



# **Influence of Organisational Culture on Strategy Operationalisation and Organisational Performance: Evidence from Zimbabwe Media Industry Vulnerability**

**Dr Calista Chikanya**

Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

Email: [cchikanya@gmail.com](mailto:cchikanya@gmail.com)

**Abstract**— This study examines the influence of organizational culture on strategy operationalization and organizational performance within Zimbabwe’s media industry amid sector liberalization, digital disruption, and public-sector performance reforms. Drawing on organizational culture and strategy execution literature, the study analyses how cultural traits shape the translation of strategic intent into daily operational practices across broadcasting organizations operating in a competitive, multi-platform environment. This study employs a qualitative experiential approach as its guiding framework and were integrated with recent peer-reviewed research and national performance reports to identify common culture–execution dynamics within the sector. Findings reveal persistent gaps between corporate strategies and operational practices, including weak operations strategies, inconsistent work planning, uneven application of performance management systems, siloed information flows, and limited use of audience and revenue analytics. These challenges are reinforced by compliance-oriented interpretations of Integrated Results-Based Management systems rather than their use as execution tools. By integrating Denison’s cultural dimensions with operational levers such as functional plans, KPIs, feedback routines, and cross-functional processes, the study proposes a sector-relevant conceptual framework linking cultural alignment to performance outcomes including service quality, audience reach, revenue sustainability, and mandate delivery. The study concludes that organizational culture functions as a core execution system and that aligning culture with operational structures is essential for competitiveness and resilience in Zimbabwe’s evolving media landscape.

**Keywords**— Accountability, Culture, Strategy Execution, Media Performance

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Organizational culture has emerged as a core determinant of strategy execution and organizational performance, particularly within public space in Zimbabwe. Defined as the shared assumptions, values, and norms shaping “how things are done,” culture significantly influences decision-making, motivation, adaptability, and strategic alignment (Becerra Castro et al., 2024; Bogale and Debela, 2024). For ZBC, operating in a liberalized and digital-first media environment, culture affects commissioning, content quality, platform strategy, revenue generation, and mandate delivery. Empirical studies confirm that cultural misalignment weakens execution capacity, while strong cultural alignment enhances responsiveness, innovation, and accountability (Ojogiwa and Qwabe, 2023; Barends and Rousseau, 2022).



Zimbabwe's broadcasting sector has shifted from monopoly to competition, driven by licensing reforms and diversification of media channels. Audience migration to digital platforms has heightened performance expectations (MISA, 2023). Parallel public-sector reforms such as Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) and Results-Based Budgeting (RBB) have introduced performance contracts, dashboards, and results-based reporting that require clear output–outcome linkages (Ministry of Finance, 2023; Office of the Auditor-General, 2023). Yet internal systems reveal gaps between strategic intent and operational practice. Interview findings showed that while corporate strategies exist, no formalized operations strategies guide daily activities. Work planning is inconsistent, and performance contracts apply unevenly to managers and staff, reinforcing a compliance-driven “box-ticking” culture (Becerra Castro et al., 2024; Barends and Rousseau, 2022). Siloed information flows further undermine coordination across editorial, distribution, and commercial units, weakening execution and responsiveness (Ojogiwa and Qwabe, 2023).

Organizational Performance will depend on how effectively cultural norms are embedded into operational structures, IRBM-aligned work planning, and feedback systems. Strategic success requires integrating culture with day-to-day execution to build resilience, accountability, and competitiveness in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

Zimbabwe's media sector has transitioned from monopoly-driven broadcasting to a pluralistic and competitive landscape. This shift has redefined expectations for organizational agility, service quality, content relevance, and financial sustainability across both public and commercial media entities. Parallel reforms in public-sector performance management particularly Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) and Results-Based Budgeting (RBB), have intensified expectations for strategic clarity, measurable outcomes, and accountability (Ministry of Finance, 2023).

However, evidence across media organizations indicates persistent gaps between strategy formulation and operationalization. While strategic plans are commonly developed, they are often weakly translated into operational strategies that guide day-to-day execution. Inconsistent work planning, limited cascade of performance metrics, and fragmented coordination between editorial, distribution, and commercial functions remain widespread challenges within the sector.

