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## **INTEGRATING STRATEGY AND CULTURE: THE CULTURE OF DEDICATION IN SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS AND APPLE INC.**

### **ABSTRACT**

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This study addresses the benefits and shortcomings of the organizational culture models employing organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage theories. Following the critical analysis of preceding literature, this study discusses the benefits of an integrative approach as demonstrated by the ABCD model for conceptualizing organizational culture for practitioners to proactively manage culture for enhanced firm performance. Also, by focusing on the sequential dynamics of ABCD model which denotes dedication as the originating point, this paper explores how the findings from organizational behavior can be integrated with the ABCD model to create a competitive corporate culture. For this purpose, Samsung Electronics and Apple Inc.'s leadership and human resource policies are and initial conditions that facilitate the creation of competitive culture are introduced through a qualitative case study approach.

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*Keywords: Competitive Strategy, ABCD Model, Organizational Culture, Effectiveness, Samsung Electronics, Apple Inc.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

With the rising importance of culture in the organizational studies since the 1980s, scholars have long examined its relationship with firm performance to derive practical implications (e.g., Schein, 1990; Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey, 2013). A plethora of studies on the topic followed: ranging from early works that merely investigated if organizational culture can be a source of competitive advantage (e.g., Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983) to more elaborate works that identified different types of culture, and how they map to different aspects of organizational effectiveness (e.g., Hartnell, Ou, and Kinicki, 2011). In general, the preceding literature support that organizational culture is an important factor that influences performance (Denison and Mishra, 1995).

Despite this academic consensus, there were rarely studies that developed a comprehensive model offering a comprehensive and systematic but intuitive guideline on how a firm can mobilize its organizational culture to improve competitiveness (e.g., Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey, 2013). This paper attempts to trace the source of this gap by investigating the characteristics of the theoretical traditions that are closely connected to the development of organizational culture and performance; in particular, this paper examines and integrates organizational effectiveness theory and competitive advantage theory.

Following the identification of the gap and its causes, this study suggests that the gap can be bridged by integrating the two theoretical approaches. For instance, the ABCD model created by Moon (2012, 2016) is discussed as a novel approach that successfully embodies the strength of the effectiveness and competitiveness approaches. While the model was initially introduced to explain a firm-level management strategy, it was later extended to serve as a model of competitive economic culture for both national and organizational entities. This study places the ABCD model in a more detailed context of organizational culture and performance literature to show its advantages. Lastly, this paper explores the cycle of competitive organizational culture's and show how the findings from organizational behavior literature can supplement the ABCD model to provide practical implications.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The term organizational culture was born to management literature ripe with ambiguity. According to Gordon and DiTomoso (1992), 167 different usages of the term, culture, was

documented from the anthropology literature long before it entered the management literature. The range of definitions used by researchers only began to narrow and stabilize around the late 1980s, owing to the maturing of the discussion followed by the publication of several influential works in mid to late 1980s. Schein's (1985) work, for instance, immensely contributed to popularizing the notion of culture as values and assumptions that are shared and taken for granted by a group, manifesting in visible forms such as myths (stories), rituals, and management practices. In particular, "shared values," defined as "the sense of what ought to be, rather than what is" (Schein, 1985: 15), settled as an essential property of culture's definition in the contemporary organizational studies (e.g., Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey, 2013).

The discussion on organizational culture then branched into two streams: one that sees organizational culture as something an organization "is" and one that sees it as something an organization "has" (Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey, 2013: 370). Also referred to as the organizational purist view and the organizational pragmatist view (Martin, 1985; Ku, 2015), the two perspectives differ in their understanding of the extent to which culture can be intentionally managed. The purists posit that each organization's culture is the natural product of various factors' interplay and difficult to change into specific shapes (Ku, 2015). Culture researchers sharing this perspective tend to describe the shared values and assumptions as they are, much like how anthropologists observe tribes and how sociologists try to understand social systems (e.g., Ouchi and Wilkins, 1983; Martin, 1985). The cultural pragmatists, on the other hand, argue that organizational culture can be artificially designed and modified with certain administrative efforts (Martin, 1985; Ku, 2015). This view received greater attention and acceptance from the management and organizational behavior researchers in business schools, and the resulting works formed a sub-group of literature concerning organizational culture's relationship with firm performance.

The dominant intermediary construct used to explain how organizational culture affects firm performance is organizational effectiveness. Many works on organizational culture and performance take the approach of identifying distinct aspects of organizational effectiveness, testing the relationship between different cultural traits and each aspect of the effectiveness, and establishing a model that maps cultural traits to their most closely related effectiveness criteria.

**Organizational culture and effectiveness**

Organizational effectiveness research is characterized by studies identifying the effectiveness criteria, which vary according to individual researchers' theoretical focus (Cameron, 1986). Each area in the criteria of effectiveness is affected by its own determining factors. However, the relationship is not necessarily exclusive, meaning that one independent variable can affect multiple areas of effectiveness criteria. Also, the areas of effectiveness criteria can be at odds, but the effectiveness models usually do not discriminate one area as more significant than another. Effectiveness-based organizational culture models tend to be centered around cataloging cultural indicators associated with corresponding areas in the effectiveness model's criteria and they are able to encompass a wide range of cultural characteristics in a single model.

