CORPORATE CULTURES IN COMPANIES: VALUES AND UNDERSTANDING, PARTICIPATION, LEARNING AND INNOVATON CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This article explores three fundamental elements of corporate culture that significantly contribute to organizational success: Values and Understanding Culture, Participation Culture, and Learning and Innovation Culture. The Values and Understanding Culture emphasizes the importance of embracing diversity, fostering trust-based relationships, and creating a respectful work environment that aligns with the organization's core principles. Participation Culture highlights the need for active employee involvement in decision-making processes, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and enhancing engagement through inclusive practices. The Learning and Innovation Culture focuses on maintaining curiosity, adapting to change, and promoting a trial-and-error approach to problem-solving, which fosters continuous improvement and innovation within the organization. By analyzing case studies from leading companies such as Google, Zappos, Southwest Airlines, Pixar, Amazon, and Toyota, this paper demonstrates how these cultural elements are integrated into corporate strategies to achieve and sustain long-term success. The findings provide valuable insights for business leaders aiming to develop an effective and dynamic corporate culture that supports organizational growth, employee satisfaction, and competitive advantage. Through these detailed analyses, the article underscores the critical role of corporate culture in shaping an organization's ability to innovate, engage employees, and meet strategic objectives in a rapidly changing business environment.

Keywords: Corporate Culture, Values and Understanding, Participation, Learning and Innovation

ÖZET

Bu makale, organizasyonel başarıya önemli katkılarda bulunan üç temel kurumsal kültür unsurunu incelemektedir: Değerler ve Anlayış Kültürü, Katılım Kültürü ve Öğrenme ve İnovasyon Kültürü. Değerler ve Anlayış Kültürü, çeşitliliğin kucaklanmasının, güvene dayalı ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinin ve organizasyonun temel ilkeleri ile uyumlu saygılı bir iş ortamı oluşturmanın önemini vurgular. Katılım Kültürü, çalışanların karar alma süreçlerine aktif katılımını, bürokratik engellerin azaltılmasını ve kapsayıcı uygulamalarla bağlılığın artırılmasını ön plana çıkarır. Öğrenme ve İnovasyon Kültürü ise merakı canlı tutmayı, değişime uyum sağlamayı ve sürekli iyileştirme ve inovasyonu destekleyen deneme-yanılma yaklaşımını teşvik etmeyi hedefler. Google, Zappos, Southwest Airlines, Pixar, Amazon ve Toyota gibi önde gelen şirketlerden vaka analizleriyle bu kültürel unsurların kurumsal

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stratejilere nasıl entegre edilerek uzun vadeli başarı sağlandığı gösterilmektedir. Bulgular, organizasyonel büyümeyi, çalışan memnuniyetini ve rekabet avantajını destekleyen etkili ve dinamik bir kurumsal kültür geliştirmeyi amaçlayan iş liderleri için değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır. Bu detaylı analizler aracılığıyla makale, hızla değişen iş ortamında organizasyonların yenilik yapabilme, çalışanları motive etme ve stratejik hedeflere ulaşabilme yeteneğinde kurumsal kültürün kritik rolünü vurgulamaktadır.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate culture is a critical determinant of a company's performance, employee satisfaction, and overall success. It encompasses the values, beliefs, and behaviors that characterize how a company conducts its business and interacts with its employees and stakeholders. A strong corporate culture aligns the organization's goals with employee behavior, thereby enhancing performance and productivity (Denison, 1990). This paper aims to explore three key elements of corporate culture: values and understanding, participation, and the culture of learning and innovation. These elements are essential for fostering a positive organizational environment and driving long-term success.

1.1. Objectives and Structure of the Paper

The primary objective of this paper is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how values and understanding, participation, and learning and innovation culture influence corporate success. Each section will include theoretical discussions, real-world examples, and case studies to illustrate the practical application of these concepts. The paper is structured as follows:

Section 2: Conceptual Framework
- Definition and Importance of Corporate Culture
- Types of Corporate Culture
- Components of Corporate Culture

Section 3: Findings and Discussions
- Values and Understanding Culture
- Participation Culture
- Learning and Innovation Culture

Section 4: Conclusion

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides a theoretical foundation for understanding corporate culture. It includes definitions, the importance of corporate culture, and its various types. Additionally, the core components of corporate culture are identified and discussed.

