

TACTFUL WORK CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON EFFICIENCY AMONG SELECTED ORGANISATIONS WITHIN EDO STATE

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Abstract

Work culture significantly influences organisational efficiency, particularly in an environment where collaboration, professionalism, and effective communication drive productivity. This study examines how tactful work culture—characterized by professionalism, adaptability, effective communication, mutual respect, teamwork, and conflict resolution—affects efficiency in selected organisations within Edo State, Nigeria. Using a comparative analysis of public and private organisations, the study explores how structured and flexible work cultures contribute to operational effectiveness. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, utilizing surveys and interviews to gather data from employees and management across various sectors. Findings highlighted the benefits of a tactful work culture in fostering employee engagement, reducing workplace conflicts, and improving overall efficiency. The study will also address the structural challenges that impede the adoption of such a culture in public organisations compared to their private counterparts. The implications of the findings will provide insights for organisations seeking to enhance productivity through improved workplace behaviour and culture.

Keywords: Work Culture, Tactful Leadership, Institutional Efficiency, Public and Private Institutions, Workplace Adaptability

Introduction

Background to the Study: Work culture plays a crucial role in shaping organisational efficiency, as it influences employee behaviour, decision-making, and overall workplace harmony. In highly competitive business environments, organisations that promote tactful work cultures—defined by professionalism, ethical behaviour, effective communication, adaptability, teamwork, and respect—tend to experience higher levels of productivity and reduced workplace conflicts (Ng & Feldman, 2021). Public and private organisations in Nigeria operate under different structural and managerial conditions, affecting how tactful work culture is implemented and sustained. Public organisations often function within bureaucratic frameworks, where rigid policies and hierarchical structures can either

foster or impede tactful work culture. In contrast, private organisations typically emphasize performance-based work ethics, necessitating adaptability and professional discipline to maintain efficiency (Adeleke & Olaniyan, 2022). Given the increasing demand for efficiency across various sectors in Edo State, it becomes imperative to assess how tactful work culture contributes to organisational success. This study examines the extent to which public and private organisations in Edo State integrate tactful work culture and its impact on overall efficiency.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the acknowledged role of work culture in organisational success, many Nigerian organisations, particularly public institutions,

struggle with inefficiencies arising from poor workplace ethics, ineffective communication, and lack of professionalism. These inefficiencies manifest in low productivity, employee dissatisfaction, and frequent workplace disputes, ultimately affecting service delivery and overall performance (Cameron, 2020). While private organisations tend to prioritize performance-driven work cultures, public organisations often contend with rigid bureaucracies that make adaptability and professional discipline challenging. The disparity in work culture between public and private organisations raises concerns about how tactful work culture can be effectively implemented to optimize efficiency. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the impact of tactful work culture on organisational efficiency, comparing public and private organisations within Edo State. It aims to identify cultural factors that enhance or hinder workplace efficiency and offer recommendations for fostering a more effective organisational environment.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the influence of tactful work culture on organisational efficiency in selected organisations within Edo State. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the key components of a tactful work culture and their role in enhancing organisational efficiency.
2. To compare the prevalence and impact of tactful work culture in public and private organisations.
3. To evaluate the relationship between professionalism, teamwork, effective communication, and organisational efficiency.

Research Hypotheses

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: Tactful work culture has no significant impact on institutional efficiency.

H₁₁: Tactful work culture positively influences institutional efficiency.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the work culture of public and private institutions.

H₁₂: There is a significant difference in the work culture of public and private institutions.

Literature Review

Conceptual Understanding Tactful Work Culture:

Tactful work culture refers to the set of behaviours, values, and attitudes that promote professionalism, mutual respect, effective communication, and conflict resolution within an organisation. It fosters a positive work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute to organisational goals (Schein, 2017). Organisations that adopt a tactful work culture experience fewer workplace conflicts, higher employee engagement (Kim, 2022), and improved operational efficiency (Schipper, 2019). A tactful work culture specifically emphasizes respect, diplomacy, adaptability, and conflict resolution, fostering a cooperative work environment (Ng & Feldman, 2021).

