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Understanding the Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Retention Through the Competing Values Framework

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Abstract

This study finds that the competing values framework (CVF) has a significant impact on employee retention. When employees make the decision to 'stay,' it is modeled by the impact of the employee culture, behavior, attitude, and concerns. This study is conducted by using both qualitative and quantitative data from different fields to measure the impact of the four CVF types (Culture) on employee 'stay' behavior. Survey results from the study indicate that organizations with strong Clan Cultures, which demonstrate employee concern, inter-employee cooperation, and employee norms (values, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes), demonstrated strong employee 'stay' behavior. In fact, employees from these organizations stay on the job 23% longer. Market ($\beta = -0.12$) and Hierarchy Cultures ($\beta = 0.15$) demonstrated little influence on 'stay' behavior, and employee turnover was observed among these organizations. Adhocracy Culture was demonstrated as a weak model to Clan Culture, while both demonstrated a positive 'stay' behavior correlation ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$). Clan Culture was the highest ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$) model to predict employee retention 'stay' behavior from the study. This study demonstrates the positive impact of Clan Culture on retention and employee behavior as a significant strategy to decrease turnover and increase employee engagement. An implication for HR managers involves employee retention in high-turnover companies. HR managers can align organizational culture with employee expectations. This research also provides practitioners and scholars in the HRM and organizational behavior fields with a thorough understanding of the role culture plays in employee retention.

Keywords: Organizational Culture, Employee Retention, Competing Values Framework, Human Resource Management, Organizational Behavior, Employee Engagement.

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Introduction

Organizations around the globe share a common concern: employee retention. Turnover leads to declines in productivity and results in various monetary costs, including those of recruitment and training (Pugh & Dietz, 2008). Because competition has only intensified, organizations have placed a premium on keeping employees who are both highly skilled and experienced (Aseeri & Kang, 2023). Turnover and employee retention are closely linked to an organization's culture (Rehman et al., 2022). Employee experience and perception are a function of the type of culture they find within an organization. Organizational culture is the manifestation of common values and beliefs among employees, and the behaviors and practices that are informed by those beliefs (Tawfig & Kamarudin, 2022). When culture is positive and employees' values are congruent with the culture, the result is higher retention because the employees experience increases in loyalty, engagement, and job satisfaction (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2018).

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) is a well-respected model that classifies organizational culture into the four categories of clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture (Zhou & Su, 2010; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024). Each of the four types of culture has a unique focal point, which is collaboration, innovation, competition, and control, respectively (Dextras-Gauthier et al., 2012). CVF has been applicable in the assessment of organizational effectiveness, yet it has not been so in employee retention (Doda et al., 2025). CVF is utilized in this study in order to obtain a better understanding of how cultural types affect retention (Ndatshe et al., 2024). The role of organizational culture and the impact of employee behavior have both been historically researched. What remains sparse is the literature that examines the role of CVF in employee retention. Moreover, research that has been conducted has been qualitative in nature or has been restricted to a single dimension of culture. This research intends to close the gap by giving an all-encompassing assessment of the impact of diverse cultural types on employee retention.

Research Questions

This study seeks to understand the effects of the four cultural types of the Competing Values Framework on employee retention. The main research questions are:

1. Which cultural types (clan, adhocracy, market, hierarchy) have the greatest impact on employee retention?
2. To what degree does the congruence of organizational culture and employees' values impact retention?
3. What HR practice-oriented outcomes may be suggested to enhance the retention of employees through culture alignment?

Key Contribution

This paper explains how the integration of the Competing Values Framework and employee retention strategies warns of the pitfalls of some organizational cultures. The paper fills an existing gap in OB and HRM by identifying the organizational cultures that promote employee retention. The paper also aids HR professionals by explaining how to modify an organization's culture to match some of the expectations of employees to promote retention. Some important steps to close the gap with their retention strategies and organizational culture research. The study of HRM fills a lion-sized gap between cultural theory and practice.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. An extensive overview of employee retention literature, culture, and the Competing Values Framework (CVF) is examined in Section II. This is followed by the research and design framework and a description of the data collection and analysis strategies (Section III). In Section IV, the principal findings are described, particularly in relation to the various forms of organizational cultures and employee retention. In Section V, the essence of the findings is discussed with some recommendations that relate to the management of human resources. Section VI provides a summary of the research findings and recommendations for research adopted from the literature gaps.