Among many effectiveness models, Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) Competing Values Framework (CVF) immensely influenced organizational culture and performance literature (e.g., Yu and Wu, 2009). CVF locates firms' organizational characteristics on a spatial model composed of three dimensions—internal-external focus, control-flexibility structure, and means-end relationship. When applied to organizational culture analysis, four types of culture (i.e., clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy) are identified on the effectiveness criteria (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). CVF is recognized for its comprehensive encapsulation of conceivable culture types, despite using only two main dimensions, and its ability to provide broad implications on culture's role and impact on firm performance (Yu and Wu, 2009).

Denison and Mishra's (1995) widely acclaimed Theoretical Model of Culture Traits is also a variant of CVF-based culture model, employing a two-by-two framework composed of "the contrast between internal integration and external adaptation, and the contrast between change and stability." According to this framework, involvement and adaptability cultures predict growth, while consistency and mission cultures predict profitability. Denison and Mishra's (1995) model, akin to Cameron and Quinn's (2006), captures a broad range of cultural types in a relatively simple model, and demonstrate that the effectiveness of a cultural type is dependent on the organizational and environmental variables such as the size of the firm and the national culture.

Similar characteristics can also be found in Deshpande and Farley's (1999) model, which supplements Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) CVF with Hofstede's (1980) typology. This model sorts culture into a competitive, an entrepreneurial, a bureaucratic, and a

consensual culture. According to this model, competitive culture emphasizes “competitive advantage and market superiority”; entrepreneurial culture emphasizes “innovation and risk-taking”; bureaucratic culture emphasizes “regulations and formal structure”; and consensual culture emphasizes “loyalty, tradition, and internal maintenance” (Deshpande and Farley, 2004). The model embodies the comprehensive strengths of the CVF (Yu and Wu, 2009).

The versatile nature of these organizational effectiveness-based culture models, however, can also be a limiting factor. While they emphasize the importance of compatibility between circumstance and culture type and suggest that “a balanced culture” is generally the ideal cultural type for improving firm performance (Quinn, 1988; Gregory, Harris, Armenakis, and Shook, 2009), the interpretation of the balance can be highly subjective and difficult to determine ahead of time. Moreover, as the cultural types are located on the continuous dimensions of effectiveness criteria, the dividing line between each type can take a blurry appearance. For instance, the difference between the competitive culture and market culture and their effects are not intuitively clear in Deshpande and Farley (1999)’s model. This blurriness and situational dependency hinder conceptualizing performance-inducing culture and identifying the independent variables leading to the ideal culture.

That the organizational effectiveness-based culture models develop overlaps in their classification may not be an anomaly, however, given the characteristics of the organizational effectiveness construct itself. Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) mention that “the literature on organizational effectiveness is simply a grounded version of the literature on organizational analysis” and acknowledge that CVF does not solve the problem of merging multiple concepts included in the construct of effectiveness into a single dependent variable, although their model can serve as a starting point. Most existing culture models building on effectiveness theories do not address this problem of overlaps.

### **Organizational culture and competitive advantage**

Although organizational culture literature is richer in works coupled with effectiveness, business researchers interested in organizational culture produced another stream of works that conjoin culture with competitive advantage theories. Competitive advantage possesses multiple definitions like effectiveness. However, unlike effectiveness, the difference results from the debate surrounding the independent variables affecting competitive advantage,

rather than concerning the meaning of competitive advantage itself. Thereby this stream of research tends to focus on a specific set of cultural types identified as idealistic, instead of holistically describing all types of organizational culture.

For instance, one of the most important business strategy theories applied to theorize organizational culture's role in management is the resource-based view (RBV). This theory focuses on the features of the internal resources of a firm as the key to gaining competitive advantage. Along with the capabilities, processes, information, knowledge, and other assets, organizational culture was considered as one of the internal resources of a firm (Daft, 1983; Barney, 1986; Moon, 2016). According to RBV, certain types of resources are superior to other types. Barney (1986), for example, prioritized valuable, rare, inimitable, and not substitutable resources (VRIN) as the kind that will help firms to gain and sustain competitive advantage. Based on this viewpoint, organizational culture is also considered to be beneficial to the creation of competitive advantage, when it meets the criteria of those meaningful resource characteristics (i.e., VRIN). Hence, following RBV's logic, firms should strive to develop a unique type of culture that others cannot replicate to leverage culture for enhancing competitive advantage.

RBV-based conceptualization of organizational culture provides a succinct definition of a competitive culture. However, the exact meaning of valuable and rare culture can be ambiguous and context-dependent. In fact, RBV is criticized for assuming a static equilibrium that does not reflect the realities of constantly changing nature of strengths, weakness, threats, and opportunities interacting in the business environment (Chan, Shaffer, and Snape, 2004). In reality, the environment is ever-changing, and therefore the actual face value of VRIN resources may change along with the environment. Also, because RBV does not specify what comprises the inimitable culture or how to create one, with RBV-based understanding alone, it can be difficult to immediately outline the desirable culture.

In regards to culture's development, industry-structure view (ISV) was incorporated in organizational culture literature to explain the cultural formation. According to ISV, an industry's structure molds firm characteristics and competitiveness. As a culture theory, the ISV maintains that the characteristics of competitive culture vary according to the industry characteristics, while the culture of competitive firms within an industry is largely homogenous (Gordon, 1991). Unlike RBV, however, ISV does not account for the differences that occur among firms within the same industry. Thus, though the general pattern of industry-wise homogenous cultural characteristics may exist, ISV-based

organizational culture models are criticized for its inability to explain why intra-industry differences arise and what kind of cultural characteristics are needed for firms to excel within the same industry.

Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) and Competence-based View (CbTF) were also introduced in culture literature to supplement RBV and ISV's shortcomings (Chan, Shaffer, and Snape, 2004). Defined as "difficult-to-replicate enterprise capabilities required to adapt to changing customer and technological opportunities" by Teece (2007), DCV focuses on operational capabilities of the firm that "build, integrate, or reconfigure other resources and capabilities" (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). This view fills the gap of RBV by recognizing the nature of the changing environment. It asserts that not only firms need unique resources to sustain their competitive advantage, but also the capabilities to utilize those resources in a manner that fits the environmental changes. Research based on DCV highlights cultural values that promote tolerance of ambiguity and employee engagement (Lawson and Samson, 2001; Chan, Shaffer, and Snape, 2004). CbTF resides in the same theoretical scope of DCV but focuses more on concerns specific to organizational studies (Freiling and Fichtner, 2010). Studies applying CbTF to understand competitive organizational culture emphasize cultural characteristics that facilitate learning and efficient knowledge management (Zheng, Yang, and McLean, 2009).

The application of DCV to organizational culture theory has made the concept of competitive culture more explicit with greater insight on how to foster the desired culture. However, learning consists of only one aspect of factors that lead to competitive advantage. Thus, this view too is insufficient to fully illustrate the desirable characteristics of organizational culture. Also, DCV itself is criticized for questionable sustainability. For instance, Moon (2016) notes that there is a need to "clarify the conditions under which a firm can sustain its competitive advantage through dynamic capabilities" when firms are exposed to high-velocity markets that make the dynamic capabilities less reliable.

Overall, competitiveness frameworks effectively reduce the abstractness of organizational culture and turn it into a more manageable concept. However, each of the major theories used so far contains limitations. ISV's conclusion that each industry has distinct requirements to be successful provides an important observation but holds little practical value. RBV offers a more generally applicable explanation about the source of competitive advantage, but its interpretation can be difficult. DCV most explicitly identifies

the definition of a competitive culture, but it is overly focused on one determinant of competitiveness, compromising its comprehensiveness.

## **INTEGRATING THE TWO APPROACHES**

### **The strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches**

The organizational culture typologies linked with organizational effectiveness models are valuable tools for analyzing the cultural topography of an organization. However, they are difficult to interpret and limited in prescriptive power, due to the high dependency on situational factors and overlaps in effectiveness criteria. As discussed earlier, the shortcoming results from the characteristics of the organizational effectiveness construct. Effectiveness, as discussed by the literature, is not a single variable, but comprised of multiple areas (Cameron, 1986). The effectiveness literature describes the criteria of elements in which an organization can be effective but do not discriminate between the elements in terms of significance. Thus, finding a relationship between a cultural trait and a particular element of effectiveness is insufficient to deduce implications for practical application.

Competitive advantage, on the other hand, is a singular dependent variable in the strategy literature. Competitive advantage literature provides models with determinants instead of criteria. Therefore, theories of organizational culture that link competitive advantage models with organizational culture provide more decisive direction for managers seeking to improve their firms' corporate culture as a business resource. However, the existing studies that draw from business theories on firm competitive advantage are limited in terms of their applicability for three reasons. The first reason is that they suffer from missing variables when explaining the source of competitiveness. The second reason is that some of the theories define the determinants of competitiveness too abstractly as does the organizational effectiveness literature. The third limitation is that the existing business theories tend to focus on the "what" or the resources that lead to competitiveness, instead of the "how" or the way people create and handle those resources. With the "what" approach, even when the picture of the desirable culture is clear, the theories often cannot give ready advice on how to realize that picture.

Therefore, although studying organizational culture in relation to competitive advantage can reduce the ambiguity generated when it is studied in relation to effectiveness, the existing models of culture and competitive advantage have room for improvement in terms of their comprehensiveness, explicitness, and immediate applicability. To solve this problem, there needs to be a model that identifies the determinants of competitive advantage in a more comprehensive and explicitly defined manner. The model also needs to be applicable to analyzing cultural characteristics pertinent to increasing competitiveness and understanding how those characteristics can be fostered. This study argues that the ABCD model (Moon, 2016) can show a viable solution to fill this gap in the organizational culture literature as it integrates the strengths of the two approaches.

### **The “how” approach as the bridge: The ABCD model**

The ABCD model integrates the strengths of the preceding theories on competitive advantage, by removing the focus from the resources to the way those resources are handled. According to the ABCD model, the limitations in resources can be overcome by utilizing four key strategies: agility (comprised of sub-factors speed and precision), benchmarking (learning and best practice), convergence (mixing and synergy), and dedication (diligence and goal-orientation). The strategy of agility involves “efficient management of time and accuracy”; whereas benchmarking strategy refers to “learning the best-practices for efficient catch-up”; convergence strategy, on the other hand, concerns effective diversification achieved by “mixing [related and unrelated resources] synergistically for creating new value”; lastly, dedication strategy describes the emphasis placed on “diligence with goal-orientation for a strong commitment” of employees (Moon, 2016: 104-109). The four strategies are also the determinants of competitiveness, which can potentially be measured to assess competitiveness. It is also suggested that the four determinants can be a typology of competitive culture at both national and organizational levels.

The ABCD model embodies the strengths of the preceding theories while complementing their limitations. While strategy literature tends to focus on unique resources that allow a firm to outperform competitors, the effective performance of activities have often been overlooked (Moon, 2012). In other words, if organizational effectiveness literature is preoccupied with identifying areas of activities that a firm conducts and how to better perform them, competitive advantage literature largely ignores the quality of activity performance and only pays attention to the acquisition of special

resources, such as capabilities. However, the ABCD model is more concerned with the “how” or the human behavior aspect, which is closer to the approach of effectiveness literature but conjoins the approach with studying the sources of competitive advantage, a singularly defined dependent variable.