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2.1. Definition and Importance of Corporate Culture

Corporate culture can be defined as the shared values, beliefs, and norms that influence the behavior of employees within an organization (Schein, 2010). It shapes how employees interact with each other and with external stakeholders. Edgar Schein, a prominent organizational psychologist, emphasizes that culture exists at multiple levels, from visible artifacts to underlying assumptions and beliefs.

The importance of corporate culture cannot be overstated. It affects every aspect of an organization, from employee engagement and satisfaction to customer loyalty and financial performance. Companies with strong, positive cultures tend to outperform their competitors. They have lower turnover rates, higher employee morale, and greater overall productivity (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

2.2. Types of Corporate Culture

There are various types of corporate culture, each with distinct characteristics and implications for organizational behavior and performance. The most common types include clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

- Clan Culture: This type of culture is characterized by a family-like environment where collaboration and consensus are highly valued. Companies with a clan culture emphasize employee involvement, open communication, and a sense of community. They prioritize mentoring and nurturing employees, which can lead to high levels of loyalty and morale.
- Adhocracy Culture: Adhocracy cultures are dynamic and entrepreneurial, encouraging innovation and risk-taking. These companies are flexible and adaptable, constantly seeking new opportunities and ways to improve. Employees are encouraged to think creatively and challenge the status quo.
- Market Culture: Market cultures focus on competition and achieving tangible results. These companies are driven by goals and targets, with an emphasis on performance and productivity. Success is often measured by market share, revenue growth, and profitability. Employees are rewarded based on their contributions to the company's success.
- Hierarchy Culture: Hierarchy cultures are structured and formalized, with a clear chain of command and well-defined procedures. These companies prioritize stability, efficiency, and control. Decision-making tends to be centralized, and employees are expected to follow established processes and guidelines.

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2.3. Components of Corporate Culture

The core components of corporate culture include values, norms, artifacts, and behaviors. Each component plays a crucial role in shaping the overall culture of an organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

- Values: Values are the guiding principles that dictate what is important in an organization. They serve as the foundation for decision-making and behavior. Values often reflect the company's mission and vision, and they influence everything from strategic planning to daily interactions.
- Norms: Norms are the unwritten rules that govern behavior within an organization. They dictate how employees are expected to act and interact with each other. Norms can influence everything from communication styles to work habits and dress codes.
- Artifacts: Artifacts are the physical manifestations of culture, such as office layout, dress code, and organizational rituals. They provide tangible evidence of the company's values and norms. For example, an open office layout may reflect a culture that values collaboration and transparency.
- Behaviors: Behaviors are the actions and attitudes of employees that reflect the organization's values and norms. They are the most visible aspect of culture and can be observed in how employees interact with each other and with external stakeholders.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Values and Understanding Culture

The culture of values and understanding is centered on embracing diversity and differences, building trust-based relationships, and fostering a deeper understanding and respect among employees. Strengthening a culture of appreciation and gratitude is also crucial. This section will delve into the importance of these aspects and their impact on organizational success.

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3.1.1. Embracing Diversity and Differences

A culture that values diversity and differences promotes an inclusive environment where all employees feel valued and respected. Diversity brings a variety of perspectives and ideas, which can enhance creativity and innovation. Companies that embrace diversity are better equipped to understand and serve a diverse customer base. Research has shown that diverse teams are more effective at problem-solving and decision-making (Page, 2007).

To effectively embrace diversity, companies must go beyond simply hiring a diverse workforce. They must create an inclusive environment where all employees feel welcome and able to contribute. This involves promoting equal opportunities, addressing unconscious biases, and fostering a culture of respect and inclusion.