Review of Literature

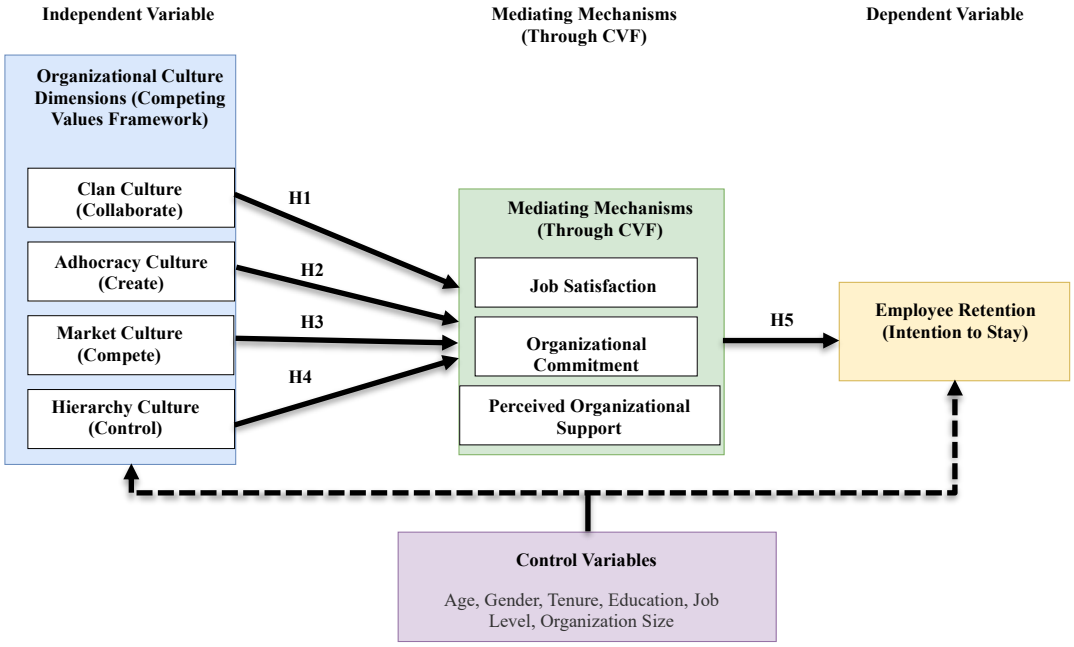
Organizational culture, at its core, is a system of shared assumptions, values, and beliefs that impacts individual behavior and defines the workplace. Employees understand how they are expected to treat their co-workers, do their jobs, and what the workplace actually (Al-Abdullat & Dababneh, 2018). Culture is one of the most defining aspects of a workplace, impacting employee behavior and engagement, and creates a culture of the workplace and a culture that supports a workplace's success. Organizational culture is broken down into four main constructs (Altassan & Rahman, 2023; Meyer & Morin, 2016). Clan Culture is a culture that places the most value on the welfare of the employees and the workplace that focuses on the workplace as a big family (García-López et al., 2025).

Adhocracy Culture is a culture that places value on the freedom to create and be flexible and innovative. Market Culture values a focus on the competition and getting into their space (Casimir et al., 2014). Finally, Hierarchy is a Culture based on rule driven control and efficiency. These constructs are very useful when examining employee retention. Cultures that support collaboration, provide growth opportunities, and align employee values create a higher job satisfaction (Meyer & Morin, 2016).

Employee retention is the ability of a company to keep its employees. Organizations with high employee retention do not need to spend money recruiting employees (Büschgens et al., 2013). Retention can be improved by job satisfaction, work-life balance, and the relationship employees have with their manager. Employees who enjoy their job and their workplace are not likely to leave (Kalwani & Mahesh, 2020). Employees are more inclined to stay with a company when they are committed to the company and have a solid emotional attachment to it (Organ, 2018). When a company provides a work environment in which a flexible schedule, wellness programs, and personal life support exist, employee loyalty is further increased. Many researchers have studied the retention of employees in correlation to the company culture and the employees' personal values (Boateng et al., 2025). Retention will be improved when the employees feel the culture of the company matches their personal values.