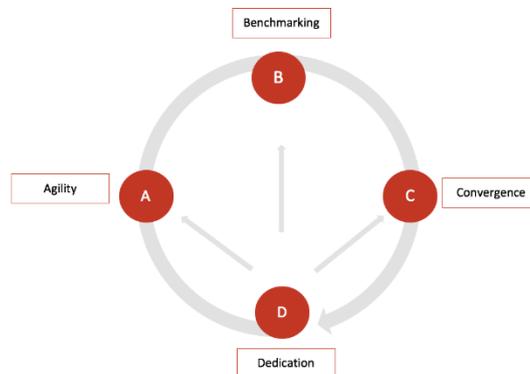
The human behavior focused, “how” approach of the ABCD model gives it a hybrid advantage. For instance, while “rare” culture of RBV is rather abstract, a culture that values agility, learning from the best practices, creativity, and dedication can be more easily visualized and implemented because they are focused on human activities. At the same time, they are not neutral concepts such as “collaborative” or “individualistic” which can either be positive or negative features depending on the situation. Also, compared to the more traditional approach to typifying culture that relies on anthropological attributes such as “feminine” versus “masculine” to label culture (Hofstede, 1980), using agility, benchmarking, convergence, and dedication can help eliminate the difficulty of assigning preference to one type of culture over another, by zooming into the directly value-producing aspects of behavior in the business context. In other words, the determinants of the ABCD model serves to typify competitive economic culture, defined as “the beliefs, attitudes, and values that bear on the economic activities of individuals, organizations, and other institutions” (Porter, 2000: 14). The focus on the economic culture allows the ABCD model to explicitly and yet effectively identify cultural attributes needed to enhance competitiveness.

Also, as a business theory, shifting attention from the characteristics of resources to what is done by people with those resources allows the model to successfully explain cases that the RBV fails to resolve, such as South Korea’s exponential development, a country with little valuable resources. It is also more specific than ISV while reaching further than DCV in scope. Hence, it can be argued that the ABCD model overcomes the preceding theories’ limitations in terms of the explicitness as well as the comprehensiveness in identifying performance-enhancing culture.

Furthermore, the ABCD model can also guide creating a competitive culture. The model denotes a sequential direction among the four factors, where dedication is the origin. Figure 1, drawn according to from Moon (2012; 2016), shows that dedication sequentially ( $D \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ ) and simultaneously ( $D \rightarrow A, B, \text{ and } C$ ) affects the development of the other three factors. Moon claimed that dedication is the most fundamental factor that has an overarching influence on the other factors of the model (Moon, 2012). Between the two sub-factors of dedication, goal-orientation precedes diligence. Powell’s (2017) research

supports this claim as it demonstrates that in people-driven context, rather than a market comprised of rational economic agents, diligent execution of activities takes priority over other strategies, and that to have clear priorities, or goal orientation, is crucial for the diligence of employees to create competitive advantage. Also, that the increase in the levels of employee engagement is an antecedent of increase in employee performance is a widely accepted conclusion in the industrial psychology and human resources literature (Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes, 2002; Gruman and Saks, 2011).

**Figure 1. The Relationship Among the Four Determinants of the Competitiveness**



Source: Illustration Modified from Moon (2018)

The “how” instead of “what” focus of the ABCD model gives it an advantage over organizational effectiveness theories and other business theories of competitive advantage to be linked with studying how organizational culture can aid firm culture in a more intuitive and readily applicable manner for practice. It offers clarity to the relationship between a specific type of culture and performance by identifying determinants of competitive advantage rather than areas of effectiveness. Yet, it moves beyond seeing culture as a static resource as does the RBV, while taking a broader and generic range of factors influencing competitiveness than does the DCV. Regarding the development of culture, the ABCD model takes a more proactive stance than the ISV, by positing that economic culture is prone to be artificially molded by managerial efforts (Moon, 2016). Thus, the ABCD model can be a useful tool for both academics and practitioners to analyze a firm’s organizational culture for the purpose of assessing how it can aid the firm’s performance by providing a succinct and comprehensive picture of a competitive culture that can readily be applied.

## **CREATING COMPETITIVENESS THROUGH THE CULTURE OF DEDICATION**

The previous section introduced the features of the ABCD model and explained why the ABCD model is a comprehensive management model that can be used to generically understand competitive culture types. The ABCD model, however, can be strengthened to increase its applicability in the organizational culture management by identifying the variables that affect dedication. As explained in the earlier section, the ABCD model posits that the increase in employee dedications lead to the creation of agility, benchmarking, and convergence capacities. In this case, the culture of dedication merits attention, since it comprises the initial condition to creating a competitive culture. The ABCD model on its own, however, does not detail how this culture of dedication can be fostered in an organization. Thus, insights from organizational behavior research can be borrowed to better understand the cultural creation process. This section presents two propositions on the factors affecting the culture of dedication based on the findings of preceding research in organizational behavior to supplement the integration of management and culture through the ABCD model.

