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Public Sector Organizational Culture: Experience from Frontline Bureaucracies

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the practice of organizational culture by the frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh. Culture scholars argue that organizational culture—commonly defined as the beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices of the members of an organization—is a powerful force in determining the health and well-being of an organization. Scholars also suggest the existence of different dimensions of organizational culture. Although they do not agree in naming these dimensions, commonalities are found in their understanding. How organizational culture is practiced by the frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh has not been studied much. A study was designed to know how the frontline public bureaucrats practice organizational culture and how they differ in their practices along their service lines. Four dimensions of organizational culture—power distance, uncertainty avoidance tendency, participation, and team orientation—were considered. The chosen culture dimensions impact the overall management of any public sector organization. Three hundred and twenty-six frontline public bureaucrats were studied using a survey questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics have been used for analyzing the collected data. Findings from independent samples t-tests revealed that the frontline bureaucrats significantly differ along their service lines in practicing the culture dimensions.

Keywords: public sector, frontline bureaucracy, organizational culture

1. Introduction

Culture in public sector organizations varies in its dimensions. Organizations comprise people. People are divided into nation-states and are variably exposed to different things such as events and information, which help form their own beliefs, values, and attitudes. These differences in beliefs, values, and attitudes result in different cultural practices, which in turn get a reflection in the organizations of their respective societies. Within a society, different subgroups exist with distinct beliefs and practices. The different generational cohorts within a society become exposed to things, technologies, and events that are particular to their own time. Therefore, subgroups within a society develop thinking and behaviors that may be considered distinct. The societal general culture and subcultures affect the cultural beliefs and practices of the organizations of society.

It is generally taken for granted that culture motivates the employees of an organization to behave in a particular way. Not much research is done on how culture affects the performance of organizations. The limited number of studies investigating the cultural influence on performance reports the linkage to be positive [1, 2]. In some other contexts, despite deliberate efforts, in the public sector, organizations have shown indifference to the adoption of the prescribed culture [3]. In spite of the influences from the new public management tools, public sector organizations tend to be internal-oriented rather than being external-oriented [4]. Organizations can develop the practice of subculture, which can be considered a management technique [2, 5].

This chapter focuses on the cultural practices of the frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh. The few studies conducted on the bureaucratic culture in Bangladesh are different from the current one in their focuses and methodologies. Jamil [6] conducted a survey in December 1992 and January 1993 on 161 bureaucrats working in both the central level administration and the field level administration and found that the bureaucrats inculcate power distance, uncertainty avoidance tendency, and are less participatory in their decision-making process. Haque and Mohammad [7], analyzing the historical accounts, relevant literature, and their observations, concluded that the prevalence of pervasive corruption in the Bangladeshi bureaucracy could be explained in terms of the existence of some culture dimensions in the public administration. Conducting 40 qualitative semi-structured interviews with bureaucrats from the central and field administration, Rahman [8] found that the bureaucrats suffer from indecision over maintaining political neutrality and political responsiveness. Zafarullah [9] found in his study of bureaucratic culture in Bangladesh that the bureaucrats support clientelism and self-preservation and oppose change initiatives. Based on personal experience and review of literature, Rashid [10] concluded that bureaucrats had less engagement with members of the civil society and non-government organizations.

The above studies had a limitation in terms of their sample size and sampling process. This study covered a larger sample chosen from the field administration only. It investigated how four dimensions of organizational culture were practiced by the frontline bureaucrats. There are two broad types of bureaucrats in the public services of the country—cadre services and non-cadre services. Recruitment, training, and mobility of the bureaucrats of these two categories are different. Therefore, how the two groups of frontline bureaucrats differ in practicing culture dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, participation, and team orientation had remained unexplored, and this has been the main objective of this study. The second section discusses how organizational culture is understood, followed by a discussion on culture dimensions in the third section. The fourth section discusses the relevance of the four dimensions of organizational culture to frontline bureaucracies, followed by a short section introducing frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh in the fifth section. The sixth and seventh sections discuss the methods followed and the findings of the study, respectively. The last two sections present a discussion on the findings and conclusion of the study.