Case Study: Embracing Diversity at Google

Google is renowned for its commitment to diversity and inclusion. The company has implemented numerous initiatives to foster an inclusive environment, including unconscious bias training, employee resource groups, and diversity hiring practices. These efforts have led to a more diverse workforce, which has enhanced Google's ability to innovate and serve a

global customer base. Google's commitment to diversity has also been recognized through numerous awards and accolades (Google Diversity Annual Report, 2020).

3.1.2. Building Trust-Based Relationships

Trust is the foundation of any successful relationship, including those within an organization. A culture that prioritizes trust fosters open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect. Employees are more likely to engage and contribute when they feel trusted and trust their colleagues. Trust can lead to higher levels of engagement, job satisfaction, and retention (Edmondson, 2018).

Building trust involves creating a transparent and open environment where employees feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering trust by demonstrating integrity, reliability, and empathy. When employees trust their leaders, they are more likely to follow their guidance and support the company's goals.

Case Study: Building Trust at Patagonia

Patagonia, the outdoor clothing and gear company, has built a culture of trust through its commitment to transparency and ethical practices. The company openly shares information about its supply chain, environmental impact, and business practices. Patagonia also empowers employees by involving them in decision-making processes and supporting their personal and professional development. This trust-based culture has led to high levels of employee engagement and loyalty (Chouinard, 2016).

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3.1.3. Creating a Deeper Understanding and Respect

Understanding and respect are essential for a harmonious work environment. A culture that encourages employees to understand and respect each other's differences can reduce conflicts and improve teamwork. This leads to a more cohesive and productive workforce. Companies can promote understanding and respect through diversity training, team-building activities, and open dialogues (Roberson, 2006).

Respect involves recognizing the value and contributions of each employee. It means treating everyone with dignity and fairness, regardless of their background or position. When employees feel respected, they are more likely to respect others and contribute to a positive work environment.

Case Study: Fostering Respect at Toyota

Toyota has long been recognized for its respectful and inclusive corporate culture. The company emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and teamwork through its guiding principles and practices. Toyota's commitment to respect is reflected in its training programs, communication policies, and conflict resolution strategies. This culture of respect has

contributed to Toyota's reputation as a leading employer and its success in the global market (Liker, 2004).

3.1.4. Strengthening a Culture of Appreciation and Gratitude

Recognizing and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements can significantly boost morale and motivation. A culture of gratitude encourages employees to perform at their best and fosters a positive work environment. Research has shown that employees who feel appreciated are more engaged, productive, and loyal (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012).

Companies can strengthen a culture of appreciation by regularly acknowledging and rewarding employees' contributions. This can be done through formal recognition programs, such as employee of the month awards, as well as informal gestures, such as thank-you notes and public praise. When employees feel valued and appreciated for their efforts, they are more likely to go above and beyond in their roles, contributing to the overall success of the organization.

Case Study: Zappos' Culture of Appreciation

Zappos, an online shoe and clothing retailer, is known for its strong culture of appreciation and gratitude. The company has numerous recognition programs, such as the Zappos HERO Award, where employees can recognize their peers for exceptional contributions. Additionally, Zappos celebrates its employees' achievements with public praise and rewards. This culture of appreciation has contributed to high levels of employee satisfaction and retention at Zappos (Hsieh, 2010).

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3.2. Participation Culture

A participation culture ensures that employees can freely express their ideas, enhances corporate solidarity, and demonstrates the power of participation. It encourages streamlining against bureaucracy and promotes polyphony against hierarchy. This section will explore the importance of these elements and their impact on organizational success.

3.2.1. Encouraging Employee Voice

Encouraging employees to voice their ideas and opinions is essential for fostering a culture of participation. When employees feel that their contributions are valued, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated. This can lead to increased innovation, improved decision-making, and greater overall performance (Detert & Burris, 2007).

