

## **Culture of Fear Effect on the Organizational Performance of Higher Educational Institutions: The Moderating Role of Strategy Communication**

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**Abstract:** This study examined the moderating role of strategy communication on the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance with particular focus on the higher educational institutions in Palestine. The study generated a quantitative questionnaire data from 236 respondents representing the top, medium and low management level of the higher educational institutions in Palestine. Data was analyzed using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Model PLS-SEM. Overall, the finding revealed that organizational culture is significantly related to performance of higher education institutions in Palestine. A further result of the moderating role shows that communication success moderating the influence of organizational culture on the organizational performance. Discussions on the findings is highlighted with the implication and limitation of the study equally provided.

**Key words:** Strategy execution organizational culture, culture of fear (culture of non-trust), performance, higher education, PLS-SEM

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### **INTRODUCTION**

It's obvious that the execution of strategy is not as clear and understood as the formulation of strategy. Thus, much more is known about planning than doing, about strategy making than making strategy work (Hrebiniak, 2005). Today's organizations research in a dynamic and complex environment that continually changing. This has forced the organizations, including the Higher Education (HE) to revisit their strategic planning. The HE sector has begun to recognize that strategic planning is necessary for the maintenance its own responsiveness to a rapidly changing environment (Flander *et al.*, 2010; Rahimian *et al.*, 2009; Bryson, 2004; Streib and Poister, 1990). Ostar (1989) claims that colleges and universities have experienced rapid changes associated with ageing facilities, changing technology, changing demographics, increasing competition, rising costs and funding cuts. Educational administrators are challenged to anticipate changes and to formulate proactive responses that will enhance the educational processes within college and university campuses. There is an abundance of literature on different aspects of HE sector development (Rahemian *et al.*, 2009). For instance, Hrebiniak (2005) identified four broad contextual factors that deserve special attention. These dimensions include the change management context, the organisational culture context,

the organisational power structure context and the leadership context. The study noted that these four dimensions are believed to affect each others. Even when these four factors are synchronized, the prognosis for effective strategy implementation is expected to be very positive (Siam and Hilman, 2014).

Furthermore, the higher learning institutions are exceptional organizations in their structures and purposes and applying a suitable and strategic management is crucial and the management and activities held are different from those of industrial, productive or service organizations. In particular, universities are not unitary institutions. Faculties and schools have diverse tasks of preparing students for admission into specific professions and inducting them into intellectual backgrounds and research methods according to the academic disciplines. Professions and disciplines have external reference groups and in universities, staff loyalty can be strongly devoted to their professionalism or to the interactional disciplinary network as a whole, than to the apparently less relevant university that happens to employ them (Anderson *et al.*, 1999). The environment today has become increasingly uncertain and unpredictable for public and private universities. Hence, the leaders of these institutions must learn, think and act strategically (Rahimian *et al.*, 2009) so as to be able to control and

adapt to the environmental changes, clear approach with long-range planning techniques should be used in the strategic management (Rahimnia *et al.*, 2009).

In his study, Eldajani (2013) pointed out that >75.9% of HEI in Palestine are practicing the strategic planning activities but they are not practiced them in a scientific and professional way to use in the organizations. He added that top management in the higher educational institutions is not convinced of strategy execution significance and role but it pays a lot to formulate a strategic plan. Further more, the respondents acknowledge that there is no organizational culture, especially the culture of participating and culture of responsibility. In addition, the respondents in Alaqsa University mentioned that there is no organizational culture in university since the organization is a public university committed to plans of the public sector, Eldajani (2013) mentioned that one of the obstacles during the implementation process is the inefficiency of organizational structure and added that the scarcity of financial resources prevents the institutions to reward their staff for the extra work, they added that institutions which have a large number of employees can overcome the problem of the absence of well-educated staff to execute the strategy by replacing them with job rotation process but the small size cannot be replaced.

Eldajani (2013) and Kallakh (2009) attributed the failure in HEIs to strategy execution's obstacles such as absence of well-educated faculty, experts and even the academic staff due to wars, closure and hard economic situation in Palestine. In addition, the respondents attributed that most of the staff does not understand the strategy as well as the strategy reaches them in a vague and ambiguous way due to weak communication instruments used during the implementation of strategy (Eldajani, 2013). Besides, there is no special department to pursue the strategy execution process and there is no particular execution plan in every department (Kallakh, 2009). Further, the top management does not follow up the implementation activities in higher educational institutions and justify that most of the educational institutions are public institutions.

This study is also significant to the practitioners as it emphasizes the role of strategy execution towards higher organizational performance. By exploring the significant role of communication strategy, this study is able to scientifically convince the Palestinian higher education institutions executives that introducing strategy execution factors are essential but not sufficient step to gain the desired level of performance unless

supported and pay caring of appropriate and supportive communication strategy inside their institution. Therefore, managers of the HEI should establish the decisive communication strategy and also encourage the sophisticated communication channels within their institutions, in prior to intend to implement master plan. Meaning that the communication strategy should match the intended strategy and all the staff should be informed and trained to conscious and show the commitment during strategy execution.