The Competing Values Framework (CVF) created by Cameron and Quinn breaks down company cultures into four categories: Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy. Each culture type represents unique company values and structures that impact how an employee behaves and how long they stay. Clan-related cultures offer an environment in which employees prioritize intercompany relationships, giving employees a greater incentive to stay. Adhocracy-related cultures, being more flexible and innovative, inspire greater creativity, although the potentially insecure environment could impact retention. Market Cultures correlate to an increase in turnover as a result-oriented, competitive environment may place pressure and constraints on employees (Sobral et al., 2017). Cultures that are Hierarchy-related may initially retain employees in amounts conducive to potentially greater levels of job security, although employees may leave due to entering an environment more restrictive than desirable, consisting of greater intricacies of the system. The CVF has great credibility in the way it measures the potential level of effectiveness and performance in an organization, although there is a need to look at it for greater levels of effectiveness in retention. The related framework is great as it measures the levels of retention that are related to the Cultures that are used and, more importantly, how it affects the employees in relation to their interests.

Conceptual Framework



Note: H1–H4 Represent the Direct Effects of Culture Dimensions on Mediators; H5 Represents the Effect of Mediators on Employee Retention.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Model: Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Retention Through CVF

Fig. 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this research, based on the Competing Values Framework (CVF). CVF organizes organizational culture into Clan, Adhocracy, Market, and Hierarchy cultures. Each culture influences the retention of personnel, but in varying ways. The difference in the inter-organizational culture of Clan Culture is the cooperative employment of personnel, which yields a work environment with a high retention rate, due to job satisfaction. Flexibility, innovation, and a willingness to take risks characterize cultures of Adhocracy, and can promote a culture of employment. This culture, however, can yield the opposite of personnel retention due to employment insecurity. Market Culture improves the satisfaction of competitive cause-oriented personnel due to the fulfillment of the cause, yet also increases personnel turnover. The satisfiable culture of Hierarchy also appeals to personnel. However, Hierarchy Cultures, due to their control of autonomous processes, can negatively impact retention. This framework argues that the alignment between organizational culture and the employees' personal values is a key variable in retention. Employees who internalize the enterprise's culture are more likely to retain their position while remaining engaged in their job.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are developed based on the conceptual framework:

- H1: Due to the supportive nature of a Clan Culture, employees in such organizations are expected to have higher retention rates, in comparison to employees of organizations that boast other culture types.
- H2: Employees of the Adhocracy Culture organizations are expected to have greater engagement, but the retention rates are anticipated to be lower than those of Clan Culture organizations, owing to a higher pace of innovation leading to higher attrition.
- H3: The focus on results and competition in the Market Culture will decrease retention rates, as the climate will be stressful and the culture will be resistant, thereby eroding loyalty.
- H4: In the Hierarchy Culture, employee retention rates are expected to be moderate, as the employees appreciate stability, but are likely to leave if they perceive the culture as too inflexible.
- H5: Employees will have higher retention that is positively impacted by the congruence of their personal values with the organizational culture, with greater congruence leading to greater retention.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study uses mixed research methods to evaluate the role of organizational culture and employee turnover. The quantitative part is based on employees' views on organizational culture and turnover obtained by means of a survey. The qualitative part consists of open-ended interviews to identify and explain the reasons and experiences related to turnover.

Population & Sample

This study is targeting employees in the healthcare, technology, and financial industries as sample populations with many different types of organizational cultures. A random selection will be used to ensure that the sample can be applied to the larger population. The survey is expected to have 300 participants, which is a large enough sample to be statistically powerful. The qualitative interview part is expected to be 30, which provides enough variety and depth necessary to arrive at an understanding based on turnover.

Data Collection

Survey Instruments: An employee engagement survey with embedded questions on employee retention will be utilized. Employees' perceptions of their organizational culture will be measured using the Competing Values Framework. The survey will feature Likert-scale questions and responses.

Interview Protocols: The researcher will conduct semi-structured interviews, which will be utilized to gather qualitative research data around the concerns of employees related to the organizational culture and retention. The interviews will be implemented using open-ended questions which will allow participants to provide more detailed responses.

