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CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS FOR SHAPING AND TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN AVIATION ENTERPRISES THROUGH THE LENS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THEIR STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

Mykhailo Podrieza. «Conceptual foundations for shaping and transforming organizational culture in aviation enterprises through the lens of sustainable development goals and their strategic relevance». *This article explores the conceptual foundations for shaping and transforming organizational culture in aviation enterprises within the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study emphasizes the strategic relevance of aligning internal cultural transformations with economic, social, and environmental goals to enhance long-term competitiveness and resilience. Particular attention is given to the integration of SDG-driven values into corporate culture, the development of adaptive management practices, and the role of organizational maturity in accelerating sustainable transformation. By examining the interconnection between cultural dynamics and sustainable development imperatives, the research provides insights into how aviation enterprises can evolve into socially responsible and ecologically conscious actors in the post-crisis global economy.*

Keywords*:* organizational culture, aviation enterprises, sustainable development, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), transformation, competitiveness, organizational maturity, corporate values, management practices, environmental responsibility

Михайло Подрєза. «Концептуальні основи формування та трансформації організаційної культури авіаційних підприємств крізь призму цілей сталого розвитку та їхньої стратегічної актуальності». *У статті досліджуються концептуальні засади формування та трансформації організаційної культури на авіаційних підприємствах у контексті Цілей сталого розвитку ООН (ЦСР). Акцент зроблено на стратегічній важливості узгодження внутрішніх культурних змін із економічними, соціальними та екологічними орієнтирами для забезпечення довгострокової конкурентоспроможності та стійкості. Особлива увага приділяється інтеграції цінностей, заснованих на ЦСР, у організаційну культуру, розвитку адаптивних управлінських практик, а також ролі організаційної зрілості у прискоренні переходу до сталого розвитку. Робота розкриває взаємозв'язок між культурною динамікою та імперативами сталого розвитку, пропонуючи бачення того, як авіаційні підприємства можуть трансформуватись у соціально відповідальних і екологічно свідомих учасників ринку у посткризовий період.*

Ключові слова: організаційна культура, авіаційні підприємства, сталий розвиток, цілі сталого розвитку, трансформація, конкурентоспроможність, організаційна зрілість, корпоративні цінності, управлінські практики, екологічна відповідальність.

Intraduction. Organizational culture is frequently characterized as a set of shared beliefs, norms, and values that influence employees' behavior and decision-making. However, when it comes to the education of future managers, corporate culture should be viewed not only as a reflection of a company's personality—shaped by its history, vision, people, and working environment—but also as a pedagogical construct that can be intentionally developed and embedded into professional training programs.

Modern management education should not be limited to transferring technical knowledge and analytical tools. It must also cultivate value-based leadership, ethical decision-making, and a deep understanding of organizational dynamics. Incorporating the concept of corporate culture into the curriculum contributes to developing students' professional identity and moral responsibility, while also preparing them to foster healthy, inclusive, and high-performing organizational environments.

Materials and Methods. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the formation and transformation of organizational culture in aviation enterprises, particularly in the post-war context and through the lens of sustainable development.

The qualitative part of the research involved expert interviews with representatives from management and HR departments of Ukrainian aviation enterprises, as well as content analysis of corporate documents (e.g., mission statements, CSR reports, codes of ethics). These materials were analyzed to identify dominant cultural patterns, values, and orientation toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the social and environmental components.

For the quantitative part, a structured questionnaire was developed to assess the current type and maturity level of organizational culture based on Denison's organizational culture model. The survey included indicators aligned with DEI&B (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging), ecological responsibility, and strategic flexibility. Respondents included middle and top managers from selected aviation companies, with a total sample size of 150 participants.

The data obtained were processed using correlation-regression analysis to determine the relationship between cultural attributes and key performance indicators, such as profitability, environmental investment ratios, and employee engagement metrics. SWOT analysis was also applied to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the organizational culture context of the industry.

This methodological approach allows for a holistic understanding of how cultural transformation can serve as a lever for sustainable growth and resilience in the aviation sector.

