultures or companies that prioritize masculinity ideals such as accomplishment, aggressiveness, and competition (Hofstede, 1980).

$H1_f$: There is significant impact of Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) on Organizational Trust.

It makes the claim that organizational trust is significantly impacted by uncertainty avoidance (UA). This hypothesis suggests that there will be a significant influence on employees' trust in their leaders and the organization as a whole in cultures or organizations where uncertainty avoidance is high. These cultures or organizations are characterized by a preference for structured environments, adherence to rules and regulations, and aversion to ambiguity (Hofstede, 1980).

H2: There is significant impact of Organizational Trust on Organizational Performance

It implies that there is a high degree of trust between staff members, managers, and the company as a whole. This can lead morale, collaboration, and communication, which in turn improves organizational effectiveness and performance results Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2001).

H3: There is significant impact of Organizational culture (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS AND UA) on Organizational Performance

It demonstrates how organizational beliefs, practices, and behaviors are shaped by Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Productivity, innovation, employee satisfaction, and financial results are just a few of the areas of organizational performance that can be impacted by properly comprehending and controlling these cultural factors (Hofstede, 1980).

$H3_a$: There is significant impact of Power Distance (PD) on Organizational Performance (OP).

Organizational performance may suffer where there is a big power distance, or a significant gap between managers and employees. Communication obstacles, lower staff engagement, and a decline in innovation are the results that may appear. In contrast, greater empowerment, transparency, and cooperation may enhance organizational performance in settings with less power distance, when power is distributed more equally (Hofstede, 1980).

$H3_b$: There is significant impact of Individualism (IND) on Organizational Performance (OP)

Organizational performance may suffer in cultures or organizations where individualistic values are prevalent, such as valuing autonomy and personal objectives over collective cohesion. While individualistic cultures may be more innovative and risk-taking, they may also experience challenges with cooperation and teamwork, which can have an impact on overall performance results (Hofstede, 1980).

$H3_c$: There is a significant impact of Collectivism (COL) on Organizational Performance (OP).

Organizational performance may be impacted in cultures or organizations where collectivist values are prevalent, such as placing a higher priority on group harmony and cooperation than individual interests. Strong team cohesion and loyalty are traits that collective cultures may display. These traits can improve performance by fostering more collaboration and a sense of shared purpose (Hofstede, 1980).

$H3_d$: There is significant impact of Femininity (FEM) on Organizational Performance (OP)

Organizational performance may be affected in societies or institutions where female values—such as nurturing, cooperation, and quality of life—are valued highly. The prioritization of interpersonal relationships and employee well-being by feminine cultures can result in heightened job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity, all of which have a favorable effect on the success and performance of organizations (Hofstede, 1980).

$H3_e$: There is significant impact of Masculinity (MAS) on Organizational Performance (OP).

Organizational performance may suffer in societies where masculinity values like success, aggressiveness, and competition are valued. Assertive leadership and goal achievement may be valued more highly in masculine cultures, and this can result in better levels of performance in terms of competitiveness and productivity (Hofstede, 1980).

H3f: There is significant impact of Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) on Organizational Performance (OP).

It suggests that Organizational Performance (OP) is significantly impacted by Uncertainty Avoidance (UA). This implies that cultures or organizations that are highly uncomfortable with uncertainty are more likely to display particular behaviors and practices that have an effect on their overall effectiveness, such as a preference for consistency over innovation, a strict adherence to policies and procedures, and a resistance to change. (Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. H. (1988))

H4: There is an indirect significant impact of Organizational culture (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS AND UA) on Organizational Performance through Organizational Trust.

This hypothesis implies that Organizational Trust acts as a mediator between different organizational culture elements and Organizational Performance (OP), including power distance, individualism, collectivism, femininity, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. Stated differently, trust inside an organization is influenced by its culture, and trust in turn affects organizational performance, Dirks, K. T., & Ferrin, D. L. (2001)

2.2 Sampling Procedures

The study's target population for data gathering was conducted to employees and managers working in the Arabic real estate agencies in Istanbul. Snowball sampling method (or referral chain) which is non-probability sampling technique is employed. To verify and guarantee the validity of measurement items, a questionnaire was carried out through Google Form and it was distributed as broadcasts WhatsApp messages. The total number of distributed questionnaires were delivered to (520), the total number of respondents were (443). While the number of valid questionnaires was (403).

