



Reducing power distance cultural practice and bureaucratic management practice to enhance the basic psychological need satisfaction: The educational context

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine the effects of power distance organizational culture and bureaucratic management practices on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. To deepen the study's theoretical framework, the literature was reviewed. The study used a descriptive assessment and correlational research design. The study population comprised all DWCL employees. Questionnaires were used to gather the data. The study found that power distance culture and bureaucratic management were moderate, while basic psychological need satisfaction was high. However, the correlation analysis suggests a significant negative correlation between power distance culture and basic psychological need satisfaction. In other words, as power distance increases, employees' autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs tend to decrease. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted. This finding implies that a high-power distance culture tends to lower the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. There was no correlation between bureaucratic management and the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, and therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

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Introduction

Management is a dynamic, complex, flexible, and rational process, suggesting that no single formula can be applied universally. Management needs to be flexible because the organizational environment is dynamic and complex, and therefore, management practices need to adjust to different environments (Burlea & Mahon, 2013). Managing an organization requires careful analysis of organizational practices that affect individual behavior and organizational performance (Einhorn et al., 2023). To understand why things work in one place and why they do not work in other places requires a manager to investigate the reasons, and thus a study is needed to identify the underlying causes of those problems. There is no quick fix or easy solution to organizational problems. The places where businesses operate play an important role in how they are run. The same is true with organizations. Each organization has a unique identity shaped by its culture. Thus, contextualization of management suggests that a manager needs to understand the culture of the place (Rosemann et al., 2008).

Positive/good and negative/bad organizational culture bring different consequences. Studies have indicated that positive organizational culture affects overall organizational performance and various performance dimensions. For example, Nneji and Asikhia (2021), Einhorn et al. (2023), Hardiyono et al. (2017), and Bogale and Bebola (2024) have suggested that positive organizational culture positively affects corporate performance. It positively affects employees' productivity (Abane et al., 2022), organizational commitment (Sarhan et al., 2019), and positive emotions and learning (Nguyen et al., 2023). The same holds for negative culture, which deteriorates organizational performance (Abane et al., 2022; Mian et al., 2008). It specifically affects employees' well-being negatively (Klajko et al., 2019), organizational resilience (Fietz et al., 2021), and organizational functioning and suffering of employees (Assens-Serra & Boada – Cuerva, 2021).

Reviewing the existing literature on the effects of organizational culture, specifically power distance and bureaucratic culture, on the basic psychological needs suggests that no studies have been conducted locally or internationally. Given its significant effect on organizational functioning, it is necessary not to ignore it but to conduct an investigation to determine and analyze its contribution to employees' well-being, particularly in terms of satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The two cultures, power distance, and bureaucracy are similar in practice and might lead to the same or different consequences for employees' need satisfaction. Thus, the current study aims to examine the effects of power-distance and bureaucratic organizational culture on employees' satisfaction of basic psychological needs.

The study is divided into several sections. The first is the introduction, which explains the rationale or background of the study. The second is the literature review, which examines the existing literature on the current topic. The third is the research methodology. The fourth is the data presentation and analysis, and lastly (the fifth) is the discussion and conclusion.

Literature review

Power Distance Organizational Culture

Culture has played an important role in shaping the human mind and behavior (Salazar, 2022). This concept is captured well in the definition of culture by Tylor (1871, p.1) as he viewed cultures as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society. His definition considers culture as the mental capabilities (thoughts) and behaviors that are learned and shared by members of society. Since Tylor (1871), many sociologists have developed their own definitions of culture. Hofstede (1980) simplified the definition of culture as purely mental capabilities, defining it as the programming of the human mind that distinguishes one group of people from another. Such a definition considers culture as a belief and value system (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2021; Stephenson, 2023). In a similar vein, Schein

(1985) defined it as a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group invents, discovers, and develops as it learns. The two definitions (Hofstede and Schein) are similar in that they consider culture intangible and situated in the mind. This definition is somewhat problematic because it does not capture measurable behavioral dimensions of culture, such as behavioral norms (Murthy & Page, 2023). Such a missing dimension is captured by the definition offered by Avruch (1998, p. 4) as he viewed culture as “an evolved constituent of human cognition and social action,” and the same is pointed out by Davis (2020) that culture is an integrated pattern of human behavior which includes thoughts, communications, and actions. Thus, culture is not only about abstract belief systems and values but also about behaviors. Culture, which cannot be seen and lies in the human mind, can be seen through the social norms of behavior that differentiate one society from another. It is only through the behavior that a culture can be measured (Kalwar et al., 2013)