### **Goal-orientation and leadership**

Most prominent studies of organizational culture's development agree that leadership plays an essential role in shaping organizational culture. Schein (1983) even compared the birth of organizational culture to the birth of Roman goddess Minerva from mythology and wrote: "Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, is said to have sprung full-blown from the forehead of Zeus. Similarly, an organization's culture begins life in the head of its founder-springing from the founder's ideas about truth, reality, and the way the world works" (Schein, 1983: 221). While many works also recognize external factors such as industry environment as the important determinants of organizational culture, that leader's style and management philosophy molds the characteristic of an organization's culture remains undisputed (e.g., Lee and Duckworth, 2018). On the other hand, later studies on the influence of leadership including both qualitative and quantitative studies detail that charismatic leadership specifically leads to the creation of strong mission culture characterized by the presence of clearly defined and well-followed goals (Bass, 1985; Wiener, 1988; Waldman and Yammarino, 1999). For instance, while Wiener (1988) disregarded cultures driven by charismatic leaders as likely to be less productive than cultures driven by

organizational tradition, this study recognized that charismatic leadership lead to the creation of group-minded cultural values that influence employees to work towards collective goals. Quantitative studies by Gruman and Saks (2011) and Xenikou and Simoshi (2006) also support the causal relationship between the presence of charismatic leaders and the development of “an achievement cultural orientation” characterized by the promotion of “goal setting, the accomplishment of objectives, and high standards of performance” (Xenikou and Simoshi, 2006: 575).

In regard to the specific nature of the leadership practice, on the other hand, developing and communicating explicit goal-hierarchy and adhering to the stated goals by top management is found to be significant by related studies (Duckworth, 2016; Lee and Duckworth, 2018). According to the findings of Duckworth and Lee (2018), even if each employee possesses a high level of diligence and strong goal-orientation, the gathering of such individuals will not necessarily exhibit strong group-wide goal-orientation and thereby nor the efficient use of diligence, because each person may be driven by separate goals. To create an organizational culture driven by a strong level of a shared goal, effective communication, and reinforcement of those goals in actual practice is suggested to be the key by leading social psychologists (e.g., Ncube and Jerie, 2012; Lee and Duckworth, 2018). Based on these findings from the preceding literature, this study postulates the following:

Proposition 1: The presence of strong, charismatic leadership, accompanied by clearly communicated organizational goal and vision, leads to the creation of a culture of dedication, concerning the sub-factor of goal-orientation.

### **Diligence and support policies**

Preceding literature suggests that well-defined goals have to be supplemented with policies that encourage employees to fully commit to the attainment of the goal by leveraging engagement (Moon, 2016; Powell, 2017). While organization’s goal may be crystal clear to each individual employee, if the personal goal of the individual does not align with the organization’s goal, the individual is unlikely to be motivated to fully engage in one’s work (Ncube and Jerie, 2012). Saks (2005) also supported that an individual’s job engagement can be different from his or her engagement with the organizational goals. Hence, to promote employee engagement to create a culture of diligence, organizations need to take individuals’ personal interests, such as self-actualization, into account (Ncube and Jerie, 2012).

Among many factors that have been studied by industrial psychologists and human resource development researchers, the concept of perceived organizational support (POS) stands out as closely related to increasing organizational engagement. POS refers to the generally shared belief among employees that their well-being is valued and supported by the organization (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Research finds that both fairness, availability of supervisor support, and rewards and favorable job conditions are key factors that increase POS and resultantly the organizational engagement (Kahn, 1992; Rhodes and Eisenberger, 2002; Salanova, Agut, and Peiro, 2005).

POS does not simply concern the availability of resources for employees to perform the given tasks at the moment. Instead, it refers to whether an employee can feel valued as an individual by the organization, and thus it is also affected by whether the organization contributes to the employee's self-esteem and growth. While external rewards—mainly wages—are sometimes undermined in motivation theories that focus on intrinsic motivation, they are found to be relevant tools for increasing POS because they affect self-esteem. Gardner, Dyne, and Pierce (2004) found that high baseline wage level increased the employee's perception of self-esteem, while bonus pay was irrelevant. Bonus pay, on the other hand, along with recognition and promotion fell under the category of reward and evaluation in many studies and transparency of the standards was deemed an important factor for the additional pays to be effective (Greenberg, 1990).

In terms of growth, the availability of training programs, feedback, and challenges are often discussed as important in preceding research (Gruman and Saks, 2011). In particular, the findings from recent motivation studies indicate that the immediacy of reward in terms of timing significantly affects the effectiveness of rewards in increasing motivation (Kruglanski et al., 2018). Also, in terms of feedback, literature support that healthy amount of challenge and negative feedback can enhance motivation, especially for those with a higher level of expertise in their fields (Wooly and Fishbach, 2015).

Interestingly, Gruman and Saks (2011) found that the communication of clear goal-hierarchy also affects engagement because it is a form of social support in that it provides guidelines for employees. This finding is consistent with the ABCD model's argument that goal-orientation and diligence co-compose diligence, while the establishing of goal-orientation must precede that of diligence. Based on these findings, this study proposes the following:

Proposition 2: Support policies with clear standards for tangible rewards conferred immediately, feedback system, and challenging assignment of goals leads to the creation of a culture of dedication, concerning the sub-factor of diligence.

## **CASE STUDY: SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS AND APPLE INC.**

Two firms with a strong culture of dedication were chosen to study the leadership and human resources policies to test the two propositions. Samsung and Apple were selected because they both exhibit a strong culture of dedication (Moon, 2016), even as they come from two varying national cultures. Since the ABCD model was initially created to explain the competitive advantage of Korean firms, it seemed appropriate to choose a Korean firm that best fits the example of a competitive firm. Samsung Electronics was chosen due to its high-performance results as it consistently ranked the highest among other Korean firms in Fortune 500 since 2010—which is during the tenure of Lee Kun-Hee’s leadership—and Apple was selected because it is comparable to Samsung as they compete directly against each other as internet technology (IT) device manufacturers, as opposed to a company such as Microsoft or Google that focus on software products and online services.

