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The Examination of Organizational Respect in Relation to Organizational Culture

The Thesis of: Amanda Walker

Abstract: This paper is an in-depth examination of the connection between organizational respect and the strong roots of organizational culture. Throughout this thesis, we will examine the importance of management recognizing and implementing respect, how respect affects other behaviors and characteristics of employees, and ways in which employees tend to feel the most respected. Additionally, we will closely examine the importance of establishing feelings of support, caring, and collaboration within an organization in efforts to create an environment filled with respect. Another concept that will be examined is the idea of person-culture fit, and how the alignment of values between employees and the overall organization can ultimately make or break its success. These concepts are important, because they collaboratively determine whether or not the organization will be able to sustain itself going forward. By the end of this paper, you will have a better understanding of the importance of organizational respect and how it contributes to organizational culture, as well as how organizational respect influences organizational culture and influences employee fit in organizations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The transition between college and a career is a giant leap for many individuals. It involves significant personal recognition and development, as individuals begin to understand and interpret values that they hold. Honesty, accountability, responsibility... These are just a few among many different values that individuals transitioning into the working world may begin to realize they hold near and dear to them. This intense process of self-searching takes a great deal of understanding and attention. For some, it may be easy. For others, it may not be as smooth of a process.

As individuals begin to make the transition into adulthood, it becomes time to think seriously about the future. This includes setting goals, making plans, and truly understanding the person that they want to become. For some, searching for a career can be one of the most difficult tasks. We ask ourselves questions, like, “Who am I?” “Where am I going?”, “How do I get there?”, among others. These are all very important questions in the quest for finding the perfect organization to begin the journey of the rest of our lives.

All organizations begin with a distinct mission, and a list of core values that they believe in or practice. For example, the mission of a recently popular line of grocery stores, Whole Foods, is as follows:

“Our motto—Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet – emphasizes that our vision reaches beyond food retailing. In fact, our deepest purpose as an organization is helping support the health, well-being, and healing of both people – customers, Team Members, and business organizations in general – and the planet (Whole Foods Market, 2014).”

The company also states, “and our Core Values are not just words on a wall somewhere: they’re guiding principles that inform every decision we make—from the daily, face-to-face interactions

with our customers to larger decisions that impact the way that Whole Foods Market evolves and grows (Whole Foods Market, 2014).” Some of Whole Foods Market’s core values include: selling the highest quality natural and organic products available, supporting Team Member happiness and excellence, creating wealth through profits and growth, serving and supporting our local and global communities, and many more (Whole Foods Market 2014). By developing a general mission and a set of core values, the company determines sets a standard for the behaviors that they expect from their employees and seek to find individuals that can carry out and live through the organization’s values. This is the first step to developing an overarching organizational culture.

Something that individuals must understand prior to their transition into the corporate world is their importance to the overall organization. Employees are the lifeblood of a company; without them, the company cannot carry out daily operations, make profits, or provide value to shareholders. Each and every employee is an integral part of the functionality of an organization, and this concept should be exemplified each and every day through management practices. Treating employees well determines how they will behave, and how they will behave determines whether or not the company can survive.

Throughout this paper, we will be examining the concept of organizational culture. Additionally, we will take a look at how a specific factor, respect, influences organizational culture. Respect within a company is a determining factor of the perception of organizational culture in organizations. Another concept that will be examined is the idea of person-culture fit, and how the alignment of values between employees and the overall organization can make or break its ultimate success. These concepts are important, because they collaboratively determine whether or not the organization will be able to sustain itself moving forward.

THESIS STATEMENT: The success of organizations depends on the alignment of values between employee and organization, which can be examined through performance and behaviors that are heavily influenced by respect and affect the perception of organizational culture. Throughout this paper, we will examine how organizational respect influences organizational culture and influences employee fit in organizations.

A. Research Question

Do perceptions of organizational respect impact organizational culture?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. What is Organizational Respect?

Respect can present itself in many different forms and ideas; however, these can change depending on where you are located. Respect is similar to culture, in that differing nations can have very different interpretations of it. Citizens and nations are not the only ones who value respect; organizations do as well. There are always variations in how teams of managers define it, but respect typically includes the same overarching concepts.

In 2010, a team of researchers from The Respect Research Group and the Rotterdam School of Management conducted a survey on respect in the workplace (van Quaquebeke 2009). The survey was administered to approximately 600 employees, all of which worked for a broad range of companies. Employees were asked how they rated issues of respect with their colleagues and supervisors, and how they ranked interpersonal workplace respect compared to safety, salary, and career opportunities. The most popular response to this survey was that

employees needed a supervisor who treated them with respect. Respect scored much higher than the importance of having a high salary or excess time for leisurely activities. Some time later, a smaller survey of approximately 320 employees was conducted, showing that respectful supervisors are a rarity, that many employees are not treated with respect, and therefore do not feel that they can respect their supervisors (van Quaquebeke 2009).

Respect is a core value within an organization (Burchell 2011). In fact, many organizations consider it part of bottom line requirements; creating and maintaining a respectful work environment at all times (Burchell 2011). Respect plays a very important role in organizational recognition, engagement, and strong culture (Jacobsen 2013). An organization that implements strong values of respect is proven to be better at retaining talented employees and having employees that are committed to the organization (Burchell 2011). If an employee feels as though they are respected, they are more likely to have an effective relationship with a team, a manager, or the overall organization. Burchell states that “respect is not getting one’s way all the time, but it is always having one’s ideas and needs affirmed” (Burchell 2011:62). An employee that feels like they are heard is more likely to cooperate and collaborate with other members of the organization (Burchell 2011). Giving an employee respect can yield empowerment, innovation, and creation, all things beneficial to the entire organization. Employees will be given the satisfaction of feeling as they have a say, can make a choice, and be involved in something that matters (Burchell 2011). This is a value-added technique, as it allows the organization to grow and develop, while still allowing employees to grow and develop in their careers (Burchell 2011).