Companies can encourage employee voice by creating open channels of communication, such as suggestion boxes, town hall meetings, and regular feedback sessions. Leaders should actively seek input from employees and demonstrate that their opinions are taken seriously. Additionally, creating a safe environment where employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas without fear of retribution is crucial.

Case Study: Employee Voice at Southwest Airlines

Southwest Airlines is known for its participative culture, where employees are encouraged to share their ideas and feedback. The company has a "Culture Committee" that includes representatives from various departments, ensuring that employees' voices are heard. This approach has led to numerous innovations and improvements in customer service and operations at Southwest Airlines (Gittell, 2003).

3.2.2. Enhancing Corporate Solidarity

Corporate solidarity refers to the sense of unity and shared purpose among employees. A strong sense of solidarity can lead to higher levels of collaboration, loyalty, and overall performance. Companies that foster corporate solidarity create a supportive and inclusive work environment where employees feel connected to their colleagues and the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

To enhance corporate solidarity, companies should promote team-building activities, encourage collaboration across departments, and create opportunities for employees to connect on a personal level. Celebrating achievements and milestones together can also strengthen the sense of unity within the organization.

Case Study: Corporate Solidarity at Pixar

Pixar Animation Studios is renowned for its strong sense of corporate solidarity. The company fosters a collaborative environment where employees from different departments work together on projects. Pixar's open office layout, regular team-building events, and emphasis on storytelling and creativity have contributed to a cohesive and united workforce. This sense of solidarity has been instrumental in Pixar's success in producing award-winning animated films (Catmull & Wallace, 2014).

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3.2.3. Demonstrating the Power of Participation

The power of participation lies in the collective intelligence and creativity of employees. When employees are actively involved in decision-making processes, they bring diverse perspectives and ideas that can lead to more innovative and effective solutions. Participation also increases employees' sense of ownership and accountability, leading to higher levels of engagement and performance (Brown, 2018).

Companies can demonstrate the power of participation by involving employees in strategic planning, problem-solving, and project development. Regular town hall meetings, employee surveys, and focus groups are effective ways to involve employees in the company's decision-making process. When employees see that their opinions are valued and can influence the direction of the company, they are more likely to be engaged and committed.

Case Study: Participative Decision-Making at General Electric (GE)

General Electric (GE) has long been recognized for its participative approach to decision-making. The company involves employees at all levels in brainstorming sessions, strategy meetings, and innovation initiatives. This inclusive approach has led to numerous breakthroughs and advancements across GE's various business units. By leveraging the collective expertise of its workforce, GE has maintained its competitive edge and continued to drive innovation (Immelt, 2015).

3.2.4. Streamlining Against Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy can stifle innovation and slow down decision-making processes. A culture that emphasizes participation seeks to streamline processes and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. This can lead to a more agile and responsive organization, better equipped to adapt to changes and seize opportunities (Morgan, 2017).

To streamline against bureaucracy, companies should review and simplify their procedures, eliminate redundant steps, and empower employees to make decisions. This can involve flattening organizational hierarchies, decentralizing decision-making authority, and promoting a more flexible and adaptive approach to problem-solving.

Case Study: Reducing Bureaucracy at 3M

3M, a multinational conglomerate, has successfully reduced bureaucracy to foster a more innovative and agile culture. The company implemented a "15% rule," allowing employees to spend 15% of their time on projects of their choosing. This initiative has led to significant innovations, including the development of the Post-it Note. By streamlining processes and empowering employees, 3M has maintained its reputation as a leader in innovation (Fry, 2003).

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3.2.5. Promoting Polyphony Against Hierarchy

Polyphony, or multiple voices, refers to the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes. Promoting polyphony against hierarchy ensures that all employees, regardless of their position, can contribute their ideas and opinions. This can lead to more innovative and well-rounded decisions (Edmondson, 2019).

To promote polyphony, companies should encourage open dialogue, create platforms for discussion, and ensure that all employees have the opportunity to voice their opinions. Leaders should actively seek input from employees at all levels and foster a culture of respect and inclusion. By valuing diverse perspectives, companies can benefit from a wider range of ideas and solutions.