In terms of the methodology, this study emulated the approach of preceding researchers that utilize secondary sources when data compilation through obtaining direct access is unattainable (e.g., Denison and Mishra, 1995). Book-length writings on the selected firms by credible authors and publishers and academic articles from peer-reviewed journals were utilized to gather information on the heroes of the firm who “embody the values of the culture” (Deal and Kennedy, 1983: 501) as well as the company myths and stories that explain the insider’s point of view on why people do what they do in their organization. Although the use of survey data for quantitative analysis is increasingly popular, as Lee (2014) argued, qualitative data, including secondary sources, can be more suitable for gaining a comprehensive understanding of how cultural characteristics affect practices and performance. In addition to published case studies, company reports, books on the history of those firms, and press articles, data from open employee review platforms such as Jobplanet and Glassdoor were consulted to draw implications on POS.

***Goal-Orientation and leadership***

Samsung Electronics was found by Lee Byeong-Cheol, the founder of Samsung Group. However, his son, Lee Kun-Hee, is widely credited as the actual founder-equivalent who oversaw the growth of the company into its current global leadership position. Lee's position in Samsung is described by many researchers as that of a monotheistic god (Lee, 2014; Kim, 2005; Kim, 2015). The legend-like stories that circulate Samsung in various channels, such as Samsung's new employee education sessions, reflect how this deification of Lee Lee Kun-Hee was achieved. For instance, one of the most well-known stories about Lee is that he was responsible for starting the semiconductor business in Samsung Electronics, which originally focused on household electronics such as refrigerators. This choice to invest in semi-conductors significantly contributed to Samsung's remarkable growth and rise into the top player position in the industry. This historical fact turned into one of the most famous stories that circulate Samsung and gets taught to the newly hired with a plot complete with protagonist-antagonist conflict, where Lee faced opposition from other executives and an ending that celebrates the success of the prescient protagonist which resulted in the legendary success. Indeed, however, the noted miraculous success is not a myth at all, but tangible fact. The slogan of the global top leader became a reality for Samsung during Lee's tenure. Also, the series of success experienced under Lee's leadership were documented as cases to study and emulate by posterity (e.g., Lee's 33 management creed) while he was in office and to this day (Kim, 2015).

Apple, also, had a founder who displayed strong charismatic leadership, Steve Jobs. While Apple was co-founded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak in 1976, Wozniak mostly remained in charge of technological development, while Jobs assumed the role as a manager. Like Lee, Jobs saw his company to the top of the industry and rose to the rank of a legend in his organization. His story, however, is more dramatic at a personal level. It includes a period of exile from Apple, during which the company struggled and did not appear at all in the Fortune Global 500 list. In fact, the year of Jobs' return to Apple in 1997, Samsung ranked 124<sup>th</sup> place on the list, but Apple's name does not even appear. Yet, by the time he left due to illness, Apple had transformed into the undisputed global IT industry leader with the continual launch of immensely successful and sensational products, such as iPod, iPhone, and iPad. In the process, Job's position as the absolute authority in the firm was established. Interviews with Apple's previous employees reveal that Jobs' authority was absolute while he held his office. He was not only the hero but the law and there were no

questions in regard to where the control tower of Apple was or by whom organizational goals were set (Lashinsky, 2012).

Another interesting point of comparison is that both leaders not only lead with charisma reinforced by success but also gave direct and clear orders, supported by a well-defined hierarchical system of the decision-making process. While Samsung's top-down management and emphasis on process configuration is a well-documented practice, one of the examples that show the emphasis Lee placed on the efficient communication is the creation of the Dictionary of Samsung Terminology, in order to standardize the meaning of various terms and expressions used within the Samsung Group (Kim and Wu, 2003). With the well-defined language and hierarchy of relationship, Samsung developed a highly consistent culture of collective movement aligned with clearly defined goals that allow its numerous employees to know exactly what their positions are and work according to the order given to them to fulfill goal highlighted by the leader. For example, Samsung developed its own smartphone to compete with the iPhone only within a few months after Apple released its sensational product. Lee's order "just follow them for now" (Kim, 2015: 140), which also became one of Samsung's legends, was interpreted by executives as an order to imitate Apple's product and the orders went down to lower level employees to fit each of their expertise. This vertical structure with a strong leader-figure, clearly articulated goal, and well-defined hierarchy and process is identified by researchers of Korean management style as the key factor that enables seamlessly choreographed movement by a large organization possible (Lee, 2014; Ku, 2015; Moon, 2016).

Also, even though it is often the Asian firms that are associated with strong hierarchical traditions, Apple exhibits a culture marked by hierarchical structures. For example, Apple employees note that Jobs set an unmistakable hierarchy among departments, with the designers on the top (Lashinsky, 2012). To illustrate, in Apple, only when the industrial designers finalized the design of a product, other departments such as engineering and marketing follow through, accommodating the design (Lashinsky, 2012). While this was not a common practice, the goal-orientation was strongly visible. The priority was to make beautiful products and the ideal was not to be sacrificed due to factors unrelated to the goal, such as the budget. Moreover, the Apple case also exhibits practices that demonstrate its efforts to increase ease of communication. For example, Apple's system of Directly Responsible Individual (DRI) assignments and the setup of a narrow area of responsibilities

and focus assigned to each employee illustrate the organizational efforts invested to reduce potential waste of resources in communicating goals and responsibilities to each individual.