Information communication and technology in organization communication continues to grow rapidly as the key fundamental technologies of organization's success and the way of associating with the team workers to send clear strategies for employees who will be involved in strategy implementation. Constant improvements in the underlying technologies make possible new ICT communication tools to make decision making very fast and so reliable when it comes to also the response. Throughout the organizations, the utility of ICT applications tends to advance much more slowly than the underlying technologies. A doubling of conveying message (strategy) speeds during the strategy implementation, The operative implementation and use of ICT in communication are the result of a multi-faceted procedure that requires not only acceptance of technology but also vicissitudes in organizations. As part of this process, individuals and agencies actively adapt (and sometimes resist) the techniques. Although, this issue has been there yet only few studies focus their attention on the importance of communication and how it influences organizational performance (Maas, 2008). As pointed out by Forman and Argenti although, an entire discipline is devoted to the study of organizational strategy as well as strategy execution, however, little attention is extended to the link between communication and strategy (Childress, 2013).

Studies of organizational culture (culture of fear or culture of non-trust) on the field of strategy execution and performance are presumed to be abundant. Many researchers who have significantly contributed in this area include (Rahimnia, *et al.*, 2009; Hrebiniak, 2008; Neilson *et al.*, 2008; Higgins, 2006). Those researchers Rahimnia *et al.* (2009), Hrebiniak (2006) and Gamdi (1998) who examined organizational culture noted that this dimension of strategy execution is very important in determining the success or failure of organizational performance. However, one major weakness of these studies is the inability to integrate the dimensions of organizational culture into a single framework that affect organizational performance.

The study by Fernandez and Rainey (2006) noted that related factors such as the organizational culture are the most effective strategy execution factors that affect organizational performance. They suggested that further studies in this area of study should moderate the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance with strategy communication (Childress, 2013; Mashari and Zairi, 1999; Beer and Eisenstat, 2000; Brenes *et al.*, 2008; Connor, 2001; Govindarajan and Gupta, 1985; Hauc and Kovac, 2000; Johnson and Scholes, 2002; Kerr, 1985; Klein and Sorra, 1996). Accordingly, the study of Andrew and Mongkol equally recommended that strategy communication should be utilized as a moderator testing for the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance. In view of this, the present study intends to examine the moderating role of strategy communication on the influence of organizational culture on organizational performance with particular focus on the Higher Education Institutions in Palestine.

#### **Literature review**

**Organizational Culture (OC):** In the context of a group, culture has to do with people's interaction, interaction between ideas and behaviors. In particular defines culture as "the collective thoughts and actions of employees that manifest the strategic orientation of the firm. Culture drives strategy and it is an internal variable that the firm can control". Two important elements are emphasized within the definition, namely) the organization culture shows their strategic orientation and approach to the execution of strategy culture is considered a variable which is under the control of an organization and the organization can alter its present culture if it is not desirable (Bailey, 2008; McChensey *et al.*, 2012). Organisational culture refers to the shared values, attitudes and norms of behavior that create the propensity for individuals in an organization to act in certain ways. One of the most common culture-related problems in companies is a lack of trust (Moore, 2014; Nayyar and Mahmood, 2012; Parnell, 2008; Hrebiniak, 2005; Okumus, 2001ab, 2002; Mintzberg and Quinn, 1991; Napier and Smith, 1987; Owen, 1982; Rajagopalan, 1992) which usually results in poor or inadequate information and knowledge sharing between individuals and/or business units responsible for strategy implementation. This problem was for example, ranked as one of the largest obstacles to strategy execution by American managers (Maas, 2008; Hrebiniak 2005). Another common cultural problem is the domination of the short-term orientation in

a company. For instance, the two independent studies conducted by Alexander (1985) and Ghamdi (1998) report that competing short-term activities distract attention from strategy implementation in 64 and 83% of companies, respectively. Also, the study by Alashloo in Iran on the same issue found that a strong relationship between "lack of adequate communication" and "lack of understanding of strategy by academic staff". The result was attributed to the social and cultural attitudes among senior managers in the country. In Iran for instance, it was observed that the cultural practice is such that all the information about planning such as mission, goal and even strategy is typically not disclosed to other parties and such information is kept in elite groups only. This suggests that a close link to the "incompatible organisational culture" and "lack of adequate organisational support". Similarly, the study of the Indonesian organizations by Alamsjah identified a number of issues relating to the top five key success factors. Among these issues is the corporate culture which is seen as the enabler or catalyst for successful strategy implementation. For instance, it is believed that the more conducive the culture, the more aggressive the middle managers. The study classified cultural values as innovation, action orientation, results orientation, team orientation, information sharing and openness to constructive criticism.

Furthermore, the integrative strategy implementation model by Maas (2008) states that changing the culture of an organization is neither easy nor is fast. Moreover, it may represent an obstruction to effective execution. Also, the behavior and emotion of fear (culture of non-trust) which stems from it is as important as it can bring both positive as well as negative effects to the organizational culture and execution performance. He further states that members of an organization have certain fears in their career life such as losing the job, taking high responsibility and etcetera and it is called "culture of fear". He mentioned firstly for the fear to offend others, then to the fear in job security, fear of making mistakes and taking initiatives, fear of responsibility, fear of participating and fear of change.