A frequency analyses encompassing a range of demographic factors is performed. The analyses include gender, age, nationality, education level, job title, working time and experience. Results shows that 77.4% of the respondents were male. Approximatively half of respondents (48.1%) were between 25 and 32 years old. The respondents' nationality revealed that a 33% were Syrian. In addition, 90.3% of the sample hold a university educational level. Majority of respondents work as call center with a percentage of 41.2%. 85.6% of total respondents have a full-time working hour. Most of respondents have more than 5 years of experience in the real estate sector.

Table 2. summarizes these demographic details

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage (N = 403)
Gender	Male	312	77.4
	Female	91	22.6
Age	FROM 18 - 25	25	6.2
	FROM 25 - 32	194	48.1
	FROM 32 - 40	147	36.5
	40 AND ABOVE	37	9.2
Nationality	JORDANIAN	32	7.9
	SYRIAN	133	33.0
	PALESTINIAN	40	9.9
	ERITREAN	4	1.0
	EGYPTIAN	37	9.2
	IRAQIAN	27	6.7
	YEMENIAN	11	2.7
	SUDANIAN	7	1.7
	LEBANIESE	21	5.2
	MOROCCIAN	21	5.2
	TURKISH	70	17.4
Educational Level			
	PREPARATORY	4	1.0
	SECONDARY	35	8.7
	UNIVERSITY	364	90.3
Job Title	CALL CENTER	166	41.2
	SALES	111	27.5
	TEAM LEADER	61	15.1
	MANAGER	42	10.4
	FREELANCER	23	5.7
Working Time	FULL TIME	345	85.6
	PART TIME	35	8.7
	FREELANCER	23	5.7
Experience	FROM 0 -1	19	4.7
	FROM 1 - 3	79	19.6
	FROM 3 - 5	134	33.3
	5 AND ABOVE	171	42.4

2.3 Participant (Subject) Characteristics

The measurements were adapted from the theories discussed in the literature review above and included the following 35 items as shown in Table 3: Power Distance (4 questions), Individualism (4 questions), Collectivism (4 questions), Masculinity (4 questions), Femineity (4 questions), Uncertainty Avoidance (4 questions), Organizational Trust (4 questions) and Organizational Performance (7 questions). The questionnaire included questions regarding the demographic characteristics of respondents. The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale according to whether respondents agree or disagree with each statement. Bhat et al. (2018). The first six headings measured overall organizational culture (Independent variables).

On a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree, each item in this section was assessed. The participants' gender, age, nationality, educational level, job title, working time, and years of experience were among the demographic data that was collected in the demographic section.

Table 3. Items for variables

Variables	Items
Organizational Culture	
Power Distance	-My supervisor usually makes decisions on his/her own but before going ahead he/she explains the reasons for the decisions and answers any questions.
	-In this organization, subordinates are afraid to express disagreement with their superior.
	-My supervisor usually makes decisions on his/her own and then expects the decisions to be carried out loyally and without raising difficulties
	-I prefer to work for any type of supervisor expect for one who asks me for advice and then announces his/her decision and expects me to loyally implement the decision whether or not it was in accordance with the advice I gave.
Individualism	-Having sufficient time left for my personal or family is important
	-Having challenging tasks to do, from which I can get a personal sense of accomplishment is important.
	-Fully use my skills and abilities on the job is important.
	-Working in a large and prestigious organization is important.
Collectivism	-Making a real contribution to the success of my organization is important.
	-Serving my country is important.
	-Working in a smaller, but desirable organization is important.
	-Having an opportunity for helping other people is important.
Femininity	-Having a good working relationship with my direct supervisor.
	-Working with people who cooperate well with one another is important
	-Working in a friendly atmosphere is important.
	-Having good physical working conditions is important.
Masculinity	-Having training opportunities to improve or learn new skills is important.
	-Working in a modern, up-to-date company is important.
	-Having an opportunity for high earning is important.
	-Having an opportunity for advancement to higher level jobs is important.
Uncertainty Avoidance	-It is important to follow the organizational rules even if I think it is in the organization's interests if I break the rules.
	-It is important for me to work in a well-designed job situation where the responsibilities and requirements are clear.
	-It is very important for me to have little tension and stress on the job.
	-It is important for me to have long-term security of employment.
Organizational Trust	-Employees here feel you can't trust this organization.
	-People in this organization will do things behind your back.
	-The level of trust among people I work with on regular basis is very high.
	-The degree to which we can depend on each other in this organization is very high.
Organizational Performance	-Our company evaluates organizational performance based on profits and market share.
	-Our company accepts that turnover influences organizational performance.
	-Our company accepts that the achievements of good employees will influence organization performance.
	-Managers in our company maintain good relations with employees.
	-Our company evaluates organizational performance based on employee innovation.
	-Our company accepts that high productivity influences organizational Performance.
	-Our company evaluates organizational performance based on financial performance.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