To summarize the findings, both Samsung and Apple's development was accompanied by the strong presence of a charismatic founding leader with centralized authority, manifested and asserted through the stories and narratives that convey the leaders' values. The academic research on leadership studies agrees to the classification of Lee and Jobs as charismatic leaders (Bel, 2010; Chang, 2012; Antonakies and Day, 2017). Yet, an important idea to note is that in both organizations, the enforcement of top-down management was accepted in general as to how the organization ought to operate, if it were to remain successful. This faith in the company's leadership and structure did not build elaborate speeches or indoctrination, but over time through the shared experience of the firm's growth while firm policy required employees to pursue exceptional fulfillment of assigned goals. Narrative building through the circulation of stories, as previously suggested by classic theories on organizational culture (e.g., Pettigrew, 1979; Deal and Kennedy, 1983; Schein, 1985), seems to have significantly influenced the process of solidifying the charismatic leader as the hero-figure in the organizational culture. Sharma and Grant's (2011) case study on Jobs' leadership, for example, support the theories from classic culture literature that claim leaders' values are instilled in the organization through the circulation of stories and myths as they find that the effective story-telling and narrative building were crucial tools that helped Jobs establish his authority as a charismatic leader in Apple.

Also, the general consensus of employees and observers alike is that Lee Kun-Hee of Samsung and Steve Jobs of Apple were both leaders who not only managed their organizations with iron grip as charismatic and prescient leaders, but also with crystal clear communication of vision (Issacson, 2012; Lashinsky, 2012; Kim, 2015). Even when Samsung was an unrecognized small company from a poverty-struck small Asian country, Lee made it clear that the goal is to reach the position of global top leader (Cheon and Han, 1994; Lee, 2014); and amidst the glamor of technological advancement and quick growth, Jobs delivered his unwavering message to his employees that the goal is to create "beautiful things" (Lashinsky, 2012: 21). In both organizations, these articulated, highest-order goal was pursued with concentration at an organizational level through clearly defined role-assignments and goal-hierarchy. Hence, this study concludes that the cases of Samsung and Apple support proposition 1.

***Diligence and support policies***

Both organizations create an environment that allows employees to fully focus on their work, without being concerned about their other personal needs, such as healthcare or children's education. Samsung is famous for its impeccable welfare system for their employees and generous salaries and financial incentives paid for high performance. The founder of Samsung, Lee Byung Cheol, believed employees cannot be expected to fully focus on their work if they have to worry about taking care of their family, in case of illness or various needs arising, such as having to pay the tuition of their children (Lim, 2013). This longstanding belief could be one of Samsung's cultural trait, as it stayed as a well-accepted justification for considerable large cost expenditure throughout the firm's history. A strongly visible pattern in company reviews by former and current employees from various sources is that there is little complaint about salary or benefits, like Samsung, on average, pays the highest in the electronics industry among South Korean firms (Lee, 2014; Choi, 2015; Kim, 2015).

On the other hand, even as Samsung woos their employees with attractive perks, they maintain a strict meritocracy, communicating that diligent focus placed on assigned goals is absolutely unnegotiable priority. "the winner takes all" ("*Seung-ja-dok-shik*") is a widespread expression in Samsung, because the employee evaluation is based on the performance of their department and depending on the performance, the employees receive their salary (Job Planet Review Analysis; Lee, 2014; Kim, 2015). If the top-down structure enables setting specific business goals for relevant divisions and projects as in what to do in specific, the employee evaluation system communicates the personal goals for individuals that must be met to survive in the organization. While Korean firms have traditionally employed compensation system that rewarded based on the length of one's tenure, Samsung was one of the earliest to shift the system to evaluation and compensation according to business outcomes an employee contributed to the firm's performance (Kim and Briscoe, 1997; Lee and Park, 2008). This evaluation system further reinforces the employees to orient themselves toward maintaining high performance in regard to goals assigned by the leadership.

A similar pattern of competitive pay and employee evaluation based on performance can also be observed in Apple, with few points of differences. As in Samsung and like many of its peers in Silicon Valley, Apple's management runs the company with "only tolerate A-players" slogan. Thus, the company evaluates its employees based on their competence

(Jeong et al., 2017; Pisano, 2019). However, while the performance-based evaluation in Samsung is more focused on how the business performed on a short-term basis, Apple's evaluation system places more focus on individual competence as in skillfulness at what he or she does below the executive level (Lee, 2014; Pisano, 2019).

Another point of deviation is that Apple places less emphasis on the flashy perks or exceptionally generous salary levels. As mentioned before, Apple does provide competitive pay, benefits within the industry standards, and favorable working conditions (Glassdoor Review Analysis). However, the emphasis is placed on "doing what you love" and "having more impact than you ever imagined" (Apple's Career Website). The cultural focus individual-organization goal alignment in Apple's case is more strongly placed on intrinsic motivation, where what an employee does in work is not merely labor for the achievement of the firm's goals in return for monetary compensation, but work towards the shared goal (Ncube and Jerie, 2012). Along with this call to dream of making a change, Apple uses the language that emphasizes enjoyment when describing work. Jobs, who largely contributed to creating this rhetoric, openly denounced working for money but outlined the vision of a workplace that inspires people to work harder (Lashinsky, 2012). In fact, the rhetoric of Jobs on the nature of work and employment can be boiled down to the following famous quote: "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do" (Forbes, 2013). This alignment of a higher level of goal often referred to as the "calling," supersedes the lower level goals concerning financial stability and poses as a stronger antecedent for increased motivation (Duckworth, 2016). Moon (2016) also acknowledged that this type of goal alignment is needed to be strengthened among Korean firms, highlighting strategically positioning firms' needs to match societal needs as the next step of development for Korean firms to strengthen their level of dedication.