Many researchers focused on the phenomenon of resistance to change which is defined as any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo. Reid (1989) claims that organizational members with no exception of managers and high ranked employees often feel distressed by the change and would often resist it. Kotter (1996, 2007) and Schlesinger argue that the disturbance which accompanies organizational change usually shakes the

company's stable interests and upsets the established routine (Noble, 1999ab; Reed and Buckley, 1988; Sharma and Kim, 2013; Slater *et al.*, 2010).

**Fear to offend others:** Fear to offend others is a significant concern being under focus. For example, Jaeger (1986) mentions that in an organizational culture, having high power distance accompanied by high uncertainty avoidance, the community tends to deal with interpersonal problems smoothly.

Bourgeois and Boltvinik (1981) state that conflicts are dealt with by Latin Americans in 'smoothing' or 'pleasing' others rather than dealing with the conflict. Allio (2005) find a significant influence on social behavior in the Asian societies and other collectivist cultures where it is influenced considerably by the Face (the public self-images that every member wants to claim) When face discredits in a social interaction, a person may experience negative feelings of shame or degradation as well negative responses of pulling out and hostility. It also leads to aggression and evasive responses, in the work environment which in turn foul up the harmonious relationship (Maas, 2008).

Avoiding open conflict is compulsory for the members to carry on their interaction, even though there is aggression within the organization and this will result in several consequences of reluctance to criticize (Maas, 2008) It is possible that managers might have reluctance to address and modify unwanted behavior, according to the new strategy. Nevertheless, these adjustments need only be made when certain behavior does not meet the objectives of the executions) In order not to cause any offense to others, indirect communication is usually used. It is understood to have a wall of friendless which according to Gottschalk (1998, 2008) refers to the phenomenon that 'some communities tend to say what the listener wants to hear'. 'They rather say 'yes' or nothing instead of saying 'no') Employees do not have the courage to raise their opinion, particularly when such opinions are different from their manager's. They do not want to stand up against their organizational members, particularly the higher hierarchy. This could influence the level of participation negatively and might even destroy it (Bhatti, 2011; Maas, 2008; Mashari and Zairi, 1999; Beer and Eisenstat, 2000).

**Fear of job security:** Maas (2008) claimed that the systematic research about organizational behavior with regard to the uncertainty among organizational members regarding their job security on the occurrence of any

major organizational change is less. Job security can have an effect or influence on execution success as Robey and Rodriguez (1989) assumed on information technology implementation in Latin America. Yet, implementation of information technology was resisted and viewed as a threat to job security by Chilean researchers (Maas, 2008). Borg and Elizur, (1992) indicate that job insecurity is influenced by several factors which are related to the low level of job satisfaction organizational commitment, motivation, job involvement, trust in management accompanied by the increase in psychological withdrawal, resistance to change and propensity to leave the organization. Also withdrawal cognitions and behaviors such as reduced work effort, increased absenteeism and theft will occur more often (Maas, 2008).

From studying the attitudes and behaviors, it seems, the fact that job insecurity and execution performance are negatively related. The idea of losing one's job affects strategy implementation in several ways. For instance, members of an organization would be scared to take initiatives or to make mistakes, especially when the layoff strategy is executed in the organization, what could cause resistance to the execution effort (Maas, 2008).

**Fear of making mistakes and taking initiatives:** With regard to the organizational behavior, Edmondson stated that the psychological safety influence the level of risk taking within an organization positively. When the members of an organization do not fear the material or reputational harm, they would be encouraged to initiate and hence to make some mistakes (Poter and Smith, 2005). When the members of such organization have the belief that a member with a good intention will not be punished when he makes mistakes, this will encourage their learning behavior in work teams.

On the other hand when the only response of superiors is punishment of such initiatives, this will surely result in the subordinate's reluctance to involve in learning behaviors which eventually mean not making mistakes and taking risks. Yet another result, when the management's response to such situation is punishment or losing the employee's face is a negative effect on the employee's execution performance (Maas, 2008). A different study conducted by Martinko and Gardner shows that certain properties may cause passive and maladaptive behavior among its members. For example organizations with inflexible rules, formalization and centralization may make the employees to be passive and uncreative with the unwillingness to take initiatives unless it is rewarded or encouraged (Maas, 2008).

**Fear of responsibility:** Several reasons could cause the organizational members to fear responsibility. These were mentioned in Maas (2008). If something went wrong under a person's responsibility or mistake has been done then the punishment for this person will be imposed for this person. When the employees do not have the experience to deal with responsibilities, due to the hierarchical management style followed by this organization which would result in making staff languid and thus have neither the willingness nor the ability to take responsibility. These members tend to think in a hierarchical manner that is decision making the responsibility of the management.