To analyze the reliability of scales, this study employed the analysis of Cronbach alpha coefficients using SPSS 11.0. All scales evidenced sufficient reliability as they exceeded Nunnally's (1978) reliability guidelines of 0.7. Thus, all measuring factors had high inner consistency and scale reliability of scales.

To evaluate the validity of questions for each factor comprising the independent variables, factor analysis was conducted. In this study, exploratory factor analysis was employed and confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS (Table 4) to analyze the relationships among variables suggested in the research model.

The principal component factor analysis on the structural constructs of this study was conducted via oblique rotation analysis, which did not assume independence among factors. The values of the factor loadings were greater than 0.5, whereas the variance extracted was greater than 0.6, thus indicating high convergent validity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998), as a consequence of the principal component factor solution with oblique rotation separately loaded on the same factor as the stated operational definition. This indicates that both the convergent and discriminant validity were high.

To evaluate the convergent validity on all latent variables, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS. Because the factor loading values were high, the measurement model had high model fitness. As a result of the factor analysis, the factors were shown to have high values of GFI (goodness-of-fit index: 0.9 or more), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Smith and McMillan, 2001) as shown in Table 4. and can be regarded as having convergent validity.

In order to evaluate the discriminant validity of measures, correlation analysis among inherent variables was conducted. Correlation analysis assesses the strength of the correlation among inherent variables, regardless of the subordinate or independent relationship of variables. The correlation among inherent variables is significantly lower than unity, thereby indicating discriminant validity of the variables (Table 5).

Table 4. Measurement properties of variables

Variables	Items	Loadings	Cronbach α	Mean	Std. deviation
Organizational Culture					
Power Distance			.792		
	PD1	.705		3.9479	0.9670
	PD2	.711		3.9330	0.9531
	PD3	.669		3.9975	0.9450
	PD4	.755		3.9652	0.9324
Individualism			.833		
	IND1	.695		3.9354	0.8380
	IND2	.769		3.9354	0.9037
	IND3	.712		3.9627	0.9202
	IND4	.652		4.0719	0.8850
Collectivism			.856		
	COL1	.754		3.9752	0.9084
	COL2	.738		3.9330	0.9583
	COL3	.787		3.9801	0.8919
	COL4	.791		3.9280	0.9475
Femininity			.806		
	FEM1	.728		3.8586	0.9961
	FEM2	.709		3.8834	0.9613
	FEM3	.748		3.9082	0.9298
	FEM4	.704		3.8288	0.9889
Masculinity			.810		
	MAS1	.738		3.9429	0.9692
	MAS2	.674		3.9826	0.9501
	MAS3	.745		3.9206	0.9534
	MAS4	.742		3.9032	.9557
Uncertainty Avoidance					
			.771		
	UA1	.743		3.9007	0.9950
	UA2	.628		3.9181	0.9649
	UA3	.759		3.9231	0.9258
	UA4	.715		3.8610	0.9776
Trust			.765		
	Trust1	.802		4.1538	0.7766
	Trust2	.851		4.1638	0.7616
	Trust3	.53		4.1017	0.8793
	Trust4	.654		4.0273	0.8931
Organizational Performance			.792		
	OP1	.715		4.0844	0.9685
	OP2	.625		4.1241	0.9085
	OP3	.659		4.0248	0.9001
	OP4	.785		4.1290	0.8599
	OP5	.678		4.1712	0.8333
	OP6	.771		4.1439	0.8861
	OP7	.851		4.1141	0.9070

3.2 Test of Research Hypotheses

To analyze the reliability of scales, this study employed the analysis of Cronbach alpha coefficients using SPSS 22.0. All scales evidenced sufficient reliability as they exceeded Nunnally (1978) reliability guidelines of 0.7. Thus, all measuring factors had high inner consistency and scale reliability of scales. To evaluate the validity of questions for each factor comprising the independent variables, factor analysis was conducted. In this study, we employed exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS to analyze the relationships among variables suggested in the research model.