Types of Tactful Work Culture: A tactful work culture is characterized by professional behaviours, interpersonal skills, and organisational practices that enhance institutional efficiency. It enables employees to work harmoniously (Rasool et al., 2021), reduces workplace conflicts, and fosters a high-performance environment (Woo & Kang, 2021). The key dimensions of a tactful work culture include professionalism, effective communication, adaptability, mutual respect, collaboration, and conflict management.

1. ***Professionalism:*** Professionalism refers to adherence to ethical standards, institutional values, and workplace etiquette. It fosters a structured and disciplined work environment where employees perform their roles with integrity and accountability (Schein, 2017). The key components of professionalism include:

- *Ethical Conduct:* Employees and leaders abide by institutional policies and ethical guidelines.
- *Accountability:* Staff members take responsibility for their actions, ensuring transparency in decision-making.
- *Competence:* Employees continuously develop their skills to meet job expectations efficiently.
- *Reliability:* Tasks are completed in a timely and efficient manner, reducing delays in operations.

Professionalism enhances institutional efficiency by ensuring smooth operations, minimizing ethical breaches, and maintaining a standard of excellence in both academic and administrative functions. However, public institutions in Nigeria often struggle with enforcing professionalism due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, whereas private institutions tend to prioritize it to maintain competitiveness (Adeleke & Olaniyan, 2022).

2. *Effective Communication:* Effective communication is the ability to convey information clearly, respectfully, and persuasively. It is a fundamental element of a tactful work culture as it prevents misunderstandings, reduces workplace conflicts, and enhances collaboration (Ng & Feldman, 2021). Components of effective communication include:

- *Active Listening:* Encouraging open dialogue and understanding diverse perspectives.
- *Constructive Feedback:* Providing feedback that is solution-oriented rather than critical.
- *Diplomatic Conflict Resolution:* Addressing issues tactfully without escalating tensions.
- *Transparent Information Sharing:* Ensuring that employees receive timely and relevant updates.

Work performance has been seen to be enhanced greatly through organisational communication and leadership style (Balakrishnan et al., 2024). Public institutions often experience hierarchical communication

barriers, making information flow slower and sometimes ineffective. Private institutions, in contrast, adopt flatter organisational structures, enabling quicker decision-making and response times (Adebayo, 2019).

3. *Adaptability and Flexibility:* Adaptability refers to the ability of employees and organisations to adjust to changes in policies, technologies, and work conditions. A tactful work culture values flexibility as a means to sustain institutional efficiency (Cameron, 2020). Elements of adaptability include:

- *Openness to Change:* Encouraging innovation and continuous improvement.
- *Crisis Management Skills:* Quickly responding to challenges with practical solutions.
- *Resilience:* Maintaining productivity despite unexpected disruptions.

Public institutions often resist change due to rigid bureaucratic structures, whereas private institutions tend to be more agile in adopting new policies and technologies (Edeh & Uche, 2021). Institutions with high adaptability are better positioned to improve staff efficiency and respond effectively to external demands.

4. *Mutual Respect and Inclusivity:* A tactful work culture is built on mutual respect, where employees value diverse perspectives and treat colleagues with dignity. Inclusivity ensures that all staff members feel valued regardless of their background, fostering a collaborative work environment (Rasool et al., 2021). The main aspects of respect and inclusivity include:

- *Recognition of Contributions:* Acknowledging and rewarding employee efforts.
- *Diversity and Equity:* Creating an environment where all individuals have equal opportunities.
- *Respect for Hierarchy and Peer Relationships:* Encouraging constructive interactions across different levels of authority.

Private institutions often promote merit-based recognition, while public institutions focus on seniority-based structures (Adeleke & Olaniyan, 2022). A culture of respect and inclusivity improves teamwork and reduces workplace disputes, ultimately boosting institutional efficiency.