Fear of carrying responsibility affects strategy execution (Langley *et al.*, 2010; Maas, 2008). The organizational members shifting responsibility to other members of the same organization and thus shifting accountability to them in case something goes wrong. These shifts will especially be made to management, instead of organizational members. When the organizational members fear to carry responsibility and shift their responsibilities to others, this might result in not executing certain tasks, particularly if this task is related to strategy execution context, simply because no one feels that such responsibility is directly related to him. The employee's reluctance to perform their tasks is due to their fear of making mistakes. Finally, they wouldn't like to make decisions during strategy formulation and execution (Langley *et al.*, 2010).

**Fear of participating:** Pineno (2008) suggest that positive influence could result from participation only with organizational members who have lower needs for authoritarianism accompanied by their independence which influence their execution performance positively. Hofstede and Hofstede (1990) also suggest that members of less education and lower status tend to be more authoritative than the higher status colleagues. Labianca *et al.* (2000) argue inviting employee to participate in organized activities, they might need to transform all their values regarding their views towards power and the power in the organization. Henderson and Argyle describe the relationship between higher administration, i.e., supervisors and lowers staff, i.e., employees as task oriented, formal, unequal and hostile. Members of organizations should form the understanding that decision making influence should be shared between the unequal hierarchical system (Labianca *et al.*, 2000). The motivation was the focus of many studies and it was suggested to take part within other cultures. Collectivist

cultures as well as cultures with high power distance influence participation negatively. Newman and Nollen (1996) proved that high power distance cultures doubt employee participation. This could cause organizational members of these cultures to be filled with fear, distrust and disrespect of participation as a result of it being unmatched with the nationwide culture. In such cultures, managers who tend to encourage participation among the organizational members are likely to be seen as weak and inefficient (Yang and Wan, 2004). Due to the weak interaction among different staff levels, participation, in high power distance cultures is of no value (Gottshalk, 1999). Individuals in collective cultures are continuously aware of the other person's status (Tannenbaum, 1965) which would result in the reluctance to suggest against the higher status people well (Pineno, 2008). Finally, it is believed that participation level depends on the type of culture followed. For example, participation has a positive influence on the execution performance in the US but Mexico and Russia has no such value, although the experiment in Russia did not have sufficient time to prove otherwise (Maas, 2008).

Organizational members can have a natural fear to participate, when they are given the chance to participate many will not take the opportunity. They often suggest that they don't have the opportunity but when it comes down to them they don't take part (Miller *et al.*, 2008).

**Fear of change:** Waweru (2011), Balzarova *et al.* (2004) and Swanson and Power, (2001) suggest that the change process itself might create tensions, insecurities among organizational members which would occasionally lead to distress. Hussy (1999) also advocates that major organizational change which is usually accompanied by uncertainty, engenders intense emotions such as fear and stress. This could even go beyond feelings to negatively influence the physical and mental health (Swanson and Power, 2001) which change may lead to the organization paralysis. This also could on the other hand create a readiness for action (Hussy, 1996). Furthermore, research results suggest that negative attitudes spread faster within a group compared to positive ones (Hussy, 1999). Finally organizational change could result due to several causes. Organizational change is always accompanied by new challenges and thus the opportunities to make mistakes or fail will be higher which would create fear among the members. They are simply trying to avoid trouble. Another source of fear of change is the organizational member's tendency to repeat the same routine and the fear of new challenges, especially among the older organizational members who had practiced this

particular routine for most of their vocational life, tend to fear change. Novelty to them is threatening their job's life style. The fear to lose the established and achieved power, status or some of it could be another reason to fear change. Another threat which accompanies organizational change is layoffs which is a threat to all organizational members (Candido and Santos, 2008). The worst performance of the previous administration could be another cause to fear change as members would not like to go through the same experience another time (Hrebiniak 2008, 2005; Higgins, 2005). Many researchers focused on the phenomenon of resistance to change which is defined as any conduct that serves to maintain the status quo in the face of pressure to alter the status quo. Reid (1989) claims that organizational members with no exception of managers and high rank employees often feel distressed by the change and would often resist it. Kotter (2007) argues that the disturbance which accompanies organizational change usually shakes the company's stable interests and upsets the established routine (Noble, 1999).

**Communication:** Communication strategy can be defined as the method and manner the strategy that is transferred to the organizational members. Forman and Argenti rightly note that although, an entire discipline is devoted to the study of organizational strategy, including strategy execution; little attention has been given to the links between communication and strategy (Moore, 2014). But they also note that, in the last decade, business communication researchers have become increasingly interested in the contribution of corporate communication to an organization's ability to create and disseminate its strategy. However, very few researchers are found to have examined the link between communication and strategy and when they have their focus has largely been on how corporate communication affects the organization's relationship with its-various stakeholders. At least, numerous researchers have already emphasized the importance of communication in the process of strategy execution (Alexander, 1985).

Communication can influence the implementation' performance positively if the uses of Information communication technology in organization communication occurs (Siam and Hilman, 2014; Okumas, 2001a, b, 2002).

**Spread out computing:** This a condition in which a organization rupture was computing power and locating it in different devices for example like in desktops, laptops so as the workers can access the information. In a

company, the staff will access the organization information shared through this form of spreading out computing. In this, the company sets up websites through which all employees are in a position of access the shared information and giving their feedback on that.