Hofstede (1980) studied the organizational culture of different organizations across countries and how their culture affects the values of their members and how those values influence their behavior. He conducted the study from 1968- 1972 at IBM companies in 50 different national branches (Zemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023) to determine the cross-cultural differences in organizational culture and Hofstede (1980) originally identified four dimensions of organizational culture and these are individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance (the strength of social hierarchy), masculinity-femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation). These cultures affected the values and the behavior of employees in every organization across the countries (Ylimaki & Brunderman, 2021). Hofstede (2011) then revised his original four dimensions into six cross-cultural dimensions of organizational culture, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, long/short-term orientation, and indulgence/restraint (Zemojtel-Piotrowska & Piotrowski, 2023). Hofstede (1985, p.34) defines power distance as “the extent to which the members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Those who live in a power-distance culture accept the inequality between those in power and those not. There is a gap between those who are in a position, those who are not, and those at the lowest level. According to Dai et al. (2022), power distance culture significantly affects the relationship between subordinates and superiors, as evidenced by fear of authority and communication gaps (Richard et al., 2022). Consequently, Khaatri (2009) noted that employees in a power distance culture are unwilling to participate in decision-making because they are content to have their managers make decisions. As a result, employees are not empowered (Kwan et al., 2024), which affects their organizational commitment (Brockner et al., 2001). Those living in low power distance respect equality, and there is no gap between those in a position and their subordinates (Alper, 2019). It supports open relationships and communication between managers and employees and encourages them to contribute ideas in decision-making (Fietz et al., 2021).

Adamovic (2023) measures power distance organizational culture by identifying several dimensions, namely power itself, conflict with authority figures, hierarchy, prestige, and social distance. These dimensions explain the nature of the work environment relationship, which is structured and decision-making power that is centered on the power holder. For the sake of the current study and based on the examination of the scale's content, the current author does not see the relevance of dividing power distance into five dimensions and thus summarizes them into two: decision-making power and work relationship.

Bureaucratic management

Bureaucratic management practices originated from Weber (1966), a German sociologist, philosopher, jurist, and political economist. As a sociologist, jurist, and political economist, he introduced the concept of bureaucracy to administer the government. He considered bureaucracy the most efficient and rational way to manage large organizations, such as the government, through a systematic process and organizational structure to maintain order (Mulder, 2017). By following the established rules, processes, procedures, and the hierarchy of command,

efficiency can be attained, and favouritism or nepotism can be avoided (Swedberg & Agewal, 2005). In short, bureaucratic management relies heavily on rules and procedures to ensure efficiency (CEoPedia, 2019; Ebane & Asamoah, 2024), and these rules and procedures are often not changed or revised. In its development, bureaucracy is not only applied to manage public organizations but also to any large private organization (Howard, 2012). Therefore, the modern definition of bureaucracy no longer refers to government organizations alone but to any form of organization. Nowadays, it simply means the rationalization of an organization, marked by structure, formalized functions, and impersonality in human relations (Aron, 1994; Giddens, 1997, cited by Serpa & Ferreira, 2019).