Developing an environment flooded with respect is crucial to the running of a “great workplace”. Respect is tied to many other values and feelings, including trust. The lack of

respect leads to a lack of trust, in turn inhibiting the overall operation and functionality of the organization (Burchell 2011). The essence of respect is said by Burchell to be how leaders set a tone: a tone for how employees and their contributions are seen (Burchell 2011). Workplaces that harbor respect demand that leaders demonstrate a legitimate interest in their workers as individuals, and not just as employees (Burchell 2011). A simple way for managers to break down and implement respect is to be practical, break down obstacles, and leverage existing opportunities (Burchell 2011). Respect is not simply “nice to have”; it is imperative in today’s corporate world (Burchell 2011). As a matter of fact, it is considered “top mind for today’s workers” (Jacobsen 2013). Brian Kropp, a management director at CEB, stated that “It’s not a do your work and keep your head down environment anymore, everyone is looking to be recognized and respected for their individual contribution (Jacobsen 2013).” Kropp’s statement has been backed by a 2012 study of social workers; whose results stated that respect was highlighted as a key factor for voluntary turnover among workers (Jacobsen 2013). Great organizations have managers that demonstrate respect, as well as demonstrating respect for their customers (Burchell 2011). In the end, it all circles around with the “People, Service, Profit” philosophy, currently practiced by Fedex; taking care of your people will allow them to deliver great service, resulting in healthy profits (Burchell 2011).

There are many different ways for leaders to evaluate and revamp the way that their organization exhibits respect. There are different categories of respect: recognition, evaluation, deference, attitudinal, and behavioral respect (Quelch 2011). Within each category, there are a series of questions a manager can ask to address the level of respect being implemented. Recognition respect addresses the customer, and how well their wants and needs are understood. Evaluation respect deals with market segments and the way that customers are being treated.

Deference respect addresses the understanding of customer contributions to company growth. Attitudinal respect discusses the company culture and the way that employees view the organization and if they harbor an environment in which customers should be respected. Lastly, behavioral respect deals with treating all customers and employees with respect in regards to service, asking permissions, and providing face-to-face meetings. All of these categories can be used to determine whether or not the organization is adequately exhibiting respect (Quelch, 2011).

For employees, perceptions of respect are affected by three categories: support, collaboration, and caring (Burchell 2011). Support stems from how a manager supports their employee's self-worth, professional development, and providing resources. With support also comes appreciation and recognition for a job well done. Collaboration regards manager involvement with decisions that impact an employees' work. The third category is caring; having a manager display that the employee matters to the organization.

The Great Workplace has a client who told a story in regards to her previous position with another company. She began by expressing her dread in attending work each day, followed by the physical and mental symptoms that she developed when she arrived each day. She expressed that she was constantly shuffled around, felt she was set up for failure, and was not properly trained. This employee worked in customer service, but was miserable. Her attitude and feelings toward her job were directly affecting her performance at work and therefore the customers that she dealt with on a regular basis (Burchell 2011). John A. Quelch stated that,

“To create long-lasting, mutually beneficial customer relationships, good leaders bring respect to the forefront. They communicate its importance, while at the same time staying aware of potential pitfalls and the complexities of demonstrating respect. Finally, they

assess how well the organization exhibits both respectful attitudes and behaviors toward customers.” (Quelch 2012)

In addition to affecting customer satisfaction, respect has been shown to impact other aspects of the organization. Throughout the rest of this paper I will discuss various business functions that are affected by respect. The bottom line is, when a leader demonstrates respect in the workplace, significant dividends are yielded back to them as the organization becomes more aligned, connected, and engaged (Burchell 2011). The lack of respect within an organization, vertical for authority or horizontal amongst employees, directly ties into the deterioration of group orientation (van Quaquebeke 2009). Without respect, there is no sense of “we”, and a lack of effort within the organization (van Quaquebeke 2009).

B. What is Organizational Culture?

When thinking of “culture”, many different symbols, stories, and behaviors may come to mind. Each and every one of us has a culture embedded within us, which could have been taught to us by family members, our communities, or even in our religion. Just as we all have our own personal cultures to live by, organizations also have cultures to live by. It is important to understand organizational culture, and what plays into how an organization lives through their culture each day.

Organizational culture is a topic that has been widely researched and analyzed over the last few decades (Ouchi 1985). Some researchers believe that this specific genre of research became popular because of Japanese firms between 1970 and 1980, as they were believed to have superior operating characteristics (Ouchi 1985). Many researchers tried to uncover links between Japanese and western firms, but failed to do so (Ouchi 1985). Another conclusion was

the possibility of national cultures breaking through modern corporate forms, inspiring the many different shapes and sizes of organizational culture (Ouchi 1985). Further studies suggested that this was the cause of differences in culture from organizational culture from firm to firm (Ouchi 1985).

The study of organizational culture is commonly traced back to anthropology (Ouchi 1985). The connection between these two areas of study stems from the anthropologists point of view and method being “borrowed” by the student of an organization (Ouchi 1985). It is clear that anthropology has influenced the study of organizational culture in countless ways, but it is not the only contributor. Another very important root of the study of organizational culture is sociology. Organizational culture can be looked at and understood as an extension of organizational sociology, a topic that discusses the regulation of social life through expression in organizations (Ouchi 1985). Since these roots have been suggested, there has been no single method or point of view regarding organizational culture that has taken precedence, as the study of this topic is a melting pot of ideas and approaches (Ouchi 1985). The concept of organizational culture is commonly described as “a riddle wrapped in a mystery wrapped in an enigma (Pettigrew 1990)”.

Organizational culture, according to Jung, Scott, Davies, Bower, Whalley, McNally, and Mannion in *Instruments for Exploring Organizational Culture: A Review of the Literature*, is considered to be a crucial and significant contributing to implementing organizational change (Jung et al 2009). This important consideration has lead to the need to understand culture better (Jung 2009). Researchers are constantly attempting to understand and conceptualize the nature, determinants, and predictions of organizational culture (Jung 2009). They also work to understand the relationship between all of the “variables” within such culture (Jung 2009). The

main question that researchers are trying to address relates to how the organization's culture can be changed to meet the needs of the organization (Jung 2009). Overall, their main interest is how culture is managed (Jung 2009).