**Email:** this is mostly used not only in the company premises but also globally by other organizations. No matter the type of tools that has been introduced no tool has been in a position of succeeding this one. Most companies make email address under their businesses domain. These one has no restriction anyone can access to it.

Instant messaging, this is faster than the email, this is done through a text message this is mainly through Skype which can be download even in mobile phones and when you other colleagues does that it will be more easy and efficient to convey a message to the company.

Online Transaction Processing (OLTP) this is getting-together of information and bring current up-to-date data to replicate the gathered and dealt with information. In most businesses they use the operational database that supports Online Transaction Processing (OLTP).

**Online Analytical Processing (OLAP):** OLAP is information technology-based. it is used in creating information through analyzing LAP ranges. This is from solving simple questions on a database to regulate which customers owe the company using the simulated brain tools, like neural networks and genetic mathematics, to explain a thoughtful problem to the benefit of the business. It is the best In quick decision making. For which the achievements and success of the company depend on the rate, efficiency and speed in decision-making. This is by gathering information and thinking about how to bring out decisions depending on the facts gathered.

**Challenges affecting ICT to make effective communication funding:** With cyclical benefactor subsidy and heaviness to curtail administrative and administration costs, it is often difficult for an organization to appropriately design and reserve financial and anthropological investments in ICT as an essentials bulk for progress programs and tools for to be used to convey the message required. For example, a company will need more computers and reliable Internet provider for efficient conveying of messages and replies.

**Lack of knowledge:** This mainly affects in using the tools into conveying messages to the work team. Some of the employees may not have the knowledge on how to open

the mails and reply to the relevant bodies and thus it will be a challenge though it can be avoided by introducing training and lessons on how to use them (McChensey *et al.*, 2012). Lack of essentials like the internet. If there is a fail on the internet one cannot be able to read or send any message or email and hence making the ICT adoption not very reliable in organizations.

Using this ICT tools in communication when conveying a message, it is very hard to realize whether the person is Frank or hiding the truth. You can never know how urgent the message is without looking at him or her (McChensey *et al.*, 2012).

**Organizational performance:** Many organizations try to develop and adopt a variety of organizational performance measurement systems to monitor and drive their improvement of specified results and communicate their vision, goals, objectives, measures, aims and outcomes to human resources and component in a coherent fashion. This system is the balance score card BSC.

The Balance Scorecard (BSC) is one such tool that provides a mix of financial and non-financial means to monitor and manage organizational performance. The balanced scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1996a, b, 2005, 2006) emerged as a method to explicate organizational performance and to have a clear and traceable means to manage it based on four perspectives financial, internal, customer and learning and growth.

The financial perspective provides a combination of both traditional accounting measures and identification of leading financial indicators of future performance. The internal process focuses on metrics that reveals internal operating performance. The customer measures often focus on satisfaction, loyalty and profitability to ensure the right customers are receiving the right response. The learning and growth perspective focuses on how well-learning and knowledge are managed and cultivated to support strategic goals (Fuentes, 2008).

**The relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance:** The strategy execution literature up to the present has been studying the organizational culture and its effect on performance. Many studies have investigated the role of organizational culture in the organization; and most of these studies indicate that there is a significant role in the organization. These studies recommended more studies to be done on strategy execution and culture in many sectors, especially in the education sector (Basri, 2015; Rahimnia *et al.*, 2009; Tolleson, 2009; Hrebiniak, 2005).

Maas (2008) in his study found different dimensions of the organizational culture, specifically, the researcher talks widely about the culture of fear and how it affects the performance in the organizations. Delisi (2006) points out that the organizational culture as one of the reinforcers that can sabotage the strategy execution process and affect the performance if it is not considered.

**The relationship between communication and organizational culture:** Forman and Argenti also note that communication researchers have become increasingly interested in the contribution of communication to a company's ability to create and disseminate its strategy in the last decade. However, very few authors have investigated the link between communication and strategy execution and when they have their focus has primarily been on how corporate communication affects the business relationship with its various stakeholders. At least, numerous researchers have already emphasized the importance of communication in the process of strategy execution (Alexander, 1985; Schaap, 2006). The study by Alashloo on the higher educational institutions in Iran also found "incompatible organisational culture" and "lack of adequate communication" as the most important organisational impeders as mentioned by the respondents. A similar findings were also reported by Alexander (1991), Ghamdi (1998), Noble (1999a, b), Okumus (2001a, b) and Dobni (2003) which noted that "incompatible organisational culture" and "lack of adequate communication" are also organisational impeders. The findings by Peng and Litteljohn show that effective communication is a key requirement for effective strategy execution. Strategy communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy execution. In fact, communication is pervasive in every aspect of strategy execution as it relates in a complex way to organize processes organizational context and implementation objectives which in turn have an effect on the process of implementation.