Presentation of the main research. Research shows that corporate culture significantly influences company performance, sustainability, and adaptability. In a survey conducted by Duke's Fuqua School of Business among 1,800 global executives, 78% identified culture as one of the top five factors determining organizational value, and 92% believed that strengthening culture would increase their company's worth. These insights underline the importance of equipping future managers with the competence to both assess and shape culture in the organizations they will serve.

In the educational context, the key elements of corporate culture—vision, values, behaviors, storytelling, leadership

style, and environment—should be translated into teaching models, case studies, and experiential learning opportunities. Students must be exposed to the complexities of aligning individual values with organizational goals, and to the mechanisms by which corporate culture influences team dynamics, communication, conflict resolution, and innovation.

Leadership training should emphasize the development of so-called "culture carriers"—individuals who act as agents of ethical and strategic transformation within organizations. This includes fostering the ability to build trust, facilitate collaboration, and lead with empathy and integrity. Within classrooms, these skills can be nurtured through reflective practices, simulations, real-world consulting projects, and analysis of both successful and dysfunctional corporate cultures.

The integration of storytelling and narrative in the educational process plays a critical role in forming cultural awareness. By studying how organizational legends, rituals, and routines are constructed and maintained, students gain insights into the symbolic layer of culture and its role in reinforcing organizational norms. These dimensions are essential for preparing managers who are not only strategic thinkers but also capable of managing meaning and purpose within their teams.

Furthermore, the physical and social environment of learning should support a culture of openness, mutual respect, and continuous dialogue. Universities and business schools must model the type of culture they aim to instill—where feedback is encouraged, diversity is valued, and leadership potential is recognized early and developed systematically. In conclusion, embedding organizational culture into the education of future managers is not merely an academic exercise but a strategic imperative. It enables the formation of professionals who are conscious of their role in shaping responsible, resilient, and value-driven organizations. Pedagogical strategies that intentionally integrate culture into management training will contribute to the long-term sustainability of enterprises and the ethical maturity of those who lead them.

Organizational culture can be understood as a collective system of values and beliefs that shape how employees behave and interact within an organization. It is also useful to perceive corporate culture as the organization's "personality"—a synthesis of its historical background, strategic vision, personnel, and working environment.

According to a study by Duke University's Fuqua School of Business, which surveyed 1,800 global CEOs and CFOs, 78% identified corporate culture as one of the top five elements influencing overall company value.[2] Moreover, 92% of respondents agreed that enhancing corporate culture would lead to an increase in company value. Whether an organization is focused on fostering a high-performance culture or working to improve existing cultural traits, it is evident that culture plays a crucial role in determining business success.[1]

To effectively navigate and influence corporate culture, it is important to first grasp its fundamental components. At its core lies the organization's purpose and vision—elements that define its long-term direction and competitiveness. These are supported by core values, which establish the expected attitudes and behaviors necessary to fulfill the organizational mission. Vision and values together provide a blueprint for leadership, communication, and employee conduct.

While some values may represent future aspirations, others already characterize the current corporate environment. For instance, a tech firm might aim to achieve zero-defect performance (aspirational) while already being known for its innovation (established value). As organizations evolve, periodic reassessment of their vision and values is essential to ensure alignment with new challenges and growth stages. Regardless of changes, clarity and communication of these core elements to all employees is critical.

Employees themselves are perhaps the most defining factor of corporate culture. As primary "culture bearers," their behaviors and interactions are central to how clients, potential recruits, and stakeholders perceive the organization. For this reason, targeted employee training can be instrumental in promoting behavior that reinforces desired cultural traits. These behaviors may stem from inherent qualities or be developed through learning, and may include leadership practices, feedback mechanisms, interpersonal dynamics, and collaboration methods.