According to "People and Organizational Culture: A Profile Comparison approach to Assessing Person-Organization Fit" by Charles O'Reilly III, Jennifer Chatman, and David F. Caldwell, the definition of organization culture is a difficult one to specify. It has been argued upon and debated over for many years, in response to several research efforts made to understand behavior within groups and organizations (O'Reilly 490). There are many ways to observe culture, study it, investigate it, and analyze it, a popular cause for such a debate (O'Reilly 490). Although there are varying methods to understanding culture, it has been agreed upon that all studies of culture, no matter where they originate, are similar in some ways (O'Reilly 490). The most common agreement of the broad definition of culture has been, "a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit (O'Reilly 490)".

Since organizational culture is a framework for building an organization, with the development of culture come several other important fundamentals. These fundamentals include assumptions, values, behavioral norms and expectations, and patterned behavior (O'Reilly 490). In fact, an organization's culture can have key linkages to the organizations values and assumptions, which are often considered the "defining elements" of the organization (O'Reilly 490). Values and assumptions can be the basis for the way that the organization develops their culture, things such as norms, symbols, and rituals (O'Reilly 490). Values are defined by "People and Organizational Culture: A Profile Comparison Approach to Assessing Person-Organization Fit" as "elements of a shared symbolic system which serves as a criterion or standard for selection among the alternatives of orientation which are intrinsically open in a situation." An

organization's values are therefore its internal beliefs and help to drive behavior within it (O'Reilly 490). When an organization crafts their values, they are then shared amongst the members of the organization, creating behavioral or social norms and expectations (O'Reilly 490). From these stepping-stones, organizations create a cultural system. The bottom line is that culture builds around values (O'Reilly 490).

Despite the fact that organizational culture can be conceptualized in many different ways, exploring organizational culture has developed into two broad categories, qualitative instruments, and quantitative instruments (Jung 1088). There are different dimensions of organizational culture ranging from observable to abstract ideas, but it is difficult to categorize these aspects further (Jung 1088). There is no end in sight for the complexity and contested ideas circulating this deeply intriguing concept (Jung 1091). There is little cumulative knowledge about organizational culture, and it will remain debated until there is further information regarding it. This can be seen by examining the many different instruments, both quantitative and qualitative, used to measure organizational culture (Jung 1091).

As previously discussed, there are plenty of ways to assess organizational culture. An individual must examine their own values and compare them to those that make up an organization's value system (O'Reilly 492). This suggestion was backed with the idea that when values and behaviors are shared "across units and levels" in an organization, they have a central value system (O'Reilly 492). An organization can then characterize their system by identifying values that apply to them, assessing agreement or disagreement amongst members, and drawing conclusions from prior research (O'Reilly 492). An organization can look at organizational intensity to determine how well their value system works. Intensity is displayed by the "approval or disapproval of those who act in certain ways (O'Reilly 492)", pertaining to those relevant

members of the organization. They can also consider crystallization: which is the general and vast agreement among organizational members on the values at hand (O'Reilly 1991). The only way for an organization to develop a concrete value system and culture is for congruency to exist among members. Organizational members need to agree on salience and importance of value in order to create a foundation of culture (O'Reilly 1991).

III. THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Organizational Culture

An important aspect of organizational culture that organizations must remember to consistently display is transparency. Transparency suggests that factors of comparison, both internally and externally, blend together (Hatch 2010). This allows organizational culture to be fully seen and be completely available for scrutiny under public eye (Hatch 2010).

Unfortunately, this means that employees can easily be swayed and accessed by stakeholder judgments and opinions (Hatch 2010). These opinions and judgments ultimately become the organizational image (Hatch 2010).

Another integral part of organizational culture is the concept of person-situation fit. The congruence between employees and organizations is a very important contributor to the study of organizational behavior (O'Reilly 1991). Culture within an organization is crucial to determining whether or not a person is the correct fit for an organizational (O'Reilly 1991). There are several paths that can be taken in studying person-situation fit (O'Reilly 1991). These two paths are “the exploration of the interaction of individual characteristics and broad occupational attributes”, and “the exploration of the fit between specific characteristics of an organization and the people in it” (O'Reilly 1991).

The exploration of the fit between specific characteristics of an organization and the people in it can be achieved in several different ways. One way is to study and match individual skills to job requirements (O'Reilly 1991). Another way is to study the relationship between individual characteristics and organizational climate (O'Reilly 1991). There are two major theories of vocational choice (Holland 1985; Super 1957), stating that individuals select a career similar or fitting to their self-concept (O'Reilly 1991). The idea that there are positive effects when an individual has a personality aligning with the demands of their career has been supported through empirical results (Mount & Muchinsky 1978; Spokane 1985). These results have also suggested that employees are more likely to stay in their jobs when they can achieve this successful match (Meir & Hasson 1982). Additionally, Lofquist and Dawis (1969) hypothesized that satisfaction finds its roots in "a harmonious relationship between the individual and his environment, suitability of the individual to the environment and vice versa (Lofquist 1969:45)."

Another study conducted by Tom (1971) discusses personality and the recruiting process; this study can be summarized by the hypothesis made that the greater similarity between organizational image and self-concept, the more individuals tended to flock toward that organization (O'Reilly 1991). Further, recent interest revolving around organizational cultures and their attractiveness or lack thereof to individuals has developed (Wilkins & Ouchi 1983).

Over time, organizational attractiveness has been discussed. When individuals look for an organization to be a part of, what do they look for? Schneider (1987) conducted a study concluded that individuals tend to be drawn to organizations that they feel have similar values as they do. Organizations tend to react in the same way; recruiting talent based on shared values and beliefs (O'Reilly 1991). From these processes comes a natural separation; if an individual

does not fit, they eventually remove themselves. Values are the framework for organizational culture.

With the importance of mutual beliefs within the organization comes external person-culture fit. This is where the importance of individual values aligning with organizational values comes into play. Past research has indicated that a solid fit between person and culture has been proven to increase performance, commitment, and satisfaction within the organization amongst employees (O'Reilly 1991). Although topics regarding organizational culture have been greatly debated, another agreement that researchers have shared is that culture plays an important role in determining how well an individual fits in with an organization (O'Reilly 1991). Organizational fit, also referred to as organizational congruence, is crucial to the study of organizational behavior (O'Reilly 1991).