### **2.1 Zimbabwe's Media Environment**

Over the last decade, Zimbabwe's media environment has undergone structural and regulatory transformation driven by licensing reforms and technological change. The entry of commercial, community, and private broadcasters has intensified competition for audiences, advertising revenue, and digital relevance. Traditional broadcasting models have been disrupted by streaming platforms, mobile consumption, and on-demand content, requiring media organizations to adopt adaptive operational strategies (MISA, 2023).



Audience behavior studies, including the Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey (ZAMPS), highlight growing platform fragmentation and declining loyalty to single broadcasters, reinforcing the need for data-driven strategy execution across content and commercial interfaces (ZARF, 2022).

### **2.2 Public Sector Reforms: IRBM and RBB**

Performance management reforms through IRBM and RBB seek to strengthen accountability, transparency, and results orientation across state-linked and publicly mandated organizations within the media sector. These reforms emphasize strategic planning, output–outcome linkages, performance contracting, and monitoring systems aligned to national development priorities such as the National Development Strategy (Ministry of Finance, 2023).

However, across media organizations, IRBM is frequently interpreted as a compliance requirement rather than an execution system. Performance contracts are unevenly cascaded, KPIs lack operational specificity, and feedback mechanisms remain weak or irregular, limiting their effectiveness as drivers of strategic performance.

### **2.3 Strategy–Execution Gaps in the Media Industry**

Despite widespread adoption of corporate strategies, many media organizations lack explicitly articulated operations strategies linking high-level objectives to daily workflows. This misalignment results in fragmented execution, informal work routines, and reduced cross-functional coordination.

Furthermore, performance management systems often distinguish between managerial and non-managerial roles, with frontline employees assessed using generic appraisal tools that lack clear KPIs or strategic linkage. When goals are not cascaded and feedback loops are weak, organizational culture defaults to compliance-oriented routines rather than performance-driven execution (Becerra Castro et al., 2024; Barends & Rousseau, 2022).

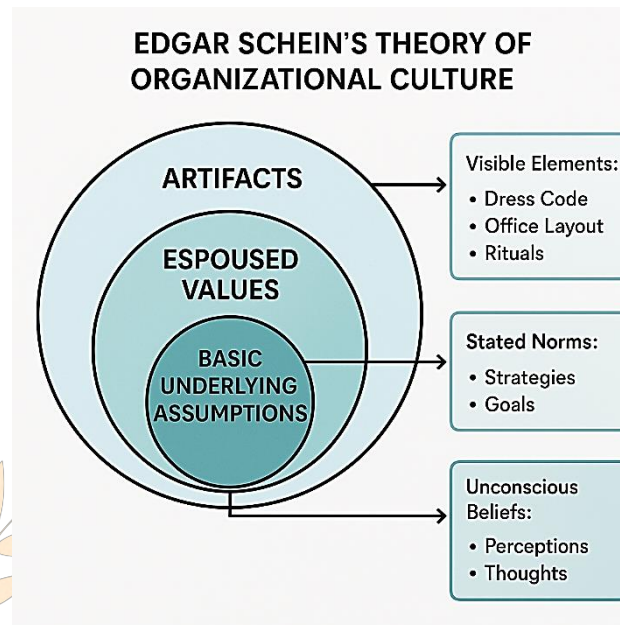
## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1 Schein’s Model of Organizational Culture**

Schein’s theory of organizational culture provides a foundational framework for examining how culture shapes strategy execution. The model distinguishes three levels—artefacts and behaviors, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions—helping leaders identify visible practices, stated values, and deep-seated beliefs that influence organizational dynamics (Schein and Schein, 2021; Rosenstein, 2024). The framework emphasizes leadership’s role in shaping culture and the importance of aligning cultural elements with strategic goals (Donnelly et al., 2020; Hogan and Coote, 2023).

For Zimbabwe Media Industry, Schein’s model helps explain how artefacts such as communication styles and programming choices may reflect a culture that hinders innovation and public trust. Espoused values such as public service and impartiality require consistency between policy and practice to sustain credibility, while underlying assumptions (for example, resistance to change) can limit adaptability in a digital-first market.

Applying the model enables cultural diagnosis to strengthen transparency, depoliticize operations, and improve sustainability.