2. Understanding organizational culture

Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov [11] described culture as a “mental programming” or “software of the mind.” It is shared patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. Therefore, it is always a collective phenomenon. The patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting differentiate one group of people from others. Thus, culture is “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of

one group or category of people from others” ([11] p. 6). The patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting come from the unwritten rules of the social game. The understanding of culture given by Hofstede et al. [11] is similar to that of Pettigrew ([12], p. 574), who defined it as a “system of such publicly and collectively accepted meanings operating for a given group at a given time” and provides “a general sense of orientation” to the group.

O’Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell [13] have argued that organizational culture as a concept has a long history and goes back to early sociological studies of the early 1950s. It received prominence in the 1980s. Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sanders [14] found no consensus on the definition of the concept. However, they identified several characteristics of organizational culture. Organizational culture is: (1) holistic, (2) historically determined, (3) related to anthropological concepts, (4) socially constructed, (5) soft, and (6) difficult to change. Schein ([15], p. 111) published an article defining organizational culture as “(1) a pattern of basic assumptions, (2) invented, discovered, developed by a given group, (3) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, (4) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore (5) is to be taught to new members as the (6) correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems.” Schein [15] identified three levels of organizational culture: (1) artifacts, (2) values, and (3) assumptions. However, Hofstede et al. [14], in their study, found that shared perceptions of daily practices rather than shared values represent the core of an organization’s culture.

Organizational culture has also been described as an administrative culture or bureaucratic culture or corporate culture. Jamil [6] argued that there is something additional in an administrative culture than can be found in organizational culture. This additional item is politics. Most culture studies focus on the private organization where politics is not an issue of interest. These studies look at the internal context of an organization. Any framework for understanding administrative culture has to incorporate politics, i.e. how bureaucrats interact with politics and society as a whole. Jamil’s [6] arguments obtain strength from the fact that the mission of public sector organizations significantly differs from that of private sector organizations. Most public sector organizations are not profit-making and do not rely on profits for their existence.

In contrast, private sector organizations are profit-oriented and rely on profits for their existence. Public sector organizations cannot avoid politics because they execute the government’s policies. There is a subtle nuance between the usages of the concepts of “bureaucratic culture” and “corporate culture.” The concept of bureaucratic culture refers to the values and practices in public sector organizations, while corporate culture usually refers to private sector organizations.

Whatever the characteristics or levels of organizational culture are, it is a “powerful force” in an organization [3] and immensely affects the well-being and success of an organization. It is described as the glue that holds the organization together [16]. The culture encourages the members in the organization to behave similarly. It impacts how well the organization will function. Rong and Hongwei [17] argue that organizational culture stems from the social culture and works as an “invisible hand” in public sector management. This hand is relatively stable but transforms itself in the long run in line with social change.

Lloyd [18] found that there are debates about what organizational culture is. Some believe it as what an organization “is” and others believe that it is what an organization “has.” However, both arguments converge in the belief that culture is something to be made up of such concepts as beliefs, assumptions, and values. Values have received prominence in the definitions of organizational culture. Values are defined as a criterion using which one tends to prefer certain states of affairs

over others. Beliefs are something that one considers as truth. The learned linkage between beliefs and values becomes attitudes. When the values, beliefs, and attitudes become so entrenched in an organization that they are no longer doubted or debated, they become assumptions. These values, beliefs, and assumptions are shared among the members of the organizations. Hofstede et al. [14] in a cross-organization study of 20 organizations in two countries found that practices rather than values play a major role. Organizational cultures are acquired on the job and are exchangeable when one takes a new job. While social cultures reside in values, organizational cultures reside in practices. These practices are visible and consciously carried out.

3. Cultural dimensions

Organizational culture is not a one-dimensional concept. Culture researchers have found different dimensions in organizational culture. Hofstede et al. [14] in their cross-organization study have identified six dimensions of organizational culture with respect to the practices where organizations differ. These dimensions are (1) process orientation vs. results orientation, (2) employee orientation vs. job orientation, (3) parochialism vs. professionalism, (4) open system vs. closed system, (5) loose control vs. tight control, and (6) normative vs. pragmatic. They argue that these dimensions may not be universally valid or sufficient. Organizational cultures in different contexts may require additional dimensions or some of the identified six dimensions may seem less useful. Along with these six practice dimensions of organizational culture, they also identified three value dimensions, which are (1) the need for security (uncertainty avoidance), (2) work centrality (job involvement), and (3) the need for authority (power distance).