As situations occur daily within organizations, there are bound to be differing reactions and responses. Combinations of individual and situational aspects typically influence the way that an employee will respond to a situation (O'Reilly 1991). The employee's values and expectations are the foundation of situational responses, and they can be motivated even more so to behave a certain way with the help of incentive systems and behavioral norms implemented within the organization (O'Reilly 1991). These aspects can help to persuade attitudes and general behavioral responses. The concept of person-culture fit applies to careers and job choices, workplace adjustment, as well as the climate and environment internally (O'Reilly 1991). The only way to utilize the person-culture fit process effectively is the ability of managers to assess relevant aspects of the individual and the culture (O'Reilly 1991).

B. Social Identity Theory

As seen in the previous section, we understand that culture is a set of shared perceptions among individuals. Therefore, perceptions of culture make up an organizational identity. An organization's identity is considered a "relational construct" defined by the differences in "how we are" and "how others see us" (E.G. Albert & Whetten 1985). Values are extremely important to organizational culture, and this is linked to the process of identity formation (O'Reilly 1991). Through this process, employees seek a social identity that will provide them with meaning and connectedness (O'Reilly 1991). Research shows that employees typically classify themselves into categories to define themselves (O'Reilly 1991). Some of these categories include gender, race, ethnicity, and organizational affiliation (O'Reilly 1991). More often than not, individuals are attracted to others that they feel are similar to them (O'Reilly 1991). Based on values that they hold, "individuals may manage their lives in ways that help them choose congruent roles, occupations, and even organizations (O'Reilly 1991)." According to Schneider (1987), individuals are drawn to organizations that they feel have similar values as them (O'Reilly 1991). Additionally, organizations recruit employees who are believed share their values (O'Reilly 1991). Values typically provide a starting point for the organization, and then selection and socialization complete the linkage or person-organization fit. Congruence of individual and organizational values is the crux of person-culture fit (O'Reilly 1991). Transparency should be considered in this context as well, as it suggests that the internal and external poles of comparison blend together (Hatch et al 2010). Transparency makes us aware of the extent that organizational identity is established and transformed (Hatch et al 2010).

C. Organizational Respect

Respect within an organization can impact much more than many managers consider. The way that supervisors within an organization treat employees has a distinct and direct impact on their performance (Burchell 2011). Additionally, an employee who does not feel they are respected within an organization will be significantly less likely to treat customers with respect, negatively affecting the reputation of customer service within a company. However, respect influences much more than simply employee performance and customer satisfaction (Burchell 2011).

Many managers seek to work with employees possessing characteristics such as creativity, dedication, as well as the ability to innovate and achieve. Things like creativity and innovation tend to blossom much more if an employee is involved in the process (Burchell 2011). It is important to understand what this entails. When employees are involved in the implementation of new processes, the creation of new products, or the change of rules and operations, they are much more likely to be successful (Burchell 2011). For example, employees tend to be more creative and innovative if they are allowed to brainstorm, think together, and be involved in the decision making process (Burchell 2011). If employees are involved in decision making, their understanding of why decisions are made increases and encourages them to be more appreciative of management efforts to improve or change (Burchell 2011). In turn, sharing the decision making process allows employees to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for successful implementation (Burchell 2011). Additionally, holding employees accountable for their performance or behavior, or following through in general, lets employees know that their ideas matter and will be listened to (Burchell 2011). Employee innovation levels also tend to improve if they feel they have manager support, and can take a risk on behalf of the

business even if it turns out to be a mistake (Burchell 2011). The bottom line is that there are many more dividends back to management if respect is demonstrated to employees (Burchell 2011). The organization will realize “a more aligned, connected, engaged, and committed workforce (Burchell 2011).”

The level of respect that employees feel they are receiving can be a determinant of their dedication, motivation, and overall employee morale. These factors are crucial to the success of the overall organization. There are three main areas of behavior or treatment that affect employee perceptions of respect within an organization (Burchell 2011).

The first area that affects employee perceptions is support. Support is considered to be “manifested the in the way managers support individual professional worth, through offering training and professional development, and through ensuring that people have the resources they need to do their job (Burchell 2011)”. Along with the aforementioned considerations, employees also look for their accomplishments to be recognized, and a general sense of appreciation if they are going “the extra mile”. The main focus of support is ensuring that employees have the ability to grow and develop their careers, with the help of necessary resources (Burchell 2011). An important piece of the puzzle in terms of employee respect is that employees do not have mistakes held against them (Burchell 2011).

Support can be broken down into two categories: supporting professional worth, and supporting individual effort. In terms of supporting professional worth, there are two major ways that managers can help their employees be successful. These two ways are, “1) by thinking comprehensively about the type of development the person requires”, and, “2) getting him or her the right tools, equipment, and other materials needed to complete his or her assigned work or accomplish goals (Burchell 2011:65)”. This involves covering more than just “the basics”, but

also encouraging the employee's overall career development (Burchell 2011). If managers have an understanding of their employees' hopes, talents, aspirations, goals, and dreams, they can better direct employees and help to align their paths with opportunities most beneficial to their goals. Great managers even actively seek out opportunities that they feel employees will benefit from (Burchell 2011). The more creatively that a manager supports their employees, the more beneficial it is to all parties involved. Managers must implement supportive practices and a strong commitment of time and energy to make employees and the organization successful (Burchell 2011). Employee support is a very involved process, and is more than just handing employees the next promotion (Burchell 2011). It requires true dedication to promoting growth and development and offering a helping hand in ways that promote employee welfare.

In great workplaces, part of supporting employees and their professional worth comes from managers not only identifying opportunities, but also anticipating them (Burchell 2011). Great managers understand the parallels between growing people and growing the organization, as in today's economy, when a company is not growing, it is shrinking (Burchell 2011). These great managers also recognize that giving employees space to create and invent exemplifies respect for their thoughts, opinions, and ideas.