5. *Collaborative Work Ethic*: Collaboration ensures that employees work together effectively toward shared institutional goals. Institutions that prioritize teamwork benefit from increased innovation, problem-solving capacity, and employee morale (Ng & Feldman, 2021). A collaborative work ethic includes:

- *Interdepartmental Cooperation*: Facilitating partnerships across different units.
- *Teamwork and Shared Goals*: Encouraging staff members to work towards collective success.
- *Knowledge Sharing*: Providing platforms for mentorship and peer learning.

Public institutions often experience siloed operations due to rigid department structures, while private institutions integrate team-based performance models to enhance efficiency (Adebayo, 2019). Institutions with strong teamwork structures experience higher productivity and efficiency.

6. *Conflict Management and Diplomacy*: A tactful work culture prioritizes resolving disputes through diplomacy rather than confrontation. Effective conflict management strategies lead to smoother institutional operations and higher staff retention rates (Cameron, 2020). Strategies include:

- *Mediation and Negotiation*: Encouraging open discussions to resolve disputes.
- *Policy-Driven Conflict Resolution*: Establishing formal grievance-handling mechanisms.
- *Encouraging Emotional Intelligence*: Training employees to manage workplace tensions constructively.

Public institutions often rely on bureaucratic grievance procedures, which can be slow and rigid. In contrast, private institutions emphasize immediate and pragmatic resolution strategies, allowing for quicker conflict mitigation (Edeh & Uche, 2021).

Tactful Work Culture and Efficiency in Educational Institutions

A tactful work culture directly influences institutional efficiency by promoting collaboration, reducing workplace conflicts, and enhancing employee engagement (Rasool et al., 2021). When staff members adhere to professionalism, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively, institutions experience smoother operations and improved service delivery. Studies suggest that tactful leadership and communication contribute to a positive work environment, which in turn improves overall institutional performance (Adeleke & Olaniyan, 2022).

Organisations that prioritize a tactful work culture benefit from:

- Increased staff motivation and engagement, leading to higher productivity.
- Improved decision-making processes, as communication and collaboration are enhanced.
- Reduced workplace conflicts, minimizing disruptions to institutional operations.

However, public and private institutions exhibit varying degrees of tactful work culture based on their structural differences. While private institutions are often driven by performance metrics that encourage efficiency, public institutions may struggle with systemic constraints that hinder a fully developed tactful work culture (Adebayo, 2019).

Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework for this study is based on established theories that explain the role of workplace culture in organisational efficiency. These theories provide insights into

how tactful work culture influences employee behaviour, productivity, and organisational effectiveness.

Schein's Organisational Culture Theory:

Schein's theory posits that organisational culture consists of three levels: artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions. A tactful work culture is embedded in an institution's values and assumptions, influencing employee behaviour and institutional efficiency (Schein, 2017). Schein (2017) proposed that organisational culture operates on three levels:

1. Artifacts: Visible aspects of work culture such as office layout, dress code, and work environment.
2. Espoused Values: Officially stated norms and ethical guidelines that govern workplace behaviour.
3. Basic Assumptions: Deeply ingrained beliefs that shape how employees interact and approach their work.

This theory suggests that organisations with a strong, tactful work culture—where professionalism, teamwork, and effective communication are emphasized—tend to perform better in terms of efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Social Exchange Theory: The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) posits that workplace interactions are based on reciprocal relationships. Employees are more likely to contribute positively when they feel respected, valued, and supported by their organisation. A tactful work culture that fosters mutual respect, inclusivity, and fairness leads to higher levels of employee commitment, reduced turnover, and improved organisational efficiency.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: Herzberg (1959) identified two key factors that influence employee motivation:

1. Hygiene Factors: Work conditions, salary, company policies, and interpersonal relationships.

2. Motivational Factors: Recognition, career advancement, and meaningful work.

A tactful work culture addresses both hygiene and motivational factors by creating a supportive work environment where employees feel engaged and motivated to perform efficiently.

