

Under the Scope of the OCAI:

Teach for America

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LDG700: Organizational Culture and Leadership

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Abstract:

This paper aims to assess the organizational culture of Teach for America (TFA) and provide recommendations for creating a stronger culture to support a stronger performing organization. The assessment will be based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF) and its four culture types: Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy considering course teachings on leadership, ethical practices, inclusivity, and effective communication.

Introduction

Teach for America (TFA) is a nonprofit organization that recruits and trains recent college graduates and professionals to teach in low-income schools across the United States.

According to its website, “Teach For America works toward the day when every child will receive an excellent and equitable education. We find and nurture leaders who commit to expanding opportunity for low-income students, beginning with at least two years teaching in a public school.”

This assessment will analyze TFA's organizational culture using the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). This assessment will also discuss the type of norms and behaviors that could create a stronger culture to support a stronger performing organization.

The Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) is a tool designed to assess an organization's culture based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). The CVF is a theoretical model developed by Cameron and Quinn (2011) that categorizes organizational culture into four types: Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy. Each of these types has its own set of characteristics, values, and behaviors.

Assessment Methods

To assess TFA's culture using the OCAI, I located and completed the OCAI assessment via OCAI-Online.com, which accurately represented all components of the scanned PDF assessment in an online format. Through its digital format, it also facilitated the data

management by then calculating and analyzing my results. Screenshots of my results are attached (*Figs. 1 and 2*).

Results

Based on my participation in the online OCAI assessment, I received the following results:

Your culture profile is a mix of:

- **Create Culture (Adhocracy Culture)**, a dynamic and creative work environment. Leaders are seen as innovators and risk takers. Experiments and innovation are a way of bonding. Prominence is emphasized. They want to grow and create new resources. New products or services are seen as a success. They value individual initiative and freedom.
- **Collaborate Culture (Clan Culture)**, a friendly, people-oriented workplace. People have a lot in common, and it feels like a large family. Leaders are seen as mentors. The organization values loyalty, tradition and participation. They emphasize long-term Human Resource Development. Success is defined as addressing the needs of the clients and caring for people. They value teamwork, participation, and consensus.
- **Control Culture (Hierarchy Culture)**, a formalized and structured workplace. Procedures direct behaviors. Leaders focus on coordination and organization. Formal rules and policies keep the organization together. They want to achieve stability and smooth execution of tasks. Reliable delivery,

continuous planning, and low cost define success. They value efficiency and predictability.

- **Compete Culture (Market Culture)**, a results-based workplace that emphasizes getting things done. People are competitive and focused on goals. Leaders are hard drivers, and producers. The emphasis on winning keeps the organization together. Reputation and success are the most important. Market dominance, achieving your goals, and high-performance metrics are seen as success. The organizational style is competitive.

An accompanying comparative table (Figure 1) and illustrative diagram (Figure 2) has been attached to visually reflect the results of the diagnostic.

Recommendations

My view of the current state of the organization was closely aligned to what I felt the organization should model. TFA's current culture has strengths and areas for improvement.

The Adhocracy culture type does support innovation and creativity, but it can also create an environment where failure is not tolerated. I have personally observed that TFA does encourage a culture where experimentation and learning from failure are valued through its Pillars of Adult Learning.

The Clan culture supports collaboration and teamwork, but it can also create an environment where diversity of thought and perspectives are not encouraged.

Although TFA does encourage a culture of inclusivity and diversity to support their mission of improving educational outcomes for all students, there is a certain

homogeneity that I have observed within its groupthink, employee profile and values, which to some extent is incompatible with my worldview. Due to this Clan emphasis, I now realize that although I am aligned to some extent with their Core Values as expressed on their website, I don't find myself to be a strong culture fit, and subsequently, was not surprised to find myself released from my position in the recent 430-employee wide layoff.

