Impact of Aligning Values on Healthcare Performance:
A Case of New Zealand’s District Health Boards

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BACKGROUND

- Despite a significant amount of health spending and numerous health reforms, New Zealand’s health outcomes are still deemed unsatisfactory.
- Organisational culture has long been regarded as an important factor in organisational performance improvement.
  - Mannion et al. (2010) suggest that future healthcare research should consider further the governance limitations of organisational culture.
- Organisational culture is a concept missing from New Zealand healthcare policy (Scahill, 2012, p. 79).

AIM

To investigate how aligned values between New Zealand’s District Health Board’s (DHB) Board members and their senior executives impact on the performance of healthcare.

METHODS

- Quantitative approach
  - Postal questionnaires
    - Nine selected DHBs’ Board members and senior executives;
    - Selected based on their performance on the New Zealand Ministry of Health’s ‘shorter stays in Emergency Departments’ target.
  - Questionnaires were developed through utilising the modified versions of Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) and Mannion et al.’s (2008) eighteen aspects of organisational culture.
  - 38.3% response rate
    - 84 completed questionnaires
    - 4 returned with reasons for non-participation

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REFERENCES

Scahill, S. L. (2012). 'The way things are around here': Organisational culture is a concept missing from New Zealand healthcare policy, development, implementation, and research. The New Zealand Medical Journal, 125(1348), 79-89.

RESULTS

- Most of the selected DHBs have higher hierarchical and rational scores as compared to Ovseiko and Buchan’s (2012) preferred culture.
- Surprisingly, one higher performing DHB (DHB H) and one lower performing DHB (DHB D) are close to aligning their organisational culture profile to the preferred organisational culture profile.
- There is a mismatch and misalignment of perceived aligned values within:
  - The DHB Board Chairs and Board members
  - Between the CEOs and the senior executives
  - Board Chair and CEOs share the same perception about Support for Innovation, while Board members and the rest of the senior executives perceive Safety Awareness and Public Service Ethos to be more important.

CONCLUSIONS

- DHBs could consider de-emphasising hierarchical & rational cultures, while promoting ‘clan’ & ‘developmental’ cultures in their organisations.
- The former two cultures could hinder performance improvement.
- The misalignment of values could have an adverse effect on DHB performance, particularly if values, such as safety awareness, are not properly aligned between the Board and its senior executives.
- Clear communications of expectations and values are required.
  - Values could be properly aligned for performance improvement.

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