**Figure 1: Schein's Model of Organizational Culture**

*Source: Adopted from Schein and Schein, 2022.*

### 3.2 Denison Model

The Denison model links organizational culture to performance through four dimensions: mission, adaptability, involvement, and consistency (Anam and Churiyah, 2023). It is widely used to diagnose cultural strengths and weaknesses and to connect culture with outcomes such as profitability, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement (Cahya and Firdaus, 2023; Kokina and Ostrovska, 2023).

Applied to the Zimbabwe Media Industry, involvement supports engagement and open communication; consistency ensures alignment with values and policy; adaptability supports responsiveness to technological change and audience needs; and mission provides unified direction that strengthens public trust. Limitations include its Western-centric origins, a tendency to understate external forces, and assumptions of linear culture performance relationships.

### 3.3 Competing Values Framework (CVF)

The Competing Values Framework identifies four culture types that is clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy, mapped along internal versus external focus and flexibility versus stability (Mtongi, 2020). It is used to diagnose culture and align it with strategic goals, assessing leadership, engagement, innovation, and competitiveness (Cameron, 2022; Felska, 2023).

For the media Industry in Zimbabwe, a dominant hierarchy culture may produce rigid, top-down communication that limits agility and innovation, affecting both audience relevance and monetization. CVF tools such as the

Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) can help compare current and desired culture to guide leadership development and change management. Limitations include oversimplification, subjectivity in assessments, and limited prescriptive guidance for transformation.

#### 4. Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework illustrates how organizational culture shapes strategic execution by linking cultural traits to operational levers and ultimately to performance outcomes. Empirical studies show that cultural dimensions such as mission clarity, involvement, adaptability, and consistency enable organisations to translate strategic intent into coordinated action (Abane et al., 2022; Petrová and Špatenka, 2022). These cultural traits influence operational levers including operations strategies, functional plans, cascading of IRBM-aligned KPIs, feedback rituals, and cross-functional routines.

When these levers are culturally aligned, they drive performance outcomes essential for a media houses, including enhanced audience reach and quality, a coherent content pipeline, diversified revenue, and improved mandate delivery. Feedback loops such as dashboards, structured reviews, and continuous performance monitoring reinforce desired behaviors and enable timely adjustments (Office of the Auditor-General, 2023; Ministry of Finance, 2023).

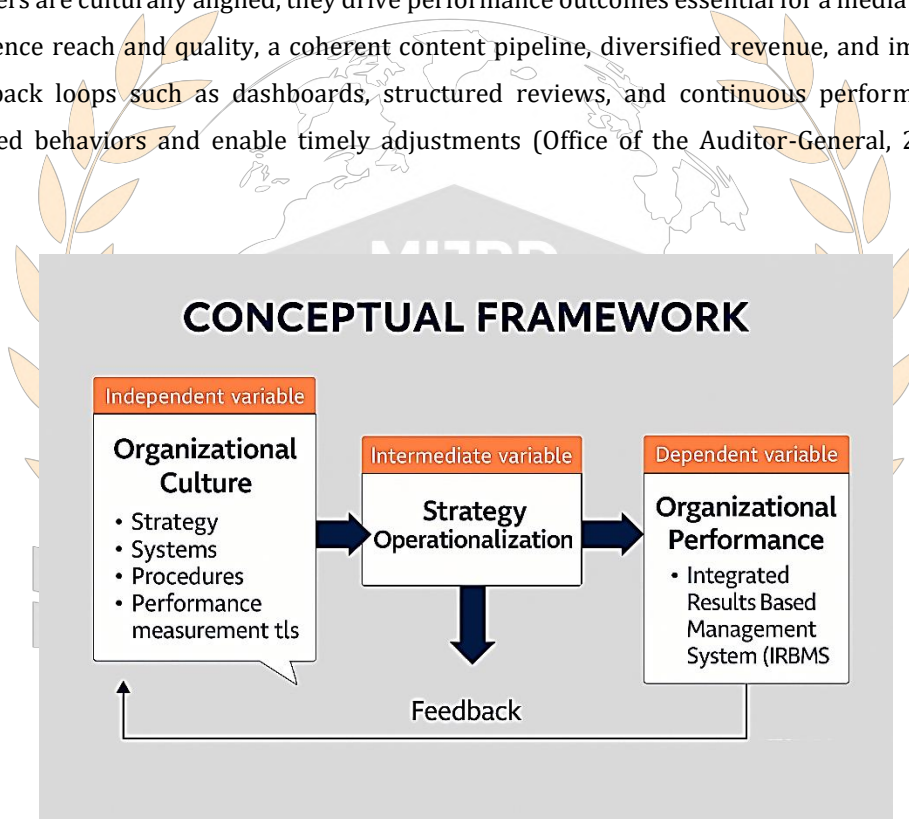


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Linking Culture, Operational Levers, and Performance