In terms of creating a stronger culture to support a stronger performing organization, according to Cameron and Kim, some norms and behaviors that can be encouraged include:

- **Clear communication:** Leaders should encourage clear and open communication at all levels of the organization. This can include regular team meetings, one-on-one discussions, and clear and concise emails.
- **Collaboration and teamwork:** Encourage collaboration and teamwork to foster a positive work environment. This can include team-building activities, cross-functional projects, and shared goals.
- **Empowerment and autonomy:** Leaders should empower employees to make decisions and take ownership of their work. This can include delegating tasks, providing resources and support, and encouraging autonomy.
- **Continuous learning and improvement:** Encourage continuous learning and improvement to support innovation and growth. This can include providing training and development opportunities, encouraging feedback, and promoting a culture of learning.

- Recognition and appreciation: Recognize and appreciate employees' contributions and achievements. This can include regular feedback, rewards and recognition programs, and a positive and supportive work environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this assessment analyzed TFA's organizational culture using the OCAI based on the CVF, which produced the results that TFA's dominant culture type is likely to be Adhocracy and Clan. TFA's culture has strengths and areas for improvement, including a need for a culture that values experimentation and learning from failure and a need for inclusivity and diversity. To create a stronger culture to support a stronger performing organization, TFA should encourage inclusivity and diversity, collaboration and teamwork, continuous learning and improvement, and empowerment and autonomy.

As I now commence my transition from this organization, I appreciate the opportunity to reframe, compare and evaluate my personal individual experience within a scholarly lens and framework, and apply my insights in a relevant way, providing a new sense of interpretation to what I have learned and observed.

References:

Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (2011). Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture:

Based on the Competing Values Framework. John Wiley & Sons.

OCAIOnline.

https://www.ocai-online.com/ocai-one-results/1Jj6ZMcjZ7c9rY6_KfqKzKyII0iCwzraI1jSf

[gdHk](#)

Teach for America:

- <https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/our-work>
- <https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/our-values>

Figures

Assessment

Your profile:

	Current	Preferred
Clan	40.00	43.33
Adhocracy	20.00	33.33
Market	24.17	12.50
Hierarchy	15.83	10.83

Figure 1.

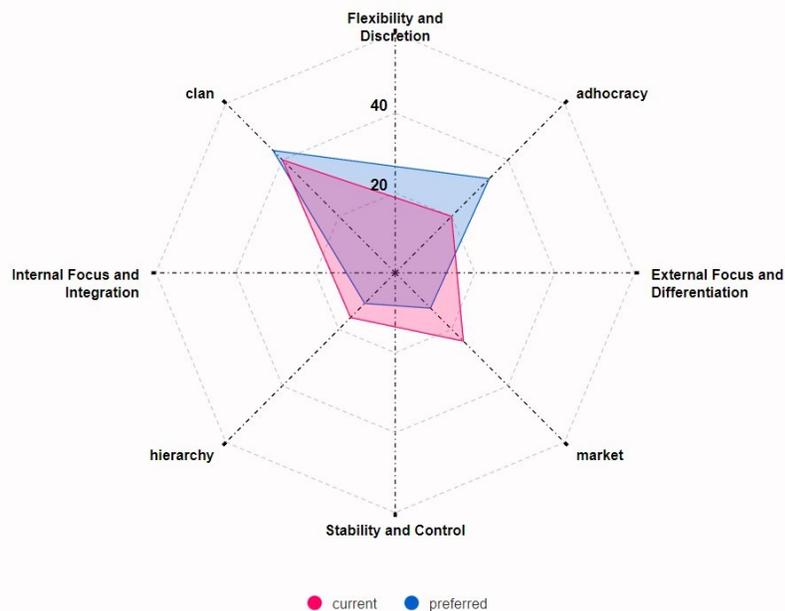


Figure 2. "The red graph is how you experience the current culture, and the blue graph is your preferred culture mix. A culture type with more points is stronger and takes more space in the graph."