Contingency Theory: The Contingency Theory (Fiedler, 1967) suggests that no single leadership or organisational structure is universally effective. Instead, efficiency depends on how well a work culture aligns with the organisation's goals, workforce dynamics, and external challenges. Organisations that implement tactful work culture practices—tailored to their specific operational needs—are more likely to experience improved efficiency.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

(Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995): The LMX theory highlights the importance of relationships between leaders and employees in shaping workplace dynamics. Tactful leadership fosters high-quality leader-member exchanges, leading to increased trust, job satisfaction, and institutional efficiency (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These theories collectively support the premise that tactful work culture positively influences organisational efficiency by enhancing employee motivation, communication, and collaboration.

Empirical Review

Several studies have examined the relationship between work culture and organizational efficiency. Ng and Feldman (2021) explored the impact of effective communication on workplace productivity. The study found that organisations with structured communication channels experienced a 25% increase in efficiency compared to those with weak communication systems. Adebayo (2019) analyzed the role of teamwork in enhancing organisational performance. The research showed that organisations with high levels of

collaboration reported better problem-solving and higher innovation rates. Cameron (2020) examined how adaptability affects efficiency in public and private organisations. The study revealed that private organisations were more responsive to policy and technological changes, leading to greater efficiency.

Adeleke and Olaniyan (2022) assessed professionalism and accountability in Nigerian organisations, highlighting that companies with clear ethical guidelines reported lower instances of workplace misconduct.

Method

Research Design: This study adopts a descriptive survey research design to explore the relationship between tactful work culture and organisational efficiency. The approach enables the collection of quantitative and qualitative data from employees across different organisations in Edo State.

Population of the Study: The exact population size is unknown due to the broad scope of organisations considered. However, the study will focus on employees in both public and private organisations within Edo State, ensuring diversity in workplace structures and culture.

Scope of the Study: The study focused on selected public and private organizations in Edo North District of Edo State, including universities, polytechnics, and health service institutions for public; and certain private

Results

This section presents the findings from the survey and discusses the implications of tactful work culture on organisational efficiency. The results are analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine the relationship between workplace culture and productivity.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: A total of 186 respondents participated in the

enterprises. To be certain, the selected organizations include: Auchi Polytechnic, Etsako-West Local Government Council, and Edo University Teaching Hospital, on one hand; Zelzah Marketplace, Freedom Group, and Hartland Construction Company, on the other hand. The research covers organizational members, examining how work culture influences institutional efficiency. A purposive sampling technique is used to ensure representation across different institutional settings.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique: A total of 186 respondents were selected using convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Convenience sampling ensures accessibility to willing participants, while purposive sampling targets employees who have significant experience in their respective organisations to be included in the study.

Instrument for Data Collection: A structured questionnaire will be designed to measure key variables such as professionalism, communication, teamwork, and efficiency. The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture respondents' perceptions.

Method of Data Analysis: Collected data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (regression analysis and correlation tests). These techniques will help determine the strength and significance of the relationship between tactful work culture and organisational efficiency.

study, representing employees from both public and private organisations in Edo State. The demographic profile includes variables such as age, gender, years of experience, and organisational type.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 186)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	102	54.8%
	Female	84	45.2%
Age	20–30 years	45	24.2%
	31–40 years	76	40.9%
	41–50 years	50	26.9%
	Above 50 years	15	8.0%
Organisational Type	Public	94	50.5%
	Private	92	49.5%
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	40	21.5%
	5–10 years	72	38.7%
	Above 10 years	74	39.8%

The demographic analysis reveals a nearly equal distribution of respondents between public and private organisations, ensuring a balanced perspective in the study.