Each company also has its own unique narrative, which becomes embedded in its culture over time. Recurrent storytelling practices—such as celebrating key achievements, organizing routine rituals, or commemorating important milestones—reinforce organizational identity and shared values.[3]

Physical and social work environments also have a considerable impact on cultural development. Regional factors, such as the innovation-driven ecosystem of Silicon Valley, or workplace design—like open-plan spaces encouraging teamwork—can both influence cultural dynamics. In industries like finance, the high-intensity atmosphere of trading floors can cultivate a fast-paced, vocal culture.

Although the definition of corporate culture can vary, its essence lies in the guiding vision and values that shape how individuals act and think. Every aspect of the culture is influenced by strategic decisions and leadership actions. Cultivating a preferred culture involves a combination of behavior-driven initiatives and structural changes. In some cases, a comprehensive cultural transformation may be necessary to align with broader organizational objectives and long-term growth.

To build a truly resilient and adaptive corporate culture, organizations must also consider the dynamic external environment in which they operate. This includes market volatility, technological advancements, global competition, and socio-political shifts—all of which can pressure an organization to change more quickly and deliberately. In such contexts, corporate culture becomes both a stabilizing force and a strategic differentiator. It's not only about shared beliefs or behaviors but about fostering agility, learning, and innovation at all levels of the organization. Companies that succeed in embedding a learning-oriented culture are often more capable of sustaining long-term competitive advantages, particularly during periods of transformation or disruption.

Leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating and sustaining such a culture. Ethical and inclusive leadership that models transparency, accountability, and empathy strengthens trust and cohesion within teams. Leaders who champion continuous learning and open dialogue inspire employees to embrace change and align their efforts with the organization's strategic direction. When leaders are deliberate in their actions and communication, they reinforce cultural values and ensure consistency between stated ideals and actual behavior. Over time, this consistency shapes how people interpret their work and purpose within the company, creating a more engaged and motivated workforce.