The second category of support is the support of individual effort. A common question asked to managers amongst employees is "where am I?" and "where am I going?" (Burchell 2011:70)." Employees want to know how they are doing and performing, which requires ongoing feedback. A great way for managers to provide feedback is "catching an employee doing something right (Burchell 2011:71)". Managers should aim to create an environment filled with appreciation, and seek to recognize good work, extra effort, ultimately paying attention to the recognition process (Burchell 2011). Employees are proven to feel more respected the more

that they feel sincere appreciation and recognition from managers (Burchell 2011). Managers should help employees learn from mistakes they make, as opposed to blaming them or put them down. Burchell states that “where you invest your time and attention as a leader serves as a powerful model for what employees see as important and meaningful (Burchell 2011:71)”. This greater focus on successful performance behavior encourages employees to respond with greater levels of energy and commitment at work each day (Burchell 2011). Great companies recognize employees when they go above and beyond, for professional contributions and achievements, and for tenure or service anniversaries (Burchell 2011).

Managers typically notice behavior that is aligned with the values instilled within the company (Burchell 2011). An effective way to demonstrate support and, therefore respect, within an organization, is the creation of recognition programs. These on the spot programs enable employees to be recognized immediately for their good work, faster than bonus processes (Burchell 2011). Cindy Ventrice, a consultant, stated in her book “Make Their Day! Employee Recognition that Works” (2009) that “in an international survey in 2007, I found that 57 percent of the most meaningful recognition doesn’t even cost a dollar... employees are looking for meaning, not things (Ventrice 2003:12).”

Employees perceive levels of respect through the amount of support that they are receiving from their managers. This support can be applied to their professional worth, or their individual efforts. There is a common thread throughout activities within organizations that demonstrate support; the respect the company shows to the employee (Burchell 2011). This includes respect of employee talents and interests, hopes and aspirations, and the whole person (Burchell 2011). Through the support activities, employees yield plenty of benefits. They gain the knowledge and development required to perform their duties, as well as ample opportunities

for growth that include learning life management skills that increase their levels of engagement, loyalty, and competence (Burchell 2011).

Collaboration is just as critical in the process of building respect as support (Burchell 2011). Employees seek feelings of collaboration and involvement in regards to decisions made about their careers. They want to feel as though they have a say in decisions that affect them, but that they also have support from their managers in making these decisions (Burchell 2011).

Collaborative idea exchange is another way that employees can feel respected (Burchell 2011). Co-founder of the Great Place To Work Institute, Amy Lyman, observed that,

“Ideas are everywhere—Individual ideas, group ideas, ideas that have been thought of, considered, argued over, discarded or never fully considered. There’s no shortage of ideas. Gaining access to ideas, developing and selecting them, and putting the best ones into action—making decisions, choosing among alternatives—those are real challenges.”
(Burchell 2011:73)

Leaders who extract employee ideas, help to develop them, and ensure they understand how their ideas are used in business processes demonstrate respect for employees. Every business runs into problems, and managers often times seek opinions and ideas from others in order to ultimately arrive at a solution or plan of action. With action plans and solutions comes internal impacts, such as changes in employee experience. Listening and asking questions can help address these changes to ensure that the employees are still feeling respected.

When managers ask questions, it is important that they are carefully crafted and considers what truly needs to be discovered (Burchell 2011). Management can even create systems and teams that work specifically on discussing key issues and solutions, allowing employees to gain company insight and build strong relationships between leaders and employees (Burchell 2011).

An important collaboration that must be evident is between management and employees; it is important that they do not feel a disconnect. Management seeking ideas also creates a perception of credibility and promotes two-way communication within the organization. Although collaborative decision-making seems trivial, it is not. It takes proper skills, structure, and training to be able to implement it effectively. Amy Lyman stated that “Two specific skills that, when practiced well, can greatly enhance people’s ability to work well together are those of practicing positive dissent and providing constructive criticism (Burchell 2011:75).” Positive dissent is “the fundamental challenge to the idea of being put forward, usually based on overarching values or goals (Burchell 2011:75). If leaders possess the skills mentioned, they will be able to listen more effectively, positively dissent when employees provide input, and then provide constructive criticism when they hear ideas (Burchell 2011).

Asking questions and incorporating ideas is not the end all, be all of implementing collaboration. Managers also need to “close the loop” with employees: which entails verifying that employees understand all parts of decisions. This includes the ultimate decision, its rationale, how employee input was used, and gaining employee support for the decision (Burchell 2011).

The third area that comes into play in employee perceptions of respect is caring. Everyone wants to feel cared for; but employees seek a genuine sense of caring from their supervisors (Burchell 2011). When asked to identify how employees feel respected by managers, they discuss how they feel cared about when they are at work (Burchell 2011). Caring comes from areas including the work environment, work-life balance, and sincere interest, all of which have special and unique benefits (Burchell 2011). The main behavior observed is the extent to which managers demonstrate an interest in the well being of their employees (Burchell 2011).

Safe, healthy work environments, and employee benefits are two ways in which managers can show employees that they are cared for (Burchell 2011). Managers who care for their employees recognize the impact of work on personal lives (Burchell 2011).

The work environment that employees operate in is directly correlated to the level of respect that they feel. Along with safe and healthy conditions, which are crucial, there is a very important formula that managers must understand (Burchell 2011). This formula states “behavior is a function of a person interacting in their environment (Burchell 2011:78).” Leaders must pay attention to both employees and environments to achieve positive results. Leaders can further their efforts of creating a respectful environment by allowing employees to collaborate with them in planning their workspaces. This opportunity enables employees to feel a sense of ownership and control over their immediate environment (Burchell 2011). Including features like skylights, indoor garden, common spaces, and open concepts help to foster greater levels of interaction, collaboration, and creativity (Burchell 2011). A key player in how employees feel about their work environment is the level of environmentally responsible practices. If employees understand that the company operates responsibly, they feel good about coming to work (Burchell 2011). The alignment of facilities and core values is critical, and their values should be represented in the structure of their facilities (Burchell 2011).

Work-life balance is another important aspect that managers should demonstrate extensive care for. Managers should constantly remind employees to create an appropriate work-life balance, and emphasize how important it is for employees to take time away from the workplace. Some practices that employers use to encourage this sensitive balance are flex-time, compressed workweeks, telecommuting, hoteling, virtual workspace, job sharing, phased retirement, and more (Burchell 2011). Great workplaces encourage employees to take advantage

of these benefits (Burchell 2011). This encouragement is especially important following employee completion of large projects, as they are more likely to feel recharged and engaged after taking a break (Burchell 2011). Attention and energy for work-life balance on the part of managers can be “the single biggest predictor of whether employees find balance and take care of themselves (Burchell 2011:80).” An organization that practices respect should have characteristics like caring woven into their values.