Barnet and Finnemore (2004) have classified modern bureaucracy into four categories: hierarchy, continuity, impersonality, and expertise. However, drawing on the definition of bureaucracy, Reynolds (2018) expanded its characteristics and identified six. *The first is a formal hierarchical authority.* A bureaucratic organization is characterized by a hierarchical management structure, from top management down to lower managers and employees (Green, 2013). Reports and communication follow the line, and therefore, one cannot go directly to the top, and the top cannot go directly to the lower level (Haveman & Kluttz, 2016). The same is true with the communication channel; it goes through the layers. If employees encounter problems that their immediate superior cannot resolve, they must report them to their immediate superior before going up. The decisions are not to be made by those knowledgeable about the situation, such as front-line staff, but by top management, which is far removed from reality. *The second is that bureaucracy depends on the rules.* Doing a job and solving problems should follow the established rules and procedures. Managers or employees are not free to do what they want, according to what they know (Olejniczak, 2018; Green, 2013). They can only do things within the rules of engagement. There are many dos and don'ts, and each employee receives a job description. *The third is the division of labour.* One is confined to a job based on one's skills and specialization, and the other is assigned a job description (Erkoc, 2023; Zhao & Han, 2022). He/she is not concerned with other parts of the organization if it is not within their territory. *Fourth is performance-based promotion.* Promotion or advancement is based on performance. Each manager and individual employee are assigned an objective to achieve, and salaries, benefits, and promotions are based on the attainment of that pre-specified objective (Gavis et al., 2000). *The fifth is efficiency.* One has to accomplish the assigned objectives with little time and effort. To increase efficiency, the organization must re-evaluate its written rules and guidelines to ensure effectiveness (Erkoc, 2023; Haveman & Kluttz, 2016). *The Sixth is impersonality.* There is nothing personal in the bureaucratic organization because what matters is achieving objectives through efficiency (Erkoc, 2023). Rules, regulations, and the structure of decision-making are the tools to achieve them. The organization does not care about employees' personal situations or needs.

Based on what we have presented, we accept that, on the one hand, bureaucratic management can be praised for its efficiency, but, on the other hand, it has side effects. Hammel and Zanini (2017) have pointed out its weaknesses for several reasons, including *bloating*. It creates more layers, which means more managers, and more managers mean higher costs and reduced efficiency. *The second is friction.* It creates too much work and processes that can delay decision-making. Consequently, the organization is unresponsive to the dynamics of the external environment. Hammel and Zanini (2017) and Johnson (1979) argued that it wastes much time and too much paperwork, and neglects opportunities. *The third is insularity.* Managers spend so much time discussing or solving internal problems that they fail to respond to emerging external trends and miss opportunities to improve service to customers (Terjesen, 2022). Terjesen (2022) even accused bureaucracy of being the culprit in the decline of innovative and creative spirit in universities. *The fourth is disempowerment.* Employees are not given the freedom and autonomy to act on their own, which often leads to conflict between management and employees (Monteiro & Adler, 2022). The majority of employees are powerless to improve the working environment because they cannot participate in decision-making to

change it as they wish (Monteiro & Adler, 2022). They feel they are not valued, and this feeling leads them not to take responsibility for issues affecting the organization. Weber himself had seen the negative consequences of the bureaucratic management style (Matipa, 2023). He had seen that implementing bureaucratic management could lead to a loss of human freedom, in which people no longer exercise their autonomy in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, but only follow the rules and job descriptions given to them. Ritzer (2004) and Haveman and Kluttz (2016) criticized that practicing bureaucracy could mean treating a human being as an impersonal "iron cage" of rule-based, rational control. *The fifth is risk aversion*. Because of a lack of autonomy and freedom, employees learn not to take risks (Leyden & Link, 1993). They tend to follow the rules and procedures prescribed by administrators out of fear of failure. They prefer to stay on the safe route, and consequently, they tend to repeat the same thing over and over because the result is predictable. Employees are afraid to explore new experiments and discover new ways of doing things, and thus innovation is dead (Mori, 2017). *The Sixth is inertia*. Lack of interest in taking risks leads employees not to respond to change. Employees do not want to initiate change or to be changed because they believe that change starts at the top (Jovita & Nurmandi, 2018). As a result of this type of management, the organization cannot respond to opportunities in the external environment. *The seventh is politics*. Hammel and Zanini (2017) pointed out that bureaucratic organization is preoccupied with politics. Too much energy is wasted to gain power and influence (Favero, 2018). Everybody is trying to gain power and influence, which, in turn, encourages politicking and creates enemies within the same organization. It also creates an environment of saving face in which people do not want to take the blame and always assign it to others. Another side effect is that promotion is given not based on merit but on political connections (Rahman, 2018).

As a result of bureaucratic management, a bureaucratic environment is created. Langer et.al. (2017) pointed out that models of administration shape the work environment. A bureaucratic environment is created by organizational policies and practices that emphasize following the rules and procedures. Within this environment, organizational members lack the flexibility to exercise judgment in performing their work and solving work-related problems. In other words, employees have little autonomy (Wright & Davis, 2003). Most of the time, employees are occupied with paperwork, and work becomes routine because of excessive, duplicative, and unnecessary procedures (Bozeman & Feeney, 2011).