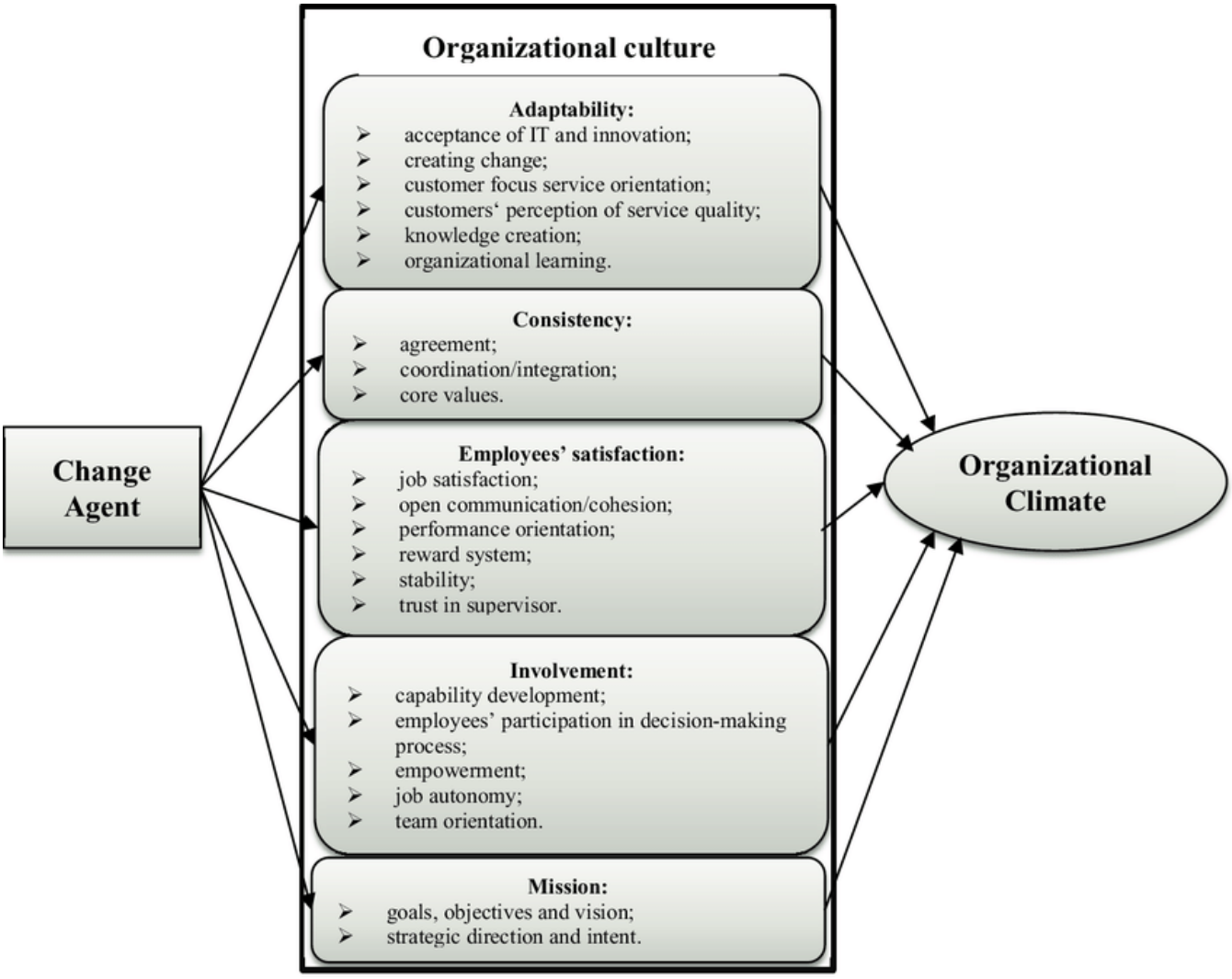

Figure 1 – Theoretical model: Organizational culture factors influencing organizational climate [5]

Another vital aspect of sustaining corporate culture lies in embedding it into systems and processes. Recruitment practices, performance evaluations, recognition programs, and career development pathways should all reflect the organization's core values and desired behaviors. For example, hiring for cultural fit—while remaining open to diversity of thought—ensures that new employees align with the company's mission while bringing fresh perspectives. Similarly, reward systems that emphasize collaboration, innovation, or service excellence can help reinforce cultural expectations and drive desired outcomes.

Organizational culture is not static; it evolves with the organization's growth, strategy, and people. To remain effective, culture must be intentionally reviewed and recalibrated. Periodic assessments, employee feedback mechanisms, and leadership retreats offer opportunities to evaluate cultural health and diagnose misalignments. During major transitions—such as mergers, leadership changes, or shifts in business models—these evaluations are especially important to ensure that cultural identity is not lost but rather strengthened in ways that support new objectives.

In today's business landscape, where adaptability and sustainability are paramount, corporate culture is no longer a soft issue relegated to HR departments. It is a strategic asset that can determine an organization's capacity to innovate, attract and retain talent, and deliver long-term value.

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Companies that consciously design and nurture their cultures—anchored in vision and values, supported by leadership and systems, and responsive to internal and external shifts—are better positioned to thrive in the complexity of the modern world.

This evolving nature of corporate culture is especially critical in industries undergoing rapid transformation or facing existential challenges—such as the aviation sector. Aviation enterprises today must navigate not only market competitiveness and technological disruption but also increasing pressure to meet sustainability goals, ensure passenger safety, and comply with stringent regulatory frameworks. In such a high-stakes environment, a strong, adaptive corporate culture can serve as both a compass and a catalyst for innovation and resilience.

For aviation companies, cultural alignment around core values such as safety, precision, accountability, and customer focus is non-negotiable. Yet as these companies respond to global calls for greener operations and more inclusive workplaces, their cultures must also expand to encompass values like environmental stewardship, cross-cultural collaboration, and ethical governance.[7] This expansion requires deliberate cultural leadership—a type of leadership that is attuned not only to operational performance but to the organizational ecosystem as a whole, including the well-being and empowerment of its workforce.