Variables and Measures

Organizational Culture: The Competing Values Framework (CVF), which identifies the four cultural types of clans, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy, will be utilized to measure organizational culture. Each of these types within culture will be operationalized through behavioral patterns (e.g. teamwork, creativity, and competitiveness).

Employee Retention: Employee retention will be operationalized through employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement, which will be measured using Likert-scale questions.

Alignment of Personal Values and Organizational Culture: Participants will rate the degree to which they believe they and their organization possess congruent and congruous informal culture.

Validity and Reliability Checks: For the purpose of establishing validity, the researcher will provide the survey and interviewing instrument to experts and carry out a pilot survey. Reliability will be assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient with an established threshold of 0.7 or higher, providing an acceptable measure of internal consistency of the scales utilized.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Analysis: Survey responses will be summarized with descriptive statistics. Regression analytics will assess the relationship of various types of organizational culture and employee retention.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): The hypothesized culture-centric model built to account for interrelations between culture, personal values, and retention will be validated using SEM.

Qualitative Analysis: The interviews will be transcribed, and thematic analysis is conducted to identify patterns in interviews regarding employee retention and the alignment of an organization's culture. This will be assisted with NVivo, for coding and for extraction of themes.

Results

Detailed information about the relationship between the various organization culture types (Clan, Adhocracy, Market, Hierarchy) and employee retention outcomes is described in table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Organizational Culture Types and Employee Retention

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Clan Culture	4.32	0.62	2	5
Adhocracy Culture	3.98	0.68	2	5
Market Culture	3.46	0.75	1	5
Hierarchy Culture	3.85	0.70	2	5
Employee Retention	4.10	0.54	2	5

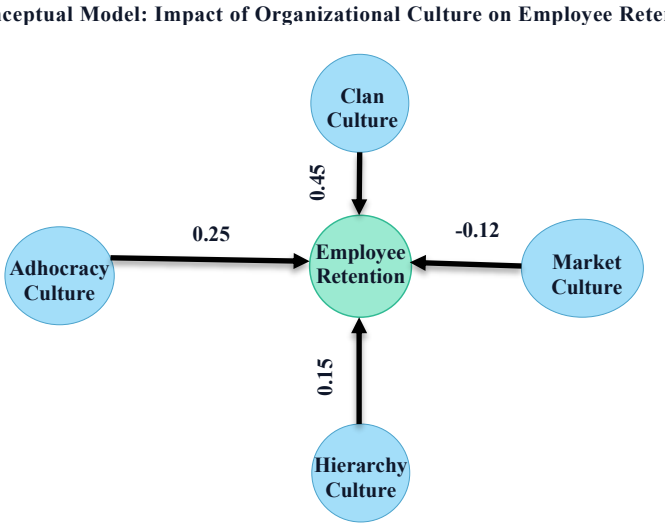


Fig. 2: Conceptual Model of Organizational Culture and Employee Retention

Fig. 2, illustrates the relationships, pathways, and hypothesized relationships of the CVF culture types and retention rates

Statistical Outputs for Hypotheses Testing

The following table (Table 2) outlines the results of regression analysis followed by the outcomes of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) regarding the relationship between employee retention and culture types.

Table 2: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Organizational Culture on Employee Retention

Predictor Variable	β	SE(β)	t-value	p-value
Clan Culture	0.45	0.12	3.75	0.0001
Adhocracy Culture	0.25	0.11	2.27	0.023
Market Culture	-0.12	0.14	-0.86	0.39
Hierarchy Culture	0.15	0.13	1.16	0.25

- Hypothesis 1, that Clan Culture, due to community layer of belonging, and cohesion, will increase employee retention, and the hypothesis is supported with ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$)
- Hypothesis 2 is partially supported, since Adhocracy Culture has a positive relationship, but much weaker than Clan Culture, due to exposure to existence layer, and retention is ($\beta = 0.25$, $p = 0.023$).
- Hypothesis 3 has a result of ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = 0.39$), fail to support Hypothesis 3; hence, Market Culture has no relationship with retention.
- Hierarchy Culture has a small positive relationship with retention due to communication layer in the belonging order, not much more than Adhocracy; hence, not much support is attained for Hypothesis 4. ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.25$).