Descriptive Analysis of Tactful Work Culture Variables

Respondents were asked to rate the extents to which key elements of tactful work culture were practiced in their organisations. The responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Tactful Work Culture Variables	Mean Score (Public Sector)	Mean Score (Private Sector)	Overall Mean
Professionalism	3.42	4.21	3.82
Effective Communication	3.68	4.35	4.02
Teamwork and Collaboration	3.50	4.10	3.80
Adaptability	3.12	4.05	3.59
Conflict Resolution	3.20	4.00	3.60

The findings indicate that private organisations exhibit stronger tactful work culture practices compared to public organisations, particularly in professionalism, adaptability, and conflict resolution.

Inferential Analysis – Correlation between Work Culture and Efficiency

To test the relationship between tactful work culture and organisational efficiency, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted with the following result.

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance Level (p-value)
Professionalism and Efficiency	0.68	0.001**
Communication and Efficiency	0.74	0.000**
Teamwork and Efficiency	0.62	0.002**
Adaptability and Efficiency	0.57	0.005**
Conflict Resolution and Efficiency	0.60	0.003**

(p < 0.05 is statistically significant)

The correlation analysis confirms a significant positive relationship between tactful work culture and organisational efficiency, with communication showing the strongest correlation.

Discussion

The results indicate that private organisations in Edo State demonstrate a more structured and adaptive work culture compared to their public counterparts. Professionalism and effective communication emerged as key drivers of efficiency, supporting Schein's Organisational Culture Theory, which emphasizes how values and practices influence workplace behaviour. This also aligns with earlier work by Balakrishnan et al. (2024), who found a significant positive relationship between work performance and communication. The findings also align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, highlighting the role of motivational and hygiene factors in workplace productivity.

Employees in organisations with strong tactful work cultures reported higher job satisfaction, supporting the Social Exchange Theory's argument that reciprocal respect fosters employee commitment. The disparity between public and private organisations suggests that bureaucratic constraints may hinder the effective implementation of tactful work culture in public institutions. This is consistent with previous studies (Adeleke & Olaniyan, 2022) that found inefficiencies in public service management due to rigid structures.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on organisational behaviour within the education sector by providing empirical evidence on the impact of tactful work culture on efficiency. The findings are beneficial to institutional administrators, policymakers, and human resource managers in designing workplace strategies that enhance employee productivity. Additionally, the study provides insights for academic researchers interested in exploring the interplay between workplace culture and organisational effectiveness in the Nigerian context.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that tactful work culture—encompassing professionalism, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and conflict resolution—significantly enhances organisational efficiency. The findings suggest that while both public and private organisations recognize the importance of work culture, private organisations implement these practices more effectively, leading to better productivity and employee engagement. The study underscores the need for public organisations to adopt more flexible and performance-driven workplace cultures to improve efficiency. It also highlights the importance of structured

communication systems in fostering a more collaborative and goal-oriented work environment.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study have practical implications for organisational leaders and policymakers with their attendant recommendations.

Public Sector Reforms: Government agencies should implement workplace policies that promote professionalism and adaptability to improve service delivery.

Training and Development: Organisations should invest in leadership and communication training to enhance workplace culture.

Conflict Resolution Frameworks: Establishing structured conflict management policies can help mitigate workplace disputes.

Performance-Based Incentives: Encouraging a performance-driven work culture through incentives can boost employee motivation and efficiency.

Employee Engagement Programs: Organisations should foster participatory decision-making processes to enhance teamwork and collaboration.

Recommendations

On the bases of the foregoing, recommendations are made that:

Public organisations should adopt modern human resource management practices that emphasize flexibility and performance-driven cultures.

Private organisations should maintain their strong work culture while integrating structured conflict resolution mechanisms to sustain efficiency.

Organisational leaders should encourage open communication channels to enhance employee involvement in decision-making.

Periodic workplace assessments should be conducted to identify areas for improvement in organisational culture.

A collaborative framework between public and private organisations can be established to share best practices in work culture management.

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