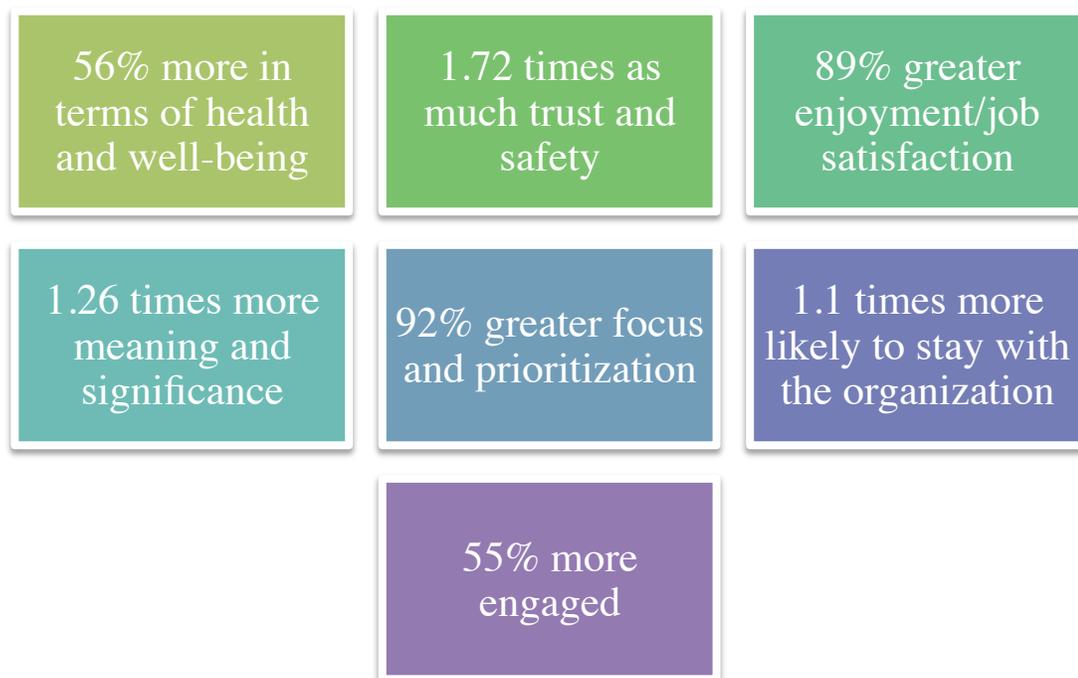
Managers should always express a sincere interest in their employees as people (Burchell 2011). A critical factor is to remember that employee perception always counts, and that as a manager, you cannot simply care about employees, you must show that you care (Burchell 2011). A manager that takes a few extra moments to check in with employees, get to know them, and can remember details about their personal lives are proven to have employees with positive perceptions of respect (Burchell 2011). Things that may seem small, such as asking how their child’s sports game went, can go a very long way and drive home feelings of respect within the organization (Burchell 2011).

An organization that offers employees special and unique benefits can also be very rewarding to the company. A commonality of employees’ senses of respect is that the benefits can be described as “only here” (Burchell 2011). These special and unique benefits are built on the foundation of caring for individuals and communities, and fit inside the context of the company culture (Burchell 2011). An important message to send to employees is “you are a part of us”, and managers can achieve this by offering benefits such as those listed above (Burchell 2011). At the end of the day, employees want to know that they matter (Burchell 2011).

Recently, Harvard Business Review conducted a study of 20,000 worldwide employees with the help of Tony Schwartz. From this study, HBR concluded, “when it comes to garnering

commitment and engagement from employees, there is one thing that leaders need to demonstrate: Respect (Porath 2014).” Out of all factors examined in the study, respect was the one behavior that had the greatest effect on the outcomes measured (Porath 2014). Employees agreed that feeling respected was more important to them than recognition, appreciation, communication and inspiring vision, providing useful feedback, and opportunities for learning, growth, and development (Porath 2014). Employees who felt respected averaged in the following categories (Porath 2014) (See Figure 1):

Figure 1 – Respect and It’s Effects on Employee Feelings and Characteristics



The Harvard Business Review Study indicated that respect influenced engagement within the workplace. The correlation was as follows: the more respect given, the greater the level of employee engagement (Porath 2014). With all of these wonderful factors, the study revealed some disheartening information. 54% of employees did not feel respected by their managers on a regular basis. Based on these frightening results, Christine Porath decided to take a deeper look

into why employees are disrespectful, uncovering that 60% “claim they are overloaded and have no time to be nice (Porath 2014).” Twenty-five percent claimed that “they don’t have a role model for respect in their organization, they’re just behaving as the leaders do (Porath 2014).” Thus, respect begins with leaders. An important takeaway from this study, according to Porath, was “Respect is directly tied to what a particular individual expects – and how the leader makes the person feel (Porath 2014).”

A specific example of the correlation between the success of the overall organization and perceptions of respect occurred within the company Campbell’s Soup. In 2001, Doug Conant, CEO, took over a company that was in not-so-great shape, to put it nicely. The company had realized a decline in market value of over half, steadily declining sales, layoffs, and an overall declining business. The environment within Campbell’s Soup was considered “toxic”, and pushed a manager from Gallup to comment on the engagement in the organization as “the worst [he had] ever seen among the Fortune 500 (Porath 2014)”. Once the CEO understood the severity of the situation, he took it into his own hands and decided to start showing employees respect. While he was CEO, he wrote over 30,000 individualized notes of thanks to the 20,000 employees at the company, going out of his way to demonstrate his appreciation and help them realize their importance to the corporation. In 2010, the situation was re-evaluated, and “employees were setting all-time performance records, including out-pacing the S&P by five-fold (Porath 2014).”