Self-determination theory and basic psychological need satisfaction

Self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000) opens the way to investigating the basic psychological needs of satisfaction. There have been efforts to move away from treating motivation as a single concept and to classify it into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as in White (1959) and Harter (1978), as cited by Schunk and Zigarmi (2015). White (1959) defined intrinsic motivation as an individual's desire to participate in an activity for the joy of learning, whereas extrinsic motivation is participation for external rewards such as praise. Harter (1978) largely adopts White's ideas about motivation, but she argued that the effects of failure are an important contributor to motivation.

Other efforts to classify motivation into categories include Deci (1971, 1975) and Deci and Ryan (1985). Ryan and Deci (1985, 2000) classified motivation as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000), an individual's behavior may be motivated by external demands or forces, or it may come from within the individual themselves. The previous studies by Deci and Ryan (1971, 1975, 1985) led to the formulation of the Self-Determination Theory. It is a macro theory or broader theory of human motivation and personality that concerns people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs. The arena of Self-Determination Theory is the investigation of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs, which underpin their self-motivation and personality integration. Under Self-Determination theory, Deci and Ryan (2000) identified three basic psychological needs: autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1968), relatedness (Baumeister & Leary,

1995), and competence (Harter, 1978). These three needs are innate, intrinsic motivational needs and are considered important in promoting the optimal functioning of natural tendencies toward growth and integration. Decy and Ryan (2000) argued that social and cultural factors can facilitate or undermine people's sense of volition and initiative, thereby affecting well-being and quality of life. Regarding the context in which intrinsic needs are cultivated, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) examines how social contexts affect intrinsic motivation and interest, and how external control impacts them. In relation to optimal functioning and well-being, basic psychological need theory (BPNT) argues that psychological well-being and optimal functioning are predicated on autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These three needs are essential, and therefore a supportive environment for their growth is necessary, because if any of these needs is thwarted or unsupported, there will be a distinct functional cost.

Autonomy

Webster defines autonomy as “the quality or state of being self-governing; especially: the right of self-government” or “self-directing freedom and especially moral independence. Based on this definition, it is clear that autonomy is considered a psychological need that everyone must actualize. It is the capacity to act according to the self-determined principle (Moreno, 2013). Legault (2016) argued that autonomy is a critical psychological need. It denotes the experience of volition and self-direction in thoughts, feelings, and actions (Legault, 2016). It is the freedom to control one's life and self, and it is a human dignity (Linhares & Atienza, 2022). The locus of control is the person himself/herself, who can control the outcome of his/her situation and make choices according to his/her own free will (Lickerman, 2012). Collier (n.d) argued that autonomy is the foundation of functionality, intentionality, and meaning. It is a self-organizing process (Holzer et al., 20008; Ryan et al., 1997). Piaget (1965) argues that autonomy is an inner-directed behavior resulting from free decision. It is intrinsic motivation; therefore, the rules are self-chosen. One chooses which rules to follow and therefore determines one's own behavior. The base of the rules is his/her own acceptance and understanding (Sugarman, 1990).

Cooper (2016) claimed that the key to happiness at work is not money but autonomy, where employees can make decisions on their own. Employees have the choice to act on their own volition, and they are the source of their own actions (Legault, 2016; Steckermeier, 2021). There is a sense of personal endorsement of their goals and actions. The more autonomous the employees are, the more satisfied they become and less likely to transfer to find another job (Kaushal, 2021; Zychova et al., 2023). A workplace that supports autonomy may help employees advance in their work by motivating them to work harder and smarter and, consequently, stay loyal to the company (Legault, 2016). Ryan (1995) noted that autonomy is a source of motivation and the lack of it is demotivating. Therefore, it must be nurtured by fostering autonomy. Studies have suggested a significant association between autonomy and job satisfaction. The workplace that supports autonomy leads to higher job satisfaction and productivity (Dickinson, 1995; Legault, 2016)

Relatedness

Webster's dictionary defines relatedness as “having close harmonic connection. The same definition is