

Introduction

This paper seeks to both define culture, from an organisational perspective, and then compare and contrast organisational culture across two different countries. This comparison will take into the key components that define culture at the national level and within organisations and considers two very different countries – Australia and the European microstate of Liechtenstein.

Whilst not the sole determinant of organisational performance, organisational culture can influence the performance of organisations in terms of the value they deliver, the engagement and stability of their workforce and the end customer experience (Alvesson, 2002). This paper, by analyzing the literature related to organisational culture, seeks to build a greater level of understanding about the drivers of effective organisational cultures, across two distinct national identities and geographic regions.

Setting the context – a comparison of two different countries

Australia and Liechtenstein are very different countries. Australia is geographically large and culturally diverse whereas Liechtenstein has an ethno-nationalistic culture built around its monarchy and distinct identity within Europe (Beattie, 2004). Australia has significant regional presence and national Defence interests whilst Liechtenstein has no military forces at all (Sara, 2017). However both enjoy high standards of living (Beattie, 2004) (Smith, 2017) and both have similar views of foreign policy matters and strong bilateral ties (Bishop, 2017).

Undertaking a head to head comparison on any series of common attributes of nations demonstrates the stark differences between these two states. These differences are illustrated in Appendix 1.

For reference, included at Appendix 2 is a map of central Europe showing the location of Liechtenstein and its near neighbours – Switzerland, Austria and Germany.

Defining organisational culture

Based on a review of the literature, there are several ways in which culture can be defined. Schein (1985) considered that culture was made of three dimensions or elements which are assumptions, values and artefacts (Schein, 1985). The table below, adapted from Schein's work, further explains these elements of organisational culture:

Table 1 - Explaining the elements of organisational culture

Element:	Description:
Assumptions	Commonly held beliefs, attitudes or biases Eg: "This is how we do things here"
Values	The defined attributes of an organisation Eg: "Resilient, Responsive, Customer Focused"
Artefacts	The rituals, traditions and key messages that are evident within an organisation Eg: "Parades and drill within the Military"

Derived from (Schein, 1985)

An alternative model for describing organisational culture is based on the work of Handy which is based on four types of culture – Power (power vested with the leaders), Task (organisations focused on solving problems), Person (a focus on the individual) and Role (where accountability is vested in specific roles) (Cacciattolo, 2014). The types of organisational culture are also considered by Douglas