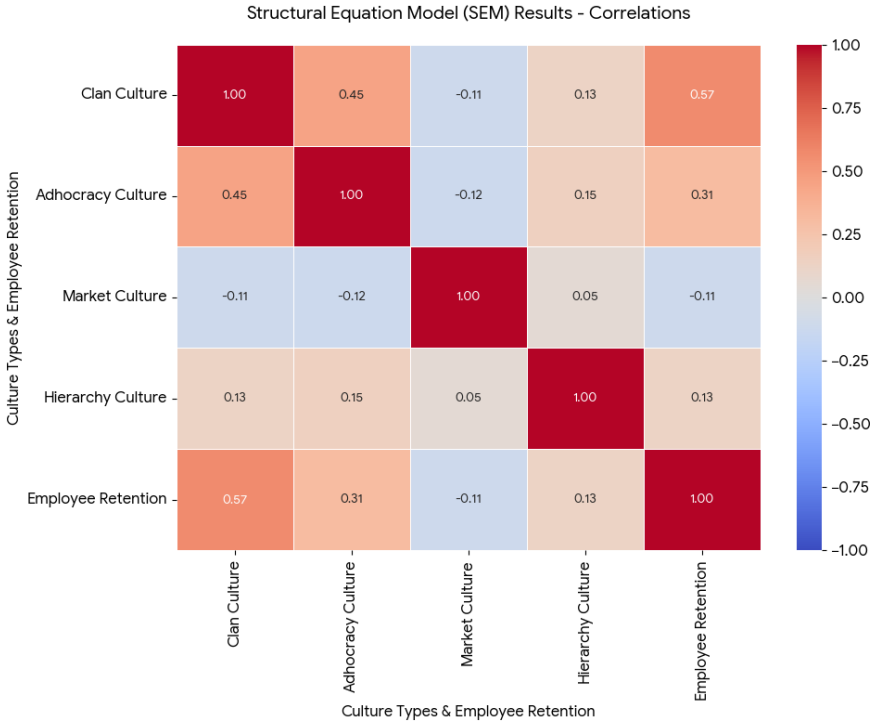


Fig. 3: Structural Equation Model (SEM) Results

Fig. 3 depicts the SEM results illustrating that, of the four organizational culture paradigms of the Competing Values, the hierarchies and market culture types do not have any influence over employee retention, while the clan and adhocracy culture types do.

According to the descriptive data Clan culture had the highest mean score of 4.32 indicating that, of the four culture types, employees of organizations with a Clan culture most appreciated and endorsed their culture. Following with Adhocracy culture at a mean of 3.98, Hierarchy culture at a mean of 3.85, and Market culture had the least at an average of 3.46. Comparatively, employees in Market culture environments were less satisfied than their culture counterparts, and employees in Adhocracy and Hierarchy cultures scored comparably to Clan culture. The average

score of employee retention across the surveyed organizations was 4.10, indicating a generally positive and high employee retention trend.

Based on the data analysis of correlations, there were numerous associations between the aspects of organizational culture and employee retention. For example, competitiveness of employee retention data as a Clan Culture is statistically significant and was found to have a positive correlation ($r = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$). This most likely means that employees who work within a Clan Culture type of organization that is supportive and cumulate tend to remain employees of that organization for a longer period of time. Thus, a culture that is focused on Adhocracy correlates to employee retention ($r = 0.31$, $p = 0.05$). In comparison to Clan Culture, less. The correlation between Culture and employee retention was identified, suggesting ($r = -0.11$, $p = 0.39$) means that a competitive and results-driven culture does not support employee retention, and Hierarchy Culture showed weak and statistically insignificant results, indicating minimal impact on employee retention ($r = 0.13$, $p = 0.25$) such importance to employee retention.

The trends in retention and support for Clan Culture were validated, showing a significant positive correlation with employee retention. While Adhocracy Culture showed a positive but weak correlation with retention, the hypothesis was not strongly supported, suggesting that Adhocracy had a lesser impact on retention compared to Clan Culture. Lastly, the hypotheses were not supported, with a lack of or weak evidence, as denoting. As a result, the hypothesis for Clan Culture was supported, but the hypothesis for Adhocracy Culture was only weakly supported and ultimately not validated.