Case Study: Polyphony at IDEO

IDEO, a global design and innovation company, promotes polyphony by encouraging input from employees at all levels. The company's collaborative approach involves cross-functional teams working together on projects, with each member bringing their unique

perspective and expertise. This inclusive culture has resulted in groundbreaking designs and innovations, solidifying IDEO's position as a leader in the industry (Kelley & Littman, 2001).

3.3. Learning and Innovation Culture

A culture of learning and innovation involves keeping curiosity alive, seeing change as an opportunity, approaching problems with a solution-oriented mindset, and learning through trial and error without fear of making mistakes. This section will discuss the importance of fostering a learning and innovation culture and its impact on organizational growth.

3.3.1. Keeping Curiosity Alive

Curiosity drives learning and innovation. A culture that encourages curiosity fosters a continuous desire to learn and explore new ideas. This can lead to more innovative solutions and a more dynamic and adaptable organization (Edmondson, 2019).

Companies can keep curiosity alive by providing opportunities for employees to learn and grow, such as training programs, workshops, and access to resources. Leaders play a crucial role in fostering curiosity by modeling a curious mindset, encouraging questions, and promoting a culture of exploration and experimentation. By valuing and supporting curiosity, companies can create an environment where employees feel empowered to seek out new knowledge and ideas.

Case Study: Fostering Curiosity at IBM

IBM, a global technology company, has a strong culture of curiosity and continuous learning. The company offers various learning and development programs, including IBM Watson, an AI-powered learning platform that provides personalized training and resources. IBM also encourages employees to explore new technologies and innovate through initiatives like "Think Friday," where employees are given time to work on creative projects. This culture of curiosity has enabled IBM to remain at the forefront of technological advancements (Gerstner, 2002).

3.3.2. Seeing Change as an Opportunity

Change is inevitable in today's fast-paced business environment. Companies that see change as an opportunity rather than a threat are better equipped to adapt and thrive. A culture that embraces change encourages employees to be flexible and open-minded, and to see change as a chance to learn and grow (Kotter, 2012).

To foster a culture that sees change as an opportunity, companies should communicate the benefits of change, provide support and resources for managing transitions, and celebrate successes. Leaders should also model a positive attitude towards change and encourage employees to view challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement.

Case Study: Embracing Change at Netflix

Netflix, a leading streaming service, has successfully embraced change and leveraged it as an opportunity for growth. The company transitioned from a DVD rental service to a streaming platform and has continuously adapted its business model to stay ahead of industry trends. Netflix's culture of innovation and adaptability has been key to its success. Employees are encouraged to embrace change, experiment with new ideas, and learn from their experiences. This approach has enabled Netflix to become a dominant player in the entertainment industry (Hastings & Meyer, 2020).

3.3.3. Approaching Problems with a Solution-Oriented Mindset

A solution-oriented mindset focuses on finding effective and innovative solutions to problems rather than dwelling on obstacles. This approach can lead to more efficient problem-solving and a more proactive and resilient organization. Companies can promote a solution-oriented mindset by encouraging employees to take ownership of problems, seek out creative solutions, and collaborate with others (Brown, 2018).

To foster a solution-oriented mindset, leaders should provide support and resources for problem-solving, recognize and reward innovative solutions, and create an environment where employees feel safe to experiment and take risks. By promoting a positive and proactive approach to problem-solving, companies can enhance their ability to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

Case Study: Solution-Oriented Culture at Tesla

Tesla, the electric vehicle manufacturer, exemplifies a solution-oriented culture. The company encourages employees to think creatively and find innovative solutions to complex problems. Tesla's commitment to continuous improvement and problem-solving is evident in its development of cutting-edge technologies such as the Tesla Autopilot and battery innovations. This solution-oriented mindset has been a driving force behind Tesla's success in revolutionizing the automotive industry (Vance, 2015).