Information communication technology in an organization in the communication emerges communication technologies are not only deviating how small companies interact but the main one is speeding up decision making amongst these upcoming companies. Installation of the internet in one's organization cost is very minimal and does not only help in research but also in fastening the communication between companies. organizations depend so much on communication among

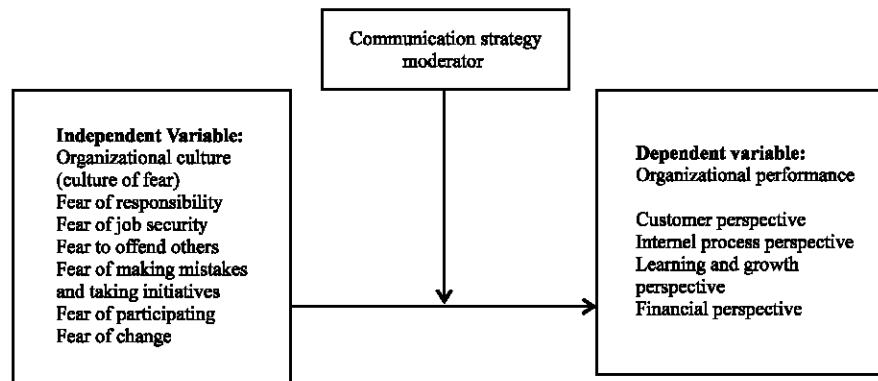


Fig. 1: Study framework

the work team as they implement on the ambitious towards success. With the help of information communication technology the exchange and tide of communication are made very easy and efficient in decision making also. In a company, it is imperative for it to stand-in and accelerates the compan's success and output and hence, it's their duty to infill knowledge to the workforce on the usage of the communication tools. These tools are namely video conferencing and Bluetooth enabled devices isolated records, computers, submissions.

Strategy communication hindrances account for more regularly than the other type kind of obstruction, for example, administration difficulties or share values (culture) barriers. Heide for instance, demonstrate that there are different types of strategy communication issues (without pointing out what they are). These communication issues may be impacted to some degree by the organizational (hierarchical) structure. As stated by Heide, Grønhaug and Johannessen, they constitute the key boundary to the execution of planned strategic events. Rapert *et al.* (2002) state that strategy communication and organizational culture play a paramount part in the execution process. Specifically, when vertical communication is regular and frequent, strategic consensus (shared understanding about strategic necessities) is upgraded and the organizational performance will improve. They investigate vertical communication linkages as a means by which key agreement and execution could be improved.

**Theoretical underpinning:** The contingency theory embodies the organizational culture because it is studied in a turbulent environment such as in Palestine, Gaza. Thus, these theories are very relevant to the present

study as it helps to explain their relevancy in the explanation of the organizational culture and how they affect organizational performances.

**Study framework:** Figure 1 shows the study framework.

**Hypothesis development:** Based on the literature review and also in line with the conceptual framework, the study formulates the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between organizational culture (culture of fear) and the organizational performance
- H<sub>2</sub>: communication moderates the relationship between organizational culture (culture of fear) and the organizational performance

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Research design:** The study applied a cross-sectional research design technique with a quantitative research approach of survey questionnaires (Hair *et al.*, 2006) affirmed that both cross-sectional design and quantitative research approach of survey questionnaire are suitable in a social science study like this kind. It is faster and easier in terms of gathering information within a limited time.

**Population and the sample technique:** The study used the simple random sampling technique to select 13 higher learning institutes from Gaza, Palestine. These institutions were identified through the directory of the Ministry of Higher education of Palestine. In all, there are only 13 higher learning institutions that are currently registered under the Ministry of Higher education of Palestine.

**Units of analysis:** The unit of analysis for this study is an organization (higher education institutions). It includes all



individual organizations in the higher education sector in Palestine, in particular those that are currently registered with the Palestine higher education authority.

**Research instrumentation and measurement:** First and foremost, all the items were measured through the 7-point Likert scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Secondly, the variables were measured according to what they reflect. For the Organizational culture, it was measured using 25 items adapted from Maas (2008) reflecting the seven dimensions of the culture of fear, named as fear to offend others, fear of job security, fear of making mistakes, fear of talking initiatives, fear of responsibility, fear of participating and fear of change. The organizational performance 22 items consists of the four perspectives of balance scorecard from Franklin.

**Data collection procedure:** The data collection procedure for this study is self-administered. All the questionnaires for this study were distributed and retrieved through self-administered also called drop-off and pick procedure. Both the questionnaire distribution and its retrieving were done by the researcher. In all, a total of 255 questionnaires was distributed and retrieved.

**The convergent validity:** This was used to determine the degree to which the measured constructs correlate positively with a measure of the same construct (Hair *et al.*, 2011, 2014). It measured the correlation between the formative and reflective constructs. The convergent validity is also determined by examining the loadings, the composite reliability and the average variance extracted. In this case, items that are high load factor of 0.7 and with the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of at least 0.5 and the composite reliability of 0.7 are all considered acceptable. Table 1 depicts the loadings, reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and the AVE for this study. It indicates that all items met the acceptable limits as suggested by Hair *et al.* (2014) and Bagozzi *et al.* (1991). The result in Table 1 shows that the measurement model has an appropriate convergent validity as suggested by Bagozzi *et al.* (1991).