The first practice dimension of organizational culture in Hofstede et al.'s [14] study opposes a concern for means to a concern for goals. They equate this contrast with the distinction made between the mechanistic and organic management systems of Burns and Stalker [19]. With a process or mechanistic orientation, an organization tends to focus on technical improvements of means rather than the accomplishment of ends. An organic system tends to focus on concern as a whole. The second practice dimension opposes concern for the employees to concern for the job to be done. In the third practice dimension, a contrast is made between the identification of the employees deriving from the organization (parochial) and the type of job (professionalism). The fourth dimension focuses on the tendency of the organization to respond to its environment. The fifth practice dimension shows the contrasts in the internal structuring of an organization. The sixth practice dimension shows how an organization is oriented toward its customers. A normative organization looks at its task toward its customers as the implementation of inviolable rules. A pragmatic organization tends to stay close to its customers. The authors distinguish results orientation from customer orientation in that "trying to serve the customer does not automatically imply a results orientation" ([14], p. 304).

Ghosh and Srivastava [20] noted that the concept of organizational culture has been interpreted differently and not all complement or converge. After reviewing a sample of the literature on the instruments used in survey studies of organizational culture, the authors concluded that no two instruments were alike, and no two instruments shared a common theoretical basis. These authors reported that Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson [21] and Wilderom, Glunk, and Maslowski [22] had studied 18 culture measure questionnaires published between 1975 and 1992 and 10 empirical culture research studies respectively. Both studies found great variation in the definition and operationalization of organizational culture and its dimensions.

Ghosh and Srivastava [20], based on Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's [23] model, identified seven dimensions of organizational culture: (1) participation, (2) respect for individual, (3) attitude to risk, (4) attention orientation, (5) trust, (6) openness, and (7) power distance. Schein [15] in attempting to understand the content of a culture identifies some of its dimensions and presents questions to be asked regarding each dimension. Answers to these questions will identify the content of that culture, but he cautions about the danger of over-generalizing the dimensions.

Harrison and Baird [3] compared the organizational culture of public sector organizations in Australia with that of private sector organizations using O'Reilly et al.'s [13] organizational culture profile (OCP) and by focusing on five dimensions: (1) outcome orientation, (2) respect for people, (3) attention to detail, (4) team orientation, and (5) innovation. O'Reilly et al. [13] developed the OCP in order to quantitatively assess organizational culture in their study examining the person-culture fit and its implications for work attitudes and behaviors. These researchers carried out two types of factor analyses—for the individual and as organizational profiles. The first analysis produced eight dimensions of an organization's culture: (1) innovation and risk-taking, (2) attention to detail, (3) orientation toward outcome or results, (4) aggressiveness and competitiveness, (5) supportiveness, (6) emphasis on growth and rewards, (7) a collaborative and team orientation, and (8) decisiveness. The second analysis produced seven dimensions: (1) innovation, (2) stability, (3) respect for people, (4) outcome orientation, (5) attention to detail, (6) team orientation, and (7) aggressiveness. Denison and Mishra [1] used four organizational traits—involve-ment, adaptability, consistency, and mission—in their research to determine the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance.

Jamil [6] studied bureaucratic culture in the context of Bangladesh in order to determine the dominant type of culture and its consequences and also to identify the bearers of administrative subcultures. He noted that most studies on organizational culture have dealt with private sector organizations. He argued that public sector organizations are different from the private sector ones in that politics play a major role in the public sector organizations. Any study about public sector organizational culture has to take into account its external context, that is, its relationship with politics and the society in general.

Jamil [6] argued that bureaucrats' attitudes in the external context could be typified in terms of their relationships to politics and relationships to citizens and civil society. In the case of the first typology, Jamil [6] argued, borrowing from Putnam [24], that bureaucrats can be classified into classical or political. Classical bureaucrats are procedure-oriented or rule-oriented, whereas political bureaucrats are problem-oriented or program-oriented. In the case of the second typology, bureaucrats can be universal or clientelistic. Universal bureaucrats believe in impartial applications of rules, which in Weberian terms are called the rational-legal type. Clientelism, on the other hand, serves in return for patronage and a power base. A recent development in the bureaucrat-citizen relationship has revealed that citizens are considered as customers in Western nations and as subjects in developing countries.