3.3.4. Learning Through Trial and Error

Learning through trial and error involves experimenting with new ideas and approaches and learning from both successes and failures. This approach can lead to continuous improvement and innovation. Companies that foster a culture of learning through trial and error encourage employees to take risks, experiment, and learn from their experiences without fear of failure (Edmondson, 2019).

To promote learning through trial and error, companies should create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes. Leaders should encourage experimentation, provide support and resources for trying new ideas, and celebrate both successes and lessons learned from failures. By fostering a culture of continuous learning, companies can drive innovation and stay competitive in a rapidly changing business environment.

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Case Study: Learning Through Trial and Error at Amazon

Amazon is renowned for its culture of experimentation and learning through trial and error. The company encourages employees to take risks and experiment with new ideas, even if they fail. Amazon's "Day 1" philosophy emphasizes the importance of maintaining a startup mentality where continuous learning and innovation are prioritized. This approach has led to numerous breakthroughs, such as Amazon Prime and AWS (Amazon Web Services), which have significantly contributed to the company's growth and success (Stone, 2013).

3.3.5. Continuously Improving by Learning from Customers and Experiences

Continuous improvement involves regularly evaluating and refining processes, products, and services based on feedback and experiences. Companies that prioritize continuous improvement are better equipped to meet customer needs, enhance quality, and stay ahead of competitors. This requires a culture that values feedback, learning, and adaptability (Schein, 2010).

To foster a culture of continuous improvement, companies should actively seek feedback from customers and employees, analyze performance data, and implement changes based on insights gained. Leaders should promote a mindset of ongoing learning and development, encouraging employees to identify areas for improvement and innovate solutions.

Case Study: Continuous Improvement at Toyota

Toyota's commitment to continuous improvement, known as "Kaizen," has been a cornerstone of its success. The company encourages employees at all levels to identify and implement improvements in their work processes. Toyota's focus on quality, efficiency, and innovation has resulted in numerous advancements in automotive manufacturing and technology. The Kaizen philosophy has enabled Toyota to maintain its reputation for excellence and remain a leader in the global automotive industry (Liker, 2004).

4. CONCLUSION

Corporate culture plays a vital role in shaping an organization's success. By fostering a culture of values and understanding, participation, and learning and innovation, companies can create a positive work environment that enhances employee engagement, productivity, and overall performance. Embracing diversity and differences, building trust-based relationships, and promoting a deeper understanding and respect among employees are essential for creating a culture of values and understanding. Encouraging employee voice, enhancing corporate solidarity, and demonstrating the power of participation can drive a culture of participation. Keeping curiosity alive, seeing change as an opportunity, approaching problems with a solution-oriented mindset, and learning through trial and error are crucial for fostering a culture of learning and innovation.

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The case studies of companies like Google, Patagonia, Southwest Airlines, Pixar, IBM, Netflix, Tesla, Amazon, and Toyota illustrate the practical application and benefits of these cultural elements. By prioritizing and nurturing these aspects of corporate culture, organizations can achieve long-term success and stay competitive in an ever-changing business landscape.

4.1. Implications for Practice

The insights gained from this analysis have significant implications for organizational leaders and managers. To build and sustain a positive corporate culture, leaders must:

• Clearly define and communicate the company's values and vision.

• Promote diversity and inclusion through equitable hiring practices and inclusive policies.

• Foster trust and respect by demonstrating integrity and empathy.

• Encourage open communication and actively seek employee input.

• Streamline processes to reduce bureaucracy and enhance agility.

• Support continuous learning and innovation through training programs and resources.

• Recognize and reward employees' contributions and achievements.

By implementing these practices, organizations can create a strong and positive corporate culture that drives engagement, innovation, and success.

4.2. Future Research Directions

Future research could explore the specific mechanisms through which corporate culture influences organizational performance and employee outcomes. Longitudinal studies could examine the impact of cultural initiatives over time and identify best practices for sustaining a positive corporate culture. Additionally, research could investigate the role of leadership in shaping and maintaining corporate culture, as well as the impact of cultural differences in global organizations.

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