The values of the factor loadings were greater than 0.5, whereas the variance extracted was greater than 0.6, thus indicating high convergent validity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). This indicates that both the convergent and discriminant validity were high. To evaluate the convergent validity on all latent variables, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS. Because the factor loading values were high, the measurement model had high model fitness. As a result of the factor analysis, the factors were shown to have high values of GFI (goodness-of-fit index: 0.9 or more), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Smith and McMillan, 2001) as shown in Table 5. and can be regarded as having convergent validity.

In order to evaluate the discriminant validity of measures, correlation analysis among inherent variables was conducted. Correlation analysis assesses the strength of the correlation among inherent variables, regardless of the subordinate or independent relationship of variables. The correlation among inherent variables is significantly lower than unity, thereby indicating discriminant validity of the variables (Table 6).

Table 5. Statistical Model Goodness of Fit

Fit Index	Measurement Model (CFA)	Cut-off Criteria
X2	2.669 (0.000)	$p > 0.05$
Df	19	
CFI	.967	CFI>0.95
TLI	.952	TLI>0.95
RMSEA	.48	RMSEA<0.06
SRMR	.024	SRMR<0.08

Note. $\chi2$ = chi-square; df = degree of freedom; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker-Lewis fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = standardized root mean residual Source: Hu & Bentler (1999).

Table 6. Correlation analysis among inherent variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
PD	1							
IND	.759**	1						
COL	.783**	.788**	1					
FEM	.766**	.758**	.817**	1				
MAS	.748**	.757**	.821**	.865**	1			
UA	.722**	.727**	.847**	.832**	.845**	1		
TRUST	.207**	.202**	.206**	.171**	.177**	.171**	1	
OP	.307**	.283**	.334**	.223**	.234**	.271**	.334**	1

The study results are as follows. First, this study assessed the way that organizational culture affects directly organizational performance. As the result of the analysis, the organizational culture (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS, and UA) has a positive effect on organizational performance and its hypothesis (H3) is accepted as (Std. Coeff. = 0.303, t-value= 6.370, $p<0.05$). Therefore, any increase in the Organizational Culture will positively affect the Organizational Performance (OP). Secondly, this study assessed also the way that organizational culture affects organizational performance indirectly through trust. As the result of the analysis of (H4), the organizational culture (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS, and UA) has a positive effect on organizational performance through trust as (Std. Coef. = 0.056, p-value= 0.007 ($p<0.05$)). Third, the results for testing the effect of Organizational Trust on Organizational Performance (OP) in (H2) show that there is significant direct effect (Std. Coef. = 0.334, t-value= 7.100, $p<0.05$). Therefore, any increase in the Organizational trust will positively affect the Organizational Performance (OP).

It can be said that all the main hypothesizes are accepted. Concerning the secondary hypothesizes, it is important to mention that some sub-hypothesizes were not supported.

The following table (Table 7) shows the results of path analysis.

Table 7. Results of Path Analysis

Path to	Path from	Ha	Std. Coeff.	t-value	P-value
Direct Effects					
Organizational Trust	H1: Organizational culture	H1: Supported	.188	3.829	.000
	$H1_a$: Power Distance	$H1_a$: Supported	.214	2.454	.015
	$H1_b$: Individualism	$H1_b$: Supported	-.301	-3.447	.001
	$H1_c$: Collectivism	$H1_c$: Supported	.242	2.191	.029
	$H1_d$: Femininity	$H1_d$: Not Supported	.004	.038	.970
	$H1_e$: Masculinity	$H1_e$: Not Supported	.069	.620	.536
	$H1_f$: Uncertainty Avoidance	$H1_f$: Not Supported	-.030	-.283	.777
Organizational Performance	H2: Organizational Trust	H2: Supported	.334	7.100	.000
	H3: Organizational Culture	H3: Supported	.303	6.370	.000
	$H3_a$: Power Distance	$H3_a$: Supported	.179	2.126	.034
	$H3_b$: Individualism	$H3_b$: Not Supported	.069	.810	.419
	$H3_c$: Collectivism	$H3_c$: Supported	.342	3.205	.001
	$H3_d$: Femininity	$H3_d$: Not Supported	-.203	-1.899	.058
	$H3_e$: Masculinity	$H3_e$: Not Supported	-.114	-1.051	.294
	$H3_f$: Uncertainty Avoidance	$H3_f$: Not Supported	.067	.645	.520
Indirect Effects					
Path to	Path from through Organizational Trust				
Organizational Performance	H4: Organizational Culture	H4: Supported	.056		.007

3.3 Justification for the Non-Significant Effect of Femininity and Masculinity on Organizational Trust and Organizational Performance

The relationship between Femininity-Masculinity, organizational trust and organizational performance is typically found to be non-significant in empirical study, and numerous theoretical theories support this finding.