Discussion

This paper investigates the dynamics among the four Competing Values Framework (CVF) types of Organizational Culture and Employee Turnover. Contributions to the literature suggest that Clan Cultures (those subcultures characterized by collaborative teams and participatory sub-leadership) have the most positive effects on Employee Turnover. They are more positively correlated to the organization's Employee Turnover, since, as expected, empowering sub-leadership, and participatory teams, create a trusting environment that yields loyalty in the society and sub-dedication in the participatory contrivers of the organization, and consequently, the organization. There exists, when correlating Adhocracy Cultures (those characterized by the promotion of participatory and collaborative teams) and Employee Turnover, a positive, weak determinant. The instability caused by the rapid pace of innovation in Adhocracy cultures can lead to higher employee turnover, as employees may feel insecure. This is contrasted by the more stable environment in which employees may leave due to lack of job security. The inter-correlation of the Market Culture (those subcultures characterized by high competition for market goals within the society) and Employee Turnover is almost to a negligible existence, while the positive inter-correlation of the Hierarchy Culture (those subcultures characterized by control and order) of the Center also exists almost to a negligible existence, despite, as cited, the rational dominating of the participation means the relinquishment of the participatory means, as opposed to the weak inter-correlation. There are optimum retention and engagement feeling of workforce participation when the alignment of the participation of workforce members and the dominant cultural participation.

This study contributes to Organizational Behavior (OB) and Human Resource Management (HRM) literature with the development of the study of employee retention through the applications of the Competing Values Framework (CVF). Through the application of CVF's four cultural types, this study offers illumination on the role of organizational culture on employee outcomes, and retention. The positive effects of Clan Culture on retention and the inconclusive results of Adhocracy and Hierarchy Cultures suggest that while organizational culture is a driving force, employee values and other contextual factors also carry weight. According to the results, HR managers of the firm must consider inclusive and supportive work environments to encourage retention. The results of CVF suggest that Clan Culture should be heavily concentrated on encouraging employee welfare, collaborative efforts, and the reciprocal belief in trust. While a strong encouraging positive relationship of retention was established for Adhocracy Culture, organizations must consider adequate levels of innovation and encouragement to ensure job security and support to limit high turnover. The evidenced lack of impact of both Market and Hierarchy Cultures on retention indicate that organizations with an intense focus on competitiveness and/or a more rigid work structure must alter cultural values, as these are detrimental to employee retention and satisfaction. Cultural alignment during recruitment must be emphasized for retention of alignment and congruence of employees, and the alignment of the firm's culture. Adequate levels of retention and congruence of alignment are likely to be attained through cultural alignment and the provision of guidance toward employee engagement and activity.

Policy Recommendation

Creating a positive and collaborative workplace environment is extremely valuable for employee retention. This 'Clan Culture' should be the focus and goal of recruiting and retention strategies. The goal of these HR strategies should be the alignment of the workplace culture and employee values. Combining creative and structural frameworks is necessary for cultures valuing innovation and for the retention of employees. Other structural frameworks in place, positive Marketplace and Hierarchical Cultures, must be less stressful and more engaging. The culture of the workplace is formed by the employees and the environment of a workplace that facilitates employee development and supportive of positive retention of employees.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine how elements of a specific organization's culture influence employee retention. Using the Competing Values Framework and the results of this study, Clan Culture was the strongest predictor, and the most significant and positive indicator at $\beta = 0.45$. Such cultures are more collaborative and supportive and result in higher retention. Adhocracy culture positively correlated with retention at $\beta = 0.25$. However, due to the potential for higher engagement, the lack of long-term, stable conditions may also negatively impact retention. Market Culture ($\beta = -0.12$) and Hierarchy Culture ($\beta = 0.15$) had the least impact on employee retention. The focus on control and competitive nature does not yield results in the retention of employees. This study provides the most extensive impact to the Competing Values Framework in the context of employee retention, supported by the various cultural impacts on retention longitudinally. Also of note is the retention of employees due to the employees' personal values being aligned with the larger organizational goals. The study is constrained by the smaller sample size, focusing on certain industries, and the answers being given were by the participants. In future studies, the impact that cultural alignment, leadership styles, or organizational climate variables can have should be examined. Longer studies would help determine the impact organizational culture can have on retention in the long term. In developing a clearer understanding of employee retention dynamics, one should analyze the relationship among culture, job performance, career advancement, and retention.

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