**The discriminant validity analysis:** The discriminant validity was used to measure the degree to which the group of items were able to distinguish the constructs from other constructs in the model as suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In doing this, it was expected that the items of each construct should indicate

Table 1: Convergent validity analysis

Construct/Items	Loadings
OC	
b10	0.551
b11	0.561
b12	0.604
b13	0.531
b14	0.531
b15	0.595
b16	0.641
b17	0.643
b18	0.675
b19	0.563
b2	0.450
b20	0.486
b21	0.539
b22	0.574
b23	0.419
b24	0.483
b25	0.538
b26	0.584
b27	0.568
b28	0.562
b4	0.327
b5	0.519
b7	0.601
b8	0.586
b9	0.606

a:  $CR = (\sum \text{factor loading})^2 / (\sum \text{factor loading})^2 + \sum (\text{variance of error})$ ; b:  $AVE = \sum (\text{factor loading})^2 / (\sum \text{factor loading})^2 + \sum (\text{variance of error})$ ; Cronbach's alpha 0.902; CR 0.914; AVE 0.500

a variance greater than that shared with other constructs (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009; Zhang, 2009). Normally, the discriminant validity is confirmed and assumed if the values of the diagonal elements are higher than other values in their respective rows and columns. Table 2 demonstrates the detail result of the discriminant validity, including the correlation among variables.

#### The structural model, inner model and hypothesis testing:

In this study, this was used to test the proposed hypotheses in order to establish the relationship between the endogenous and exogenous variables. It was done by running the bootstrapping in SmartPLS 2.0. Table 3 depicts the results.

Table 3, it is revealed that organizational culture OC has a negative and insignificant effect on the organizational performance OP at the 0.1 level of significance ( $\beta = 0.066$ ,  $t = 1.175$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ). The result further revealed that Similarly, The OC\*CS has a significant effect on the organizational performance at the 0.05 level of significance ( $\beta = 0.160$ ,  $t = 2.382$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the hypotheses ( $H_1$ ) for this study is not supported and ( $H_2$ ) for this study is supported (Chin, 1998).

**Predictive relevance of the model:**  $R^2$  and Cross-validated redundancy was utilized to examine the predictive power of the model (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005).  $R^2$  refers to the variance in the endogenous variables that is being

Table 2: The discriminant validity analysis

Construct	CP	CS	F	IN	LG	OC
CP	0.783					
CS	0.657	0.766				
F	0.469	0.451	0.768			
IN	0.744	0.733	0.518	0.790		
LG	0.540	0.531	0.489	0.545	0.731	
OC	0.207	0.316	0.321	0.214	0.210	0.707

Table 3: The results of the inner structural model

Hypothesis	Hypothesized path	Path coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value	Decision
H <sub>1</sub>	OC->OP	0.066	0.056	1.175	0.120	Not Supported
H <sub>2</sub>	OC*CS->OP	(-)0.160**	0.067	2.382	0.009	Supported

\*, \*\*, \*\*\*p&lt;0.1; 0.05; 0.01

Table 4: Results on the output is the cross-validated redundancy

Construct	R <sup>2</sup>	Cross validated redundancy	Cross validated communality
Organizational performance	0.403	0.256	0.640
Organizational culture			0.620

explained by the exogenous variables. Table 4 revealed the R<sub>2</sub> representing 40.3% of the organizational performance that was explained by the organizational culture. In line with the findings of this study, suggested a value of R<sup>2</sup> where 0.26 substantial, 0.13 moderate and 0.02 weak. Therefore, both R<sup>2</sup> values for this study are considered substantial and the power of variables contained in the model in explaining the organizational performance.

Furthermore, the study also used the R<sup>2</sup>, the cross-validated redundancy values to assess the quality of the model. This was done by conducting the Blindfolding procedures, these values in SmartPLS was applied with a view to generate the cross-validated redundancy and cross-validated communality. To do this, the study removed sum the values in the data which was later estimated as a missing value. After that, the estimated parameters are used to re-estimate the missing data and comparison of the output were conducted. Table 4 provides the detail results on the output is the cross-validated redundancy.

According to Fornell and Cha (1994), the model under investigation will have the predictive quality if the cross-redundancy values were more than zero, else the predictive quality of the model cannot be confirmed. Table 4 showed the obtained cross validated redundancy of 0.25 for OP. Therefore, these results confirmed that the model has adequate prediction quality.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aims to examine the moderating role of strategy communication on the influence of strategy execution on the organizational performance. The study

specifically investigated how strategy communication moderates the relation and influence of organizational culture and its dimensions (culture of fear) on organizational performance with specific focus on higher education institutions in Palestine. The study applied the structural equation modelling in particular partial least square with SmartPLS analysis technique for the data analysis.

Overall, the finding revealed that organizational culture is not significantly related to performance of higher education institutions in Palestine but was significantly related to performance through the communication strategy. First the result demonstrates a significant relationship between the organizational culture and organizational performance. Thus, the study failed to support the hypothesis that organizational culture will influence the organizational performance. This finding is at variance with Rahimnia *et al.* (2009), Maas (2008), Balzarova *et al.* (2004), Swanson and Power (2001) which affirmed that organizational culture (culture of fear or (Culture of non-trust) is a critical and significant factor that determined the success or failure of any organization including those educational institutions.