Samsung and Apple's similar and yet different approach can also be found in the way they challenge their employees. Apple employees identify being surrounded by the smartest people of the field as one of the best perks of working for Apple. Samsung is also one of the most sought-after workplaces in South Korea and therefore reserves the luxury of choosing only the best. Moreover, both firms are known for their drive for finding and recruiting top talents (Pisano, 2019). The outcome is that both Samsung and Apple are filled with employees who are considered by their peers and by themselves as experts and A-players of the field. This composition of the firm with top talents allows projecting that the

organization would benefit from being challenged by constructive negative feedback. Both Samsung and Apple indeed characteristically emphasize constant challenge, rather than satisfaction with current performance, while they exhibit different rhetorical characteristics.

Samsung's crisis management underscores the constant push Samsung employees receive to top their previous bests (Lee and Kim, 2006; Lee, 2014; Kim, 2015; Ku, 2015). Many journalists who reported on Samsung when it was rising into the global leader position noted that the atmosphere in Samsung headquarters was far from celebratory, but rather urgent, because the employees were convinced that they are under a crisis (Reuters, 2012; Kim, 2014; Kim, 2015). While an individual's high performance receives generous immediate rewards, the management charges the organization as a whole to negative feedback, challenging the members to overcome their own best-practice. In this way, while diligence and hardworking are not the explicit catchphrase of Samsung's human resource policy, Samsung employees, regardless of rank, are encouraged to work hard and to be fully devoted to their career in Samsung. Furthermore, as the firm endured various crises and challenges throughout its history, the value of diligence that had been promoted, and practice by the organization during those times of difficulties also seem to have survived and successfully took place as a shared belief of Samsung, taking up a part of its culture.

Deeply embedded in Apple's myth and language are the words of Jobs, "Stay hungry, stay foolish" (Stanford News, 2005). According to the stories from former Apple employees on what it is like to work at Apple, the quote was never mere advice, but a pressing demand, if not an absolute command, all Apple employees faced. With the first half of the set resonates with the feedback of challenge, rousing the value of diligence. All accounts on the work environment in Apple confirms that devotion to work is a lifestyle at Apple, in search of excellence and greater innovation. However, unlike in Samsung, the cultural emphasis expressed in the language of the leadership is not placed on the fear of getting replaced from the top or losing in global competition, but on reaching the unprecedented heights and making a difference.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study focused on the initial conditions required to develop the competitive culture as identified by the ABCD model, which indicates that the culture of dedication needs to exist before the development of the culture of agility, benchmarking, and convergence. The

literature on employee engagement and commitment in fact support that a high level of dedication is antecedents to a high level of employee performance at effectively completing tasks and learning. Also, evidence to support proposition 1 and 2 were found in both Samsung and Apple's case. While they differ in the details of their management practices and leadership style, in terms of large patterns, both firms had strong charismatic hero-figure as their founding leaders along with hierarchical division of goals and their policies also emphasize satisfying employee needs, providing immediate rewards and feedback at individual level, while fostering the spirit of constant challenge. These detections of patterns alone cannot sufficiently prove a causal relationship indicated in propositions 1 and 2. However, combined with the theoretical support from preceding literature, they may provide strong evidence to postulate that competitive culture can be created through the identified strategies.

The findings are indicative of the value of the ABCD model's approach for conducting organizational culture research across different regions and for providing a point of reference for assessing the strengths of one's organizational culture. The case study analysis implies that while Asian organizational culture is often considered to have a stronger characteristic of hierarchical orientation and emphasis placed on diligence, the difference between the two may be more relevant to the manner of their expression and dissemination. Using the ABCD model to analyze these two firms allowed uncovering these differences without confusing the outline of competitive culture by purely focusing on the behavioral traits pertinent to economic activities. With this model, it is possible to avoid vague conclusions such as both communal and individualistic cultures can be effective depending on regional differences, but instead clearly state that the culture of dedication is needed, but different practices may lead to this effect. Here, the emphasis is placed on the behavioral pattern that directly influences the economic activity, dedication, while the differences in factors that lead to dedication can stand as separate research without confusing the vision of competitive culture. Having this globally applicable model as a point of reference, practitioners can easily assess the strengths of their organizational culture and customize the proxy variables to improve each determinant.

This paper attempted to contribute to the existing literature on organizational culture and management by illuminating the advantages of integrating organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage theories for conceptualizing culture's role and characteristics in a business context. The ABCD model provides a good theoretical example

of such integration and by incorporating the insights from the organizational culture theories and the organizational behavior literature, the model can also be used to delineate the process through which cultural values are disseminated throughout the organization. The case analysis along with the findings of organizational behavior literature demonstrate that charismatic leadership and internal and external rewards in various forms are both important to foster a culture of dedication, which sets the initial stage of developing a competitive culture. For further study utilizing the ABCD model to understand organizational culture, quantitative studies that measure the four cultural traits of the ABCD model would extend the applicability and the robustness of the model. Also, further studies examining the relationship among the four types in greater detail as well as each type's independent variables and their proxy variables will be highly beneficial.

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