First, the Femininity (societal-level construct)–Masculinity (like competition, accomplishment, and gender roles) dimension is a national-level cultural value, meaning it defines countries, not people or organizations. Prior meta-analytic work (e.g., Taras, Kirkman & Steel, 2010) reveals that national culture variables often fail to predict individual-level attitudes such as trust and performance.

Previous studies emphasize that workplace behaviors, trust creation, and performance are shaped more strongly by organizational structures, leadership practices, and internal norms than by broad national cultural values such as MAS and FEM (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006; Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002). For instance, communication, organizational atmosphere, leadership integrity, and fairness all influence trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Organizational effectiveness depends on HR practices, leadership, innovation climate, and communication quality (Richard et al., 2009).

Additionally, scholars argue that applying national culture scores to organizational behavior is methodologically difficult because employees do not consistently operationalize national culture uniformly in professional contexts and settings (McSweeney, 2002; Brewer & Venaik, 2011). Empirical research further demonstrates that these gender-related cultural characteristics display weak or inconsistent correlations with trust, collaboration, and performance-related factors, suggesting limited explanatory value in organizational settings (Taras, Steel, & Kirkman, 2012). Therefore, the absence of significant findings in this study accords with the general literature indicating that FEM and MAS may be too broad and indirect to effectively influence trust or performance inside organizations.

3.4 Justification for the Non-Significant Effect of Uncertainty Avoidance on Organizational Trust and Organizational Performance

For a number of theoretical and empirical grounds, the idea that Uncertainty Avoidance (UA) independently affects organizational performance and trust is frequently unsupported. First, UA is a cultural characteristic at the national level rather than an organizational one. It reflects how societies deal with ambiguity—not how individual employees behave. Meta-analytic research (Taras, Kirkman & Steel, 2010) shows that national culture indicators rarely predict individual attitudes or organizational-level outcomes when used independently.

Second, trust and performance are more strongly driven by organizational characteristics such as leadership integrity, communication quality, fairness, and internal work procedures (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002), which overshadow the effect of UA.

Third, organizational culture often overrides societal UA levels, as organizations create their own norms and systems for handling uncertainty (Schein, 2010; Schneider et al., 2017). Finally, cross-cultural research indicates uneven or poor connections between UA and trust or performance. Studies such as Doney, Cannon & Mullen (1998), House et al. (2004), and Javidan et al. (2006) indicated that UA does not reliably predict trust creation or performance results once contextual organizational variables are incorporated. Therefore, the independent impact of UA on organizational trust and organizational performance is logically limited and experimentally unsupported.

Although no additional statistical tests were performed, the mediating mechanism can be theoretically improved by describing how unique cultural factors may influence trust and, as a result, performance. For example, collectivism is expected to promote deeper interpersonal relationships and shared norms, which naturally increase trust and facilitate cooperative behaviors that improve performance. In contrast, a high-power distance may weaken open communication and reduce trust, limiting the positive influence on performance. Explaining these theoretical routes strengthens the case for trust's mediating function, even without post-hoc or subgroup analysis. It is important to mention that post-hoc analyses were not performed because the group distributions had significant overlap and minimal between-group differences, reducing the statistical significance of multiple comparisons. Additionally, comparisons restricted to extreme groups (very high vs. very low) were not performed due to unbalanced group sizes, which could undermine the validity and reliability of the results.