#### 5. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative experiential approach as its guiding framework. The methods used include:

**Secondary data analysis:** Drawing on policy reports, audience surveys, and scholarly literature to establish a broad evidence base.



**Industry experience:** Incorporating lived insights accumulated over time within the sector to capture practical realities.

**Practitioner perspectives:** Synthesizing reflections from managers, practitioners, and observers to highlight operational and cultural dynamics.

Together, these methods illustrate how cultural traits have shaped execution across the sector, weaving theoretical understanding with applied industry knowledge.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Experiential evidence across Zimbabwe's media industry reveals recurring cultural dynamics that have shaped reform implementation and organizational performance.

### ***Compliance vs. Execution***

Many organizations treated Integrated Results-Based Management (IRBM) and Results-Based Budgeting (RBB) reforms as bureaucratic obligations rather than strategic alignment tools. This compliance-driven orientation fostered accountability gaps and diluted performance outcomes (Office of the Auditor-General, 2023; Ministry of Finance, 2023). Similar findings in African public sector reforms highlight that when reforms are perceived as externally imposed, they fail to embed into organizational culture (CITEZW, 2025).

### ***Siloed Communication***

Industry veterans recount how editorial, commercial, and technical units often operated in isolation, undermining cross-functional execution. This mirrors global findings that siloed cultures weaken responsiveness and innovation (Ojogiwa & Qwabe, 2023; MISA Zimbabwe, 2025). Comparative studies in media organizations elsewhere confirm that siloed structures reduce adaptability in fast-changing environments (Singh et al., 2021).

### ***Resistance to Data-Driven Decision-Making***

Despite the availability of audience surveys such as the Zimbabwe All Media and Products Survey (ZAMPS), many organizations failed to embed analytics into daily routines. Practitioners attribute this to cultural resistance to transparency and fear of accountability (Pindula, 2024; Gemnation, 2024).

This reluctance reflects broader critiques of ZAMPS' credibility, which further discouraged adoption of evidence-based practices.

### ***Adaptive Success Stories***

Community radio stations and digital-first entrants demonstrated how cultures of involvement and adaptability fostered innovation. By embedding collaborative routines and mission clarity, these organizations achieved stronger audience engagement and sustainability (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2024; ZimNow, 2025; ZACRAS, 2026). Their success illustrates how participatory cultures can overcome structural limitations and resource constraints.

### ***Leadership and Cultural Shaping***

Leadership plays a decisive role in shaping organizational culture. Where leaders articulated non-negotiable execution behaviors such as collaboration and accountability, organizations were better able to operationalize strategy (Petrová & Špatenka, 2022; Allied Business Academies, 2021). Conversely, weak or inconsistent leadership reinforced compliance-driven and siloed practices, echoing global findings that leadership is pivotal in navigating digital transformation and maintaining journalistic integrity (Springer, 2021).