After examining and analyzing the results collected from the Harvard Business Review survey, as well as the statistics behind the almost destructive situation at Campbell’s Soup, Porath has been able to put together a few general conclusions. She states, “Our studies reveal that without respect, even if people want to perform well, they can’t...these costs chip away at the bottom line (Porath 2014).” When employees feel disrespected, they are highly likely to

respond negatively, and many end up leaving (Porath 2014). Approximately half of employees will purposely decrease effort or quality of work (Porath 2014). Studies have also shown that customers are less likely to buy from companies when they feel employees are treating them, or other employees, rudely (Porath 2014). It is imperative that leaders promote and encourage cultures of respect within their organizations to help preserve organizational culture. They need to be role models for civility, communicate how highly it is valued, and correct bad behavior (Porath 2014). In the end, “respect pays (Porath 2014)”.

Employee perceptions of respect are influenced by many factors. Some of these factors include feelings of support, collaboration, and caring from managers. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that these factors are maximized within the organization and throughout daily operations. By creating a climate full of these feelings, employees feel more comfortable and, therefore, more respected. Employees also want to be treated as a “whole person”, rather than being treated as “human capital”. Employees are less likely to be respectful if they feel they are considered another expense on the income statement (Burchell 2011). As managers typically start as average employees, it is important to always keep in mind the employee perspective—and practice the golden rule (Burchell 2011). Finally, leaders can actively model the behavior that they wish to see to help set the tone of support, collaboration, and caring (Burchell 2011). Leaders have the most important role in establishing an environment loaded with respect (Burchell 2011).

D. Propositions

The success of organizations depends on the alignment of values between employee and organization, which can be examined through performance and behaviors that are heavily

influenced by respect and affect the perception of organizational culture. Therefore, based on organizational culture research and our understanding of social identify theory and fit, we propose that:

- **Proposition 1:**
 - **Proposition 1A:** *The higher the perception of support, the higher the perceptions of organizational respect.*
 - **Proposition 1B:** *The higher the perception of collaboration, the higher the perceptions of organizational respect.*
 - **Proposition 1C:** *The higher the perception of caring, the higher the perceptions of organizational respect.*
- **Proposition 2:** *The higher the perceptions of organizational respect the stronger the organizational culture.*

Please refer to Exhibits 1 and 2 to obtain a better understanding of how support, collaboration, and caring influence organizational respect, and therefore lead to a stronger culture within the organization.

IV. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Based on what has been discussed throughout this paper, we think that organizational respect will lead to higher levels of culture, because of support, collaboration, and caring in the workplace. We have thoroughly examined how organizational respect influences organizational culture and influences employee fit in organizations. The success of organizations depends on the alignment of values between employee and organization, which can be examined through

performance and behaviors that are heavily influenced by respect and affect the perception of organizational culture. These perceptions of support, collaboration, and caring lead to increased perceptions of respect. Increased perceptions of respect lead to a high level of culture and a reinforcement of company values and beliefs.

Organizational culture is the framework for building an organization. Respect is a core value in organizations, and it plays a very important role in organizational recognition, engagement, and strong culture (Jacobsen 2013). The connection between perceptions of organizational respect and organizational culture are immeasurable, and the absences of these can severely detriment the organization.

Lack of respect in organization also has implications for management. An organization that implements strong values of respect is proven to be better at retaining talented employees and having employees that are committed to the organization (Burchell 2011). If an employee feels as though they are respected, they are more likely to have an effective relationship with a team, a manager, or the overall organization. Developing an environment flooded with respect is crucial to the running of a “great workplace”. Respect is tied to many other values and feelings, including trust. The lack of respect leads to a lack of trust, in turn inhibiting the overall operation and functionality of the organization (Burchell 2011). The bottom line is, when a leader demonstrates respect in the workplace, significant dividends are yielded back to them as the organization becomes more aligned, connected, and engaged (Burchell 2011). The lack of respect within an organization, vertical for authority or horizontal amongst employees, directly ties into the deterioration of group orientation (van Quaquebeke 2009). Without respect, there is no sense of “we”, and a lack of effort within the organization (van Quaquebeke 2009).

Employee perceptions of respect are influenced by feelings of support, collaboration, and caring from managers. Managers are solely responsible for ensuring that these factors are maximized within the organization and throughout daily operations, and filling the company culture with these feelings. This allows employees to feel more comfortable and, therefore, more respected. Employees also want to be treated as a “whole person”, rather than being treated as “human capital”. Leaders have the most important role in establishing an environment loaded with respect (Burchell 2011).

If management meets the needs of employees by immersing them with feelings of support, collaboration, and caring, the company reputation will improve, and in the future, candidates will be more likely to flock to the organization due to person-culture fit and the social identity theory. Perceptions of culture make up an organizational identity. Employees use the process of identity formation to seek a social identity that will provide them with meaning and connectedness (O’Reilly 1991). Based on values that they hold, “individuals may manage their lives in ways that help them choose congruent roles, occupations, and even organizations (O’Reilly 1991).” According to Schneider (1987), individuals are drawn to organizations that they feel have similar values as them (O’Reilly 1991).

V. EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1 - Factors Increasing Perceptions of Organizational Respect

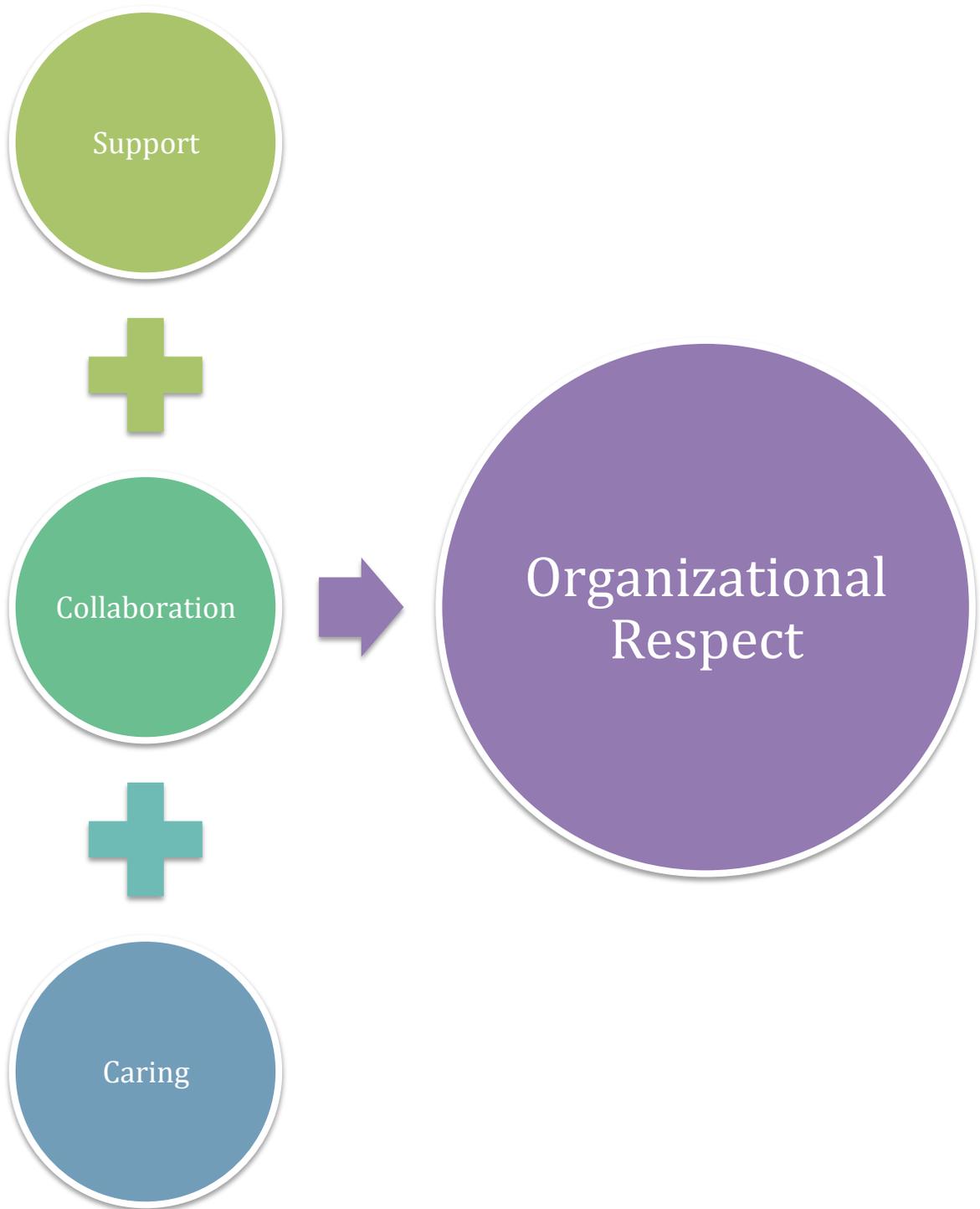
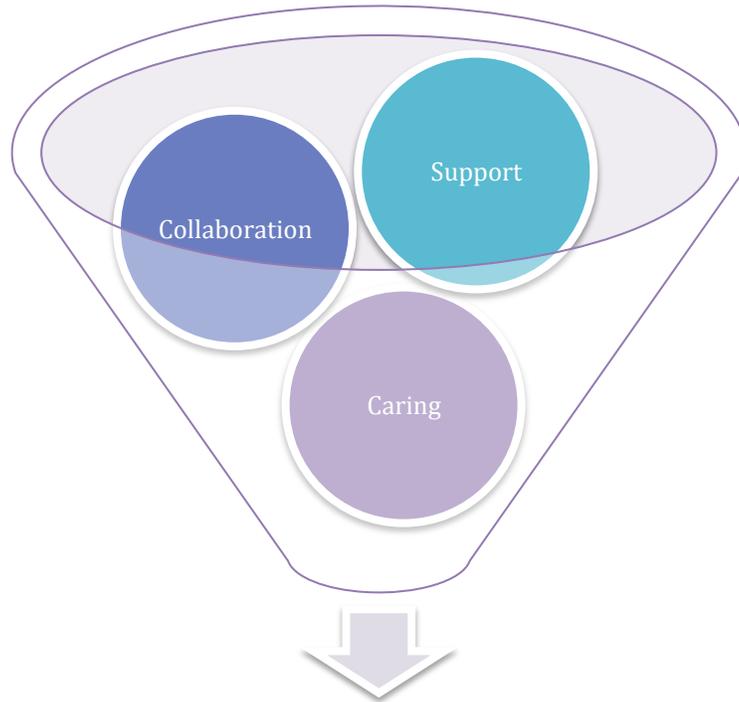
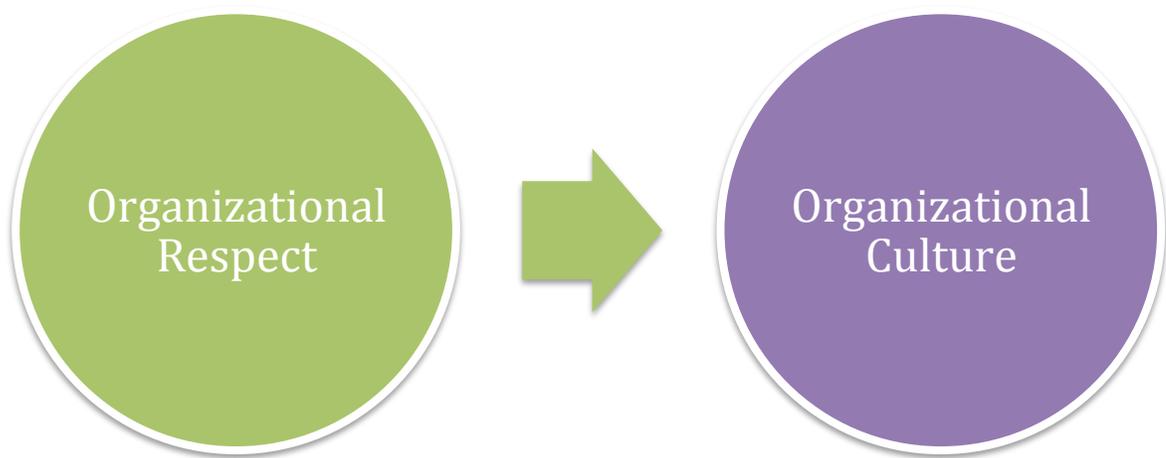


EXHIBIT 2 - Factors Increasing Organizational Culture



Organizational Respect



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