Figure 2 – Organizational culture and communication [6]

Furthermore, in post-crisis or high-uncertainty scenarios—such as recovery from global pandemics, economic downturns, or military conflict—aviation enterprises are particularly reliant on their organizational culture to rebuild stability and trust. Cultural resilience, in this context, becomes a strategic imperative. It is what enables teams to stay cohesive under pressure, align around evolving goals, and maintain high standards despite external shocks. Organizations with mature cultures are better able to sustain morale, retain critical talent, and pivot operations to address new realities without compromising their core identity.

Culture also has a direct link to the development and sustainability of human capital, which is increasingly viewed as a central pillar of competitive advantage in knowledge-based industries like aviation. A culture that values continuous learning, professional growth, and inclusive decision-making not only attracts high-caliber talent but also encourages retention and engagement. Moreover, when employees feel seen, valued, and included in shaping the organization's future, their intrinsic motivation rises, leading to improved performance and innovation across departments.

From a strategic perspective, then, corporate culture must be intentionally integrated into every facet of the organization—from long-term vision setting to day-to-day operations. It must be measured, cultivated, and, when necessary, transformed. Successful aviation enterprises are already embedding cultural metrics into performance dashboards, using culture as a lens to assess risk and opportunity, and training leaders to become active stewards of the cultural journey.

In conclusion, the strategic management of corporate culture is not merely a leadership preference—it is a critical determinant of enterprise success. For aviation companies facing multifaceted global pressures, the ability to shape, evolve, and align culture with organizational purpose and external demands is essential. It's through this cultural agility that organizations will secure both operational excellence and long-term sustainability in an ever-changing world.

This cultural agility also serves as the foundation for organizational learning and continuous improvement—two factors that are indispensable in the aviation industry, where safety margins are tight, technological cycles are short, and regulatory expectations are high. An adaptive culture that promotes psychological safety, open communication, and knowledge-sharing empowers employees to report errors, suggest improvements, and challenge outdated processes without fear of retribution. These behaviors are critical not only for preventing accidents but also for nurturing a proactive mindset that anticipates problems and innovates solutions.

Equally important is the alignment of corporate culture with broader global movements such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Aviation companies increasingly find themselves under scrutiny for their environmental impact, social practices, and governance standards. A mature and values-driven culture enables these organizations to integrate ESG principles not as compliance obligations, but as intrinsic elements of their corporate identity. For example, when sustainability becomes a lived value—rather than just a slogan—employees are more likely to contribute to green innovation, whether through fuel efficiency, waste reduction, or digital transformation efforts.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in this cultural evolution. Leaders must go beyond articulating values; they must embody them through consistent action, transparent communication, and inclusive decision-making. In aviation, where hierarchical structures often dominate, the shift toward more participatory, ethical leadership can redefine how authority and accountability are exercised. Leaders who engage authentically with their teams and who understand the nuanced experiences of frontline employees can more effectively steward change and build trust.

The role of storytelling and symbolic actions in shaping culture should not be underestimated either. Aviation enterprises, many of which have long and storied histories, can harness their legacy as a source of cultural strength. Commemorating past achievements, honoring employees' contributions, and articulating a compelling vision for the future can create a strong sense of belonging and continuity even in times of disruption. These cultural rituals reinforce shared identity and purpose, essential ingredients for resilience and cohesion.

Conclusions. Finally, the measurement and reinforcement of cultural outcomes are key to sustaining progress. Organizations must invest in tools and frameworks that assess cultural health, track behavior alignment with values, and identify gaps between aspirational culture and lived experience. Regular culture audits, employee surveys, and feedback loops provide actionable insights that inform strategy and leadership development. When culture is treated with the same rigor as financial performance or operational metrics, it becomes a true lever of strategic advantage.

In essence, organizational culture in aviation is not a peripheral concern—it is the infrastructure that underpins safety, innovation, sustainability, and human capital development. As the industry confronts unprecedented challenges and redefines its role in a complex, interconnected world, those organizations that prioritize cultural integrity and adaptability will be the ones best positioned for enduring success.

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