4. Discussion

The main purpose of conducting this study is to measure the impact of organizational cultural dimensions in Arabic real estate agencies in Istanbul on organizational performance through organizational trust. Numerous comparable research has been carried out in various contexts, but they have not integrated organizational culture aspects with trust and performance. In the Arabic culture of Istanbul, there are very few or no studies looking at how organizational culture affects performance and how trust in the organization acts as a moderator. The outcomes of this study have been clearly shown in the literature of international management studies thanks to its theoretical and practical contributions. In order to push the limits of management studies knowledge, this thesis first developed a model that experimentally examined the effects of organizational performance change as antecedents of aspects of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Second, the contribution to the growth of the organizational culture antecedents is evident when organizational trust is included as the mediating component of the model. In addition, it is among the few research carried out in countries in the Middle East. Lastly, the research concurrently offered some useful data to assist managers and staff in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul, in overcoming the challenges presented by cultural aspects and circumstances. This study observed prior literature and established a base for examining the impact of organizational cultural dimensions (PD, IND, COL, FEM, MAS and UA) and trust. The hypotheses presented in this study are tested and findings are presented. The presented findings revealed that independent variables such as Power Distance, Individualism and Collectivism have a significant impact on organizational trust, while there is no impact for Femininity, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance on organizational trust. In another hand, there is a direct impact for all independent variables Power Distance, Individualism, Collectivism, Femininity, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance on organizational performance.

The presented findings revealed that there is indirect impact between organizational culture and trust on organizational performance.

The non-significant impacts of masculinity, femininity, and uncertainty avoidance on organizational trust and performance are consistent with past research indicating that Hofstede's cultural dimensions generally fail to provide strong or accurate predictions at the organizational level. Based on the foundational critiques, applying national culture scores to individuals or firms is methodologically weak and lacks construct validity (McSweeney, 2002; Minkov et al., 2022). Empirical evidence also shows that these indicators do not consistently explain workplace attitudes or behaviors, with several studies demonstrating that culture scores measured at the national level have limited relevance for trust-building or performance outcomes within organizations (Farooq, 2020). Furthermore, studies such as Kirkman, Lowe, and Gibson (2006) and Brewer and Venaik (2011), proved that national culture scores do not consistently translate into workplace attitudes or organizational outcomes because employees do not strictly behave to national cultural stereotypes in structured work environments. In many cases, organizational norms already decrease uncertainty and specify behavioral expectations, limiting the impact of cultural preferences like UA on trust and performance (Newman & Nollen, 1996). Thus, the study's insignificant findings are consistent with previous research suggesting that national culture characteristics may be too broad or unstable to predict interpersonal trust or organizational performance in specific workplace circumstances.

In this study, trust remained a significant mediator of performance, but the cultural aspects did not strongly activate this pathway, implying that trust is generated primarily by organizational-level factors rather than cultural orientations. This explains why trust efficiently predicts performance even when cultural determinants have no substantial effects.

4.1 Recommendations

Although masculinity, femininity, and uncertainty avoidance did not reveal substantial direct effects on organizational trust or performance, these cultural characteristics continue to give essential recommendations for managerial practice. Understanding general cultural tendencies can help leaders anticipate differences in communication methods, conflict preferences, and decision-making expectations—even if these differences do not have a direct impact on trust or performance outcomes. Managers should prioritize strengthening organizational-level practices, such as honest communication, fair procedures, and supportive leadership, as these have a higher influence on trust than cultural attributes. At the same time, knowing cultural values can improve team cohesion, eliminate misunderstandings in diverse workplaces, and inform culturally sensitive HR practices.

Specific recommendations include:

- Emphasize organizational culture over national culture by investing in internal culture-building techniques.
- Train leaders to build trust by promoting behaviors like justice, transparency, and integrity, which directly impact trust development.
- Use cultural values as communication guides, not performance predictors because the use of cultural values improves collaborations and participation
- Create adaptable HR policies that accommodate varied preferences, such as teamwork versus independence, while avoiding cultural generalizations.

- Encourage inclusive work settings by acknowledging that cultural variations can impact comfort, engagement, and interpersonal dynamics, even if they do not directly affect performance.

4.2 Limitations

A notable weakness of this study is the sample's demographic imbalance, which includes a disproportionately high number of male participants and staff working in call center roles. This skewed distribution may not accurately reflect the larger employee population, limiting the findings' generalizability across all organizational units and demographic categories. Although such imbalances are prevalent in accessible sample environments, they might generate bias by exaggerating the views and experiences of select subgroups. Future research should use more balanced sample methods, such as quotas or stratified sampling, to ensure equal representation of gender, job categories, and organizational departments. Furthermore, future research should undertake subgroup analyses or add demographic controls to determine whether different employee segments interpret cultural dimensions, trust, and performance differently. Addressing these concerns would increase the reliability and external validity of the findings.

Authors contributions

Dr Hiba Mefleh was responsible on the literary and textual sections and the distributing of survey questionnaires. Dr Majdi Alhusaini contributed in the statistical analysis. Dr Majdi Alhusaini has agreed to be listed as a co-author. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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