One plausible explanation for this result could be due to the vagueness and misunderstanding among staff during the strategy execution efforts and this is due to the execution activities, procedures and because the responsibilities were not formalized and this will make the employees do not know what they can and what they cannot do. It could also be due to the authoritarian management there, the staffs do not engage in the formulation of study, automatically this will affect the strategy execution efforts, even though this will require a close supervision of the staff of the management, because staff will not be willing to take initiatives or be responsible or offend other staff and thinking that might be he is going to lose his job for successful strategy execution activities and the competent employees will get frustrated.

For the moderating effect of strategic communication, further finding revealed that there is an influence of organizational culture on the organizational performance is moderated by communication strategy. Our result indicates that strategic communication gave further explanation to the influence of strategy execution organization on the organizational performance. It suggests that strategy communication success to strengthen the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. It shows that the moderating variable, strategy communication success to interact with the independent variables (organizational culture (culture of fear)) to influence the dependent variable-organizational performance.

In other words, strategy communication might be relevant in the further explanation of the relationship between organizational culture and organizational performance. However, we advise that our result should be interpreted with caution as strategic communication could be significant in other research environment. In all, our findings to the moderating effect demonstrate that success to affect the strength and the direction of the associations between organizational culture and organizational performance. One key limitation of this study might be the quantitative nature of our data. Therefore, other research approach such as qualitative and meta-analysis approach could be helpful in this regard. It could be that the use of these approaches may possibly produce additional insight in the moderating role of strategy communication.

#### **The uniqueness of the study**

**Strategy implementation:** Each strategy implementation effort has a unique constellation of factors that may influence implementation performance. In every implementation a different subset factors may influence the implementation effort and organizational performance. Therefore, each implementation has a unique context which needs to be taken into account. As argued above, the process and content of an implementation effort needs to be adapted to the context in which the implementation takes place. Although, this research has yielded a comprehensive set of obstacles can occurs in the organizations during the implementation process which may influence implementation success and organizational performance, these obstacles sometimes appear in the culture which is dominated in any organizations. Our integrative framework for strategy implementation can assist managers during implementation by providing an empirically derived set of factors that need to be taken into account to increase the likelihood of implementation success. The wide range of factors needs to be taken into account by managers with implementation responsibilities in order to successfully manage an implementation effort. In this study, the focal point is how the managers can involve their staff in the execution of strategy and how to solve the problems faced, in this study managers should focus on the culture of distrust and make them fear. In real situation, some staff can contribute to their organizations by offer them the creativity and innovative thing to solve problems in organization.

**Organization culture:** This study is the first study to mention for these impediments and give red signals to managers in higher education or in a business and public sector as well. Findings of this study indicate to existing culture of an organization can exert a considerable

influence on the performance of an implementation effort. When the prevailing organizational culture is not in line with the new strategy that culture needs to be changed. Habits and ways of thinking that are an obstacle to successful implementation need to be adapted. An organization culture can be characterized by fear for job security making mistakes, responsibility, participation and change. However, to implement a strategy successfully, proactive organizational members are often needed who participate in strategy formulation and implementation. In order to participate, staff need to dare to take initiative, voice their opinion and not be afraid to make mistakes. Therefore, an empowered and fearless organization culture needs to be created in which organizational members are able to make mistakes without being punished for it.

#### **CONCLUSION**

One of finding of this study is changing culture of an organization is a difficult and time-consuming process. It is difficult to change habits which have been the same for a very long time. Therefore, it can take a long time and considerable energy to change a culture because it requires a lot of consultation, discussion and coaching and counseling. However, such a long period is not always available, for example when a company is in crisis. In such an instance, a more authoritarian way of culture change may be required.

#### **SUGGESTIONS**

This study suggests several strategies and tactics that can be used to change the existing organizational culture. First, a very clear vision of the new organizational culture should be developed. It is important to clearly describe the new culture and how it differs from the old culture what its advantages and disadvantages are. The description of the new culture should be focused on norms and values, new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things. A cultural action plan can be developed to guide this process.

In addition, staff need to be rewarded when their behavior is in alignment with the desired culture. Second, the description of the new culture should be communicated very clearly to the members of the organization. To communicate the new culture several types of communication and ICT instruments should be used including: meetings with the whole organization, meetings with department heads, informal personnel parties, staff magazines, email, memos, performance review meetings and individual conversations. Meetings which allow for two-way communication were found to be most effective.

Third, staff should be individually coached and counseled to make them adopt the new culture. This includes having open conversations with organizational members. Managers should involve organizational members and give them information about their performance and the new culture.

Fourth, providing training and education, especially motivational courses, can be an effective way to change the organizational culture. In these courses, organizational members learn the new behaviors and mindsets which are required to successfully implement the strategy. A fifth tactic to change the existing culture is to transfer, demote or fire older organizational members who were unwilling or unable to adapt to new culture and the recruitment of new (and often younger) staff who were more suitable for the new culture.

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