In the internal context, bureaucrats' attitudes, Jamil [6] continued, can vary in specific characteristics such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, guiding decision-making, and preferred employees. Power distance is a character that affects the decision-making behavior of bureaucrats. Where power distance is high, top bureaucrats take decisions, and lower bureaucrats carry out them. Where power distance is low, superiors and subordinates make consultations to take decisions.

According to Jamil [6], uncertainty avoidance is another character that affects decision-making behavior as well. Bureaucrats with a high tendency toward

uncertainty avoidance tend to follow the rules and regulations strictly and do not take risks. Contrarily, a low tendency toward uncertainty avoidance encourages them to take risks in terms of bending or breaking the rules.

Bureaucrats need information for making decisions. Jamil [6] argued that the nature of the decision-making structure affects information search behavior. A top-down or hierarchic type of decision-making structure leads bureaucrats to limit their information search within its boundaries, their superiors, colleagues, or juniors. However, a collegial structure of decision-making leads bureaucrats to search beyond its boundaries, that is, politicians; citizens; academic, economic, and voluntary organizations.

Another characteristic of bureaucratic decision-making, where bureaucrats differ in their attitudes, Jamil [6] argued, is preferred employees. The attribute

	Hofstede et al. [14]	Ghosh & Srivastava [20]	Harrison & Baird [3]	O'Reilly et al. [13]	Denison & Mishra [1]	Jamil [6]
1. Process vs. results orientation	✓		✓	✓		
2. Employee vs. job orientation	✓					
3. Parochialism vs. professionalism	✓					
4. Open vs. closed system	✓					
5. Loose vs. tight control	✓					
6. Normative vs. pragmatic	✓					
7. Power distance	✓	✓				✓
8. Work centrality/Involvement/Job involvement	✓				✓	
9. Uncertainty avoidance/attitude to risk	✓	✓				✓
10. Participation (external)/Adaptability/guiding decisions					✓	✓
11. Respect for individual/people		✓	✓	✓		
12. Participation (internal)		✓				
13. Action orientation		✓				
14. Trust		✓				
15. Openness		✓				
16. Attention to detail			✓	✓		
17. Innovation			✓	✓		
18. Aggressiveness and competition				✓		
19. Supportiveness				✓		
20. Emphasis on growth and reward				✓		
21. Collaborative and team orientation			✓	✓		
22. Stability				✓		
23. Tolerance for politics						✓
24. Attitude towards citizens						✓
25. Attitude towards NGOs						✓
26. Preferred employees						✓
27. Mission					✓	
28. Consistency					✓	

Source: Alom ([25], p. 40).

Table 1.
Comparison of dimension of organizational culture.

of preferred employees argues that the employees for an organization should be chosen considering their social values and cultural characteristics. The social values and the cultural characteristics of the chosen employees should benefit the organization.

A comparison of the dimensions of the organizational culture identified by the different studies is presented in **Table 1**. It reveals that scholars do not agree in identifying common cultural dimensions. However, some of them agree with some of the dimensions. Some other dimensions are given different names by different authors.

4. Frontline bureaucracy and culture dimensions

Frontline bureaucracies—also known as street-level bureaucracies—are located at the bottom of the governmental pyramid. The citizens experience their government through the frontline bureaucracies because these are the service providing windows of the government. Therefore, the cultural practice of the frontline bureaucrats is of paramount importance to the government. Alom [26] identified four culture dimensions that affect transparency and accountability behaviors of the frontline bureaucrats. These culture dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance tendency, participation, and team orientation. One of the critical features of good governance is accountability, which comes through transparency. In this sense, the four culture dimensions affect good governance the most.

Most frontline bureaucracies bear two common characteristics—they enjoy discretion but suffer from resources. The resource limitation characteristic may vary from context to context based on economic development of the countries, but discretion has been reported to exist irrespective of the level of economic development. Discretion is a structural feature, while resources are issues of an endowment. Therefore, these are not cultural factors. However, these factors in interaction with the cultural beliefs and practices—power distance, uncertainty avoidance, participation, and team orientation—may impact on the good governance practices of the frontline bureaucrats. A brief discussion of these four cultural beliefs and practices is given below.

Power Distance: Power distance is the tendency to accept inequality among ranks in the system [14]. Bureaucrats, in socially backward contexts such as Bangladesh, believe that they are socially superior, and they are not accountable to the service seekers. They protect this power position. Therefore, any reform initiatives that are directed to change this power position are not acceptable to them or at least will hinder the implementation of such initiatives [27, 28]. Redistribution of power in a social structure that has traditionally practiced a patron-client relationship among its members is particularly problematic. Bureaucrats that possess power distance in relation to their clients will also possess the same in their organizational structure. Rong and Hongwei [17] suggested that organizational culture stems from social cultures. Jamil's [6] study supports this argument. He found that the traditions from the samaj (society as a whole) and the British colonial administration dominate bureaucratic culture in Bangladesh. The samaj and the colonial traditions maintain a hierarchical or patron-client social structure. The influence of these traditions is reflected in the bureaucracy in the form of high power distance. Therefore, high power distance supports a hierarchical power structure in the organization as well as in society.

Uncertainty Avoidance: Bureaucrats do not want to be in uncomfortable situations. In other words, they like to avoid situations or avoid anything that may create

situations, putting them in trouble or discomfort. They want to be certain that any action committed by them will not bring them discomfort. According to Zafarullah ([9], p. 936), “The civil service in Bangladesh has shown an extraordinary predilection to hang on to the established rather than readily accepting change in its status, structure, functions, and norms of engagement with extra-bureaucratic instruments.” The bureaucrats are “more at ease operating in a familiar environment employing conventional practices than embracing anything new or different” ([9], p. 936).

Participation: Participation is allowing those in the decision-making process for whom decisions are being made. In other words, it refers to the quality, quantity, and diversity of input from the stakeholders in government decisions [29]. Organizations that are under stronger influence from external stakeholders are likely to exhibit a higher level of participation. In Jamil’s [6] language, this type of participation is guiding decisions, that is, how the decisions of the bureaucrats are guided. Do the frontline bureaucrats consult with their stakeholders, that is, politicians; citizens; and business and voluntary organizations? A bureaucrat’s attitude toward the level of interaction with its stakeholders regarding the decision-making process influences the practice of participation.

Team Orientation: Practice of teamwork increases productivity in organizations. A team is a group of individuals who share their responsibilities to accomplish their shared goals [30]. Group members have discretion in deciding how to carry out tasks and allocate tasks among themselves [31]. Team orientation is a dimension of organizational culture identified by Schein [15] and O’Reilly et al. [13] and has been used by Harrison and Baird [3] in their research. Hierarchical structures in public bureaucracies work as barriers to team building. A public sector organization is a “machine bureaucracy” that needs to change its hierarchically controlled managerial culture into “a coaching environment” where the individuals will appreciate “interpersonal needs and the benefits of intuition and creativity” (Lovell [32], p. 403).

5. Frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh

The frontline public bureaucracy in Bangladesh represents the characteristics of the overall public service of the country. These characteristics descended from the British colonial administration and the post-colonial administration of Pakistan. Bangladesh was liberated from Pakistan through a liberation war in 1971. Considering the recruitment, training, and mobility of the bureaucrats, one characteristic of the public services in Bangladesh has been that they are divided into cadre and non-cadre services. The cadre services have distinct hierarchy and specified functions—specialized and generalized [33]. The members of these services belong to the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) who are recruited by the Public Service Commission (PSC) through highly competitive examinations. They are hired as Assistant Secretary or equivalent and can move to the Senior Secretary position through promotions. They can move from one department to another. On the other hand, members of the non-cadre services are recruited to particular departments and do not have a definite structure of mobility horizontally and vertically [34]. They need to serve within the department to which they are recruited. These bureaucrats have limited training opportunity throughout their service life. The frontline bureaucracy of Bangladesh has officials from both cadre and non-cadre services, but the size of the former category is smaller than the later.

6. Methods

Data for this study were collected from sub-district level frontline bureaucrats in Bangladesh using a survey questionnaire. Bangladesh had 488 sub-districts at the time of data collection. Twenty-nine sub-districts were chosen using a multistage sampling technique. From each of the selected sub-districts, 16 pre-decided office heads out of around 25 were given the questionnaire to fill out. The 16 office heads were chosen because they were perceived by practitioners as the frontline bureaucracies that had most interactions with citizens. Seven of these 16 offices are headed by cadre officials, and the rest nine offices are headed by non-cadre officials.