### ***Synthesis***

Taken together, these dynamics suggest that culture, more than policy design, determines reform success in Zimbabwe's media industry. Compliance-driven attitudes, siloed structures, and resistance to analytics undermine reforms, while adaptive cultures and strong leadership enable innovation and sustainability. This highlights the need for reform strategies that explicitly address cultural transformation alongside technical implementation.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Translate the corporate strategy into documented platform-specific operations strategies (television, radio, and digital), supported by quarterly functional plans outlining content pipelines, scheduling, distribution processes, and commercial activities. Strategy execution improves when high-level plans are converted into disciplined routines (Poulose, 2024; Gibson, 2023).
- 2) Cascade IRBM by assigning every role managerial and non-managerial SMART KPIs derived from programme and portfolio goals in public sector institutions. Standardize performance contracts and eliminate generic templates that lack measurable indicators. IRBM and RBB achieve impact when KPIs are consistently cascaded and embedded in daily decisions (Ministry of Finance, 2023; Office of the Auditor-General, 2023).
- 3) Institutionalize cross-functional 'content-to-cash' routines, including weekly planning across editorial, marketing, and sales; daily stand-ups during flagship campaigns; and formal post-mortems analyzing audience and revenue results. Cross-functional collaboration improves alignment and responsiveness to performance data (Ojogiwa and Qwabe, 2023; Abane et al., 2022).
- 4) Deploy integrated dashboards surfacing programme-level reach, content quality indicators, and monetization performance, combining ZAMPS and first-party analytics. Data visibility enables learning and real-time course correction (Becerra Castro et al., 2024; MISA, 2023).
- 5) Shape culture deliberately by articulating non-negotiable execution behaviors (data-informed decision-making, shared ownership, timely feedback, and collaborative problem-solving) and embedding them into onboarding, reviews, recognition, and promotion criteria. Cultural traits such as mission clarity, involvement, adaptability, and consistency are associated with performance gains when embedded into routines and incentives (Petrová and Špatenka, 2022; Abane et al., 2022).



## 8. CONCLUSION

The study reinforces a central insight in contemporary organizational research: culture is the execution system. Norms related to accountability, collaboration, adaptability, and data-driven decision-making determine whether strategic plans translate into results or remain aspirational documents (Bogale and Debela, 2024; Becerra Castro et al., 2024). Organizational Performance for the media industry in Zimbabwe will be shaped not only by the quality of strategy but by the degree to which cultural norms are embedded within operations strategy, IRBM-aligned planning, and continuous feedback mechanisms.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Abane, J. A., Adamtey, R., & Ayim, V. O. (2022). Does organizational culture influence employee productivity? *Future Business Journal*.
- [2] Barends, E., & Rousseau, D. (2022). Organisational culture and performance: An evidence review. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).
- [3] Becerra Castro, M. A., Becerra, A. P., Condom Bosch, J. L., & Soriano Soriano, G. (2024). Impact of organizational culture on the effective implementation of strategic plans: A systematic review. *International Journal of Organizations*.
- [4] Bogale, A. T., & Debela, K. L. (2024). Organizational culture: A systematic review. *Cogent Business & Management*.
- [5] Cahya, & Firdaus. (2023). Organizational culture and performance; Diagnostic insights using the Denison model. *International Journal of Management Studies*, 30(2), pp.45–59.
- [6] Cameron, K. (2022). *Competing Values Leadership* (3rd ed.). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- [7] Donnelly, R., et al. (2020). Management learning: Extending the boundaries. *Management Learning*, 51(1), pp.9–30.
- [8] Felska, A. (2023). The Competing Values Framework explained. *Want to Work There*.
- [9] Gibson, K. (2023). 5 reasons strategy execution fails. *Harvard Business School Online*.
- [10] Hogan, S. J., & Coote, L. V. (2023). Organizational culture, innovation, and performance: A test of Schein's model. *Journal of Business Research*, 157, pp.113–126.
- [11] Kokina, & Ostrovska. (2023) The analysis of organizational culture using the Denison model. *European Scientific Journal*, 19(4), pp.112–128.
- [12] Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. (2023). *Results-Based Budgeting: Policy and Technical Guidelines*. Government of Zimbabwe.
- [13] MISA Zimbabwe. (2023). *Zimbabwe Media Audience Survey 2023*. Media Institute of Southern Africa.
- [14] Mtongi, T. (2020). Diagnosing organizational culture using the Competing Values Framework. *Journal of Public Administration*, 55(3), pp.410–425.
- [15] Office of the Auditor-General. (2023). *Report on State-Owned Enterprises and Parastatals (FY2022)*. Government of Zimbabwe.



- [16] Ojogiwa, O. T., and Qwabe, B. R. (2023). The practicability of the Competing Values Framework as a stride towards public service delivery improvement in the health sector. *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 69E, 101–117.
- [17] Petrová, K., & Špatenka, J. (2022). The Denison Organizational Culture Survey (DOCS): Empirical review of a digital organizational culture's effectiveness. *AD ALTA: Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 12(2).