For data collection, the researcher traveled to the respondents. It was not possible to return with all filled-out questionnaires all the time. Therefore, questionnaires were left with the offices of those respondents where they were not available in their offices. It was not possible to contact each of these office heads before going to their offices. Instead, the chief executive officer (UNO) of the sub-district was contacted before going to that particular sub-district. The UNO office in a sub-district carries some importance because it plays a coordinating role among all the offices of the sub-district. After going to a sub-district, help from officials from the UNO office was obtained sometimes in distributing and collecting the questionnaires. Thus, the UNO office was used as the first contact point.

After going to a sub-district, this researcher went to each of the 16 selected offices in the sub-district. Where the office head was present, this researcher requested him or her to fill out the survey questionnaire. Where the office head was not present, his/her contact cell phone number was collected from the other officials of the office. Then the office head was contacted over the phone and requested to fill out the survey questionnaire when he/she was available in the office and was requested either to send the filled out questionnaire to the UNO office or the postal address of this researcher. In most cases, an envelope (with postage stamp) was left with the postal address of the researcher written on it.

Around 40% of the survey questionnaires, on average, were collected directly by the researcher. Some filled out questionnaires came directly from the respondents through the postal service. The remaining questionnaires were submitted to the UNO office, or the officials of the UNO office collected them from the other offices and then sent them together to the researcher through postal service. Altogether, 329 questionnaires were collected for the study out of the sample of 456. This constituted a response rate of 72.15%. However, three questionnaires were rejected because two of them had more than 50% items unanswered, and one was a duplicate. The duplication happened because one officer was in charge of two offices. That official filled out two questionnaires. Thus, one of these two questionnaires was rejected. Finally, data from 326 questionnaires were entered into the SPSS program. Demographic information of the respondents is presented in **Table 2**.

The questionnaire had items taken from validated instruments to measure each of the cultural dimensions. Each item had a four-point scale which varied from “always” to “never” or “agree” to “disagree.” A five-item scale was constructed based on Jamil [6] to measure power distance. The items were: (1) I seek my subordinates’ opinions before making a decision; (2) My subordinates suggest me ideas about my office work; (3) Confident subordinates in my office disagree with my decisions; (4) I tell my subordinates what decisions are to be taken; and (5) When I am confident, I disagree with my higher authority. To measure uncertainty avoidance, a four-item scale was developed based on Jamil [6] which were: (1) I emphasize results more than following routines, procedures to the point; (2) I feel nervous about satisfying my higher authority with my work; (3) I look for the best alternative even if it

(1) Sex:		(3) Education		(5) Nature of service	
Male	291(89)	Bachelor	105(32)	Cadre	144(44)
Female	35(11)	Master	209(67)	Non-cadre	182(56)
		PhD	2(1)		
(2) Age		(4) Career (years in service):			
26-35	79(25)	1-5	147(46)		
36-45	108(37)	6-10	87(27)		
46-55	97(30)	11-15	30(9)		
56-	29(9)	16-20	30(9)		
		≥21	25(8)		

Table 2.
Demographic information of respondent (% in parenthesis).

goes beyond routines, and procedures; (4) I expect my higher authority to tell me if I am doing a good job. Participation was measured using a four-item scale developed following theoretical arguments. The items were: (1) My office should serve citizens according to their preferences; (2) Officers can learn nothing from service seekers; (3) My office should seek feedback from service recipients about their satisfaction; and (4) Service seekers should not advise us on what to do. Based on Harrison and Baird [3], a four-item scale was used to measure team orientation. The items were: (1) Working in teams can produce better results; (2) We should help each other in our office work; (3) Sometimes subordinates can give better opinions than superiors; (4) Subordinates should not disagree with the superior’s opinion.

7. Findings

Results of two independent samples t-tests and descriptive statistics of group differences in the means of the culture dimensions practiced by the cadre and non-cadre officials are presented in **Table 3**. Power distance in non-cadre officials is higher than in cadre officials. The difference is significant at 0.10 level of significance. Concerning uncertainty avoidance, the non-cadre officials again have a significantly higher tendency to avoid uncertainty compared to the cadre officials. The cadre officials’ mean score in the participation culture dimension is significantly higher than the mean score of the non-cadre officials. This finding is indicative of the cadre officials’ higher tendency to accommodate stakeholders in decision-making processes. With regard to team orientation, the mean score of cadre officials

Culture Dimension	Group						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df	Sig.
	Cadre			Non-Cadre						
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n				
Power Distance	2.20	.40	145	2.28	.43	179	-0.17, 0.02	-1.64	319	.10
Uncertainty Avoidance	2.54	.52	143	2.70	.51	182	-0.27, -0.05	-2.79	323	.01
Participation Team	3.47	.55	141	3.34	.53	181	0.01, 0.25	2.17	320	.03
Orientation	3.46	.32	144	3.39	.31	182	-0.00, 0.14	1.93	324	.05

Table 3.
Results of t-test and descriptive statistics for culture dimensions by cadre.

is also significantly higher than the non-cadre officials. Therefore, cadre officials possess a higher mentality of teamwork compared to non-cadre officials.

8. Discussion

The four culture dimensions influence the daily works of the frontline bureaucrats. Generally, power distance within an office context is an extension of the power distance that prevails in society. High power distance among the employees of an organization contributes to the fortification of its formal and rigid hierarchical structure. The cadre officials of the frontline bureaucracies inculcate this culture slightly less than the non-cadre officials and both scores are slightly lower than the average of the scale. Jamil [6] reported the existence of higher power distance in the cadre officials in general (central and frontline bureaucrats). Power distance in this study shows scores lower than the average (2.5 points on the scale of 4). Therefore, this culture has not changed much.

The culture of uncertainty avoidance tendency negatively affects the achievement of the targeted results of an organization. It bars officials from taking initiatives of innovation. Strict enforcement of bureaucratic procedures, in some contexts, may not fetch the desired results. Therefore, officials need to apply their discretion and take some risks, which might bring them some uncertainty. Generally, everyone wants to remain in his comfort zone. In public service delivery, when facing the complexity of local contexts, frontline bureaucrats need to come out of their comfort zones sometimes. This study found high uncertainty tendency in the frontline bureaucrats. The non-cadre officials have a greater tendency to avoid uncertainty than the cadre officials. High level of uncertainty avoidance tendency among the bureaucrats in Bangladesh was reported by Jamil [6], and the current scenario does not show any change.

Participation in this research was used to mean bureaucrats' citizen-orientation, that is, their attitude toward feedback from citizens. The frontline bureaucrats directly deliver services to the citizens. Their understanding of the expectations of the citizens can equip them with appropriate services. The findings of this study show that the frontline bureaucrats have a very high tendency to get feedback from the citizens. Again the cadre officials are ahead of the non-cadre ones. This finding is also similar to that of Jamil [6].

The frontline bureaucrats show a positive attitude toward teamwork. The score of cadre officials is higher than the non-cadre officials. These frontline bureaucrats work in their offices with limited resources. They face huge workloads as well. These workloads happen because of two reasons. One reason is that the demand for services is very high. Bangladesh is a populous country. So these bureaucrats face more service seekers than the ideal size. The second reason is that many of the sanctioned positions in the frontline bureaucracies remain vacant. Therefore, the bureaucrats from within an organization need to cooperate among themselves through teamwork.

9. Conclusion

Organizational culture is difficult to change without a deliberate effort. In the public sector organizations, this change is even harder to bring. The bureaucrats are rule followers and change-resistant. They remain to be in their comfort zones. Bringing desired changes in the practice of culture will require conscious

and deliberate efforts. These efforts may include education, training, and social campaign. The difference in the scores in the dimensions of culture practiced by the cadre and non-cadre bureaucrats can be attributed to the different outlook they develop through their participation in social events. Although both groups of bureaucrats come from the same social context, they become exposed to different social events. One obvious social event is training. The cadre bureaucrats take part in different long- and short-term training programs even at the very beginning of their services. The non-cadre bureaucrats hardly get any training. The second social factor is that the cadre bureaucrats, because of their mobility, attend various seminars and workshops on governance issues, which help them change their mindset. This scope is limited to the non-cadre bureaucrats.

This research had limitations. The items used to measure the culture dimensions in this research match the research context. The measurement tools might be different in other contexts. Future researchers can investigate why the cadre and non-cadre officials differ significantly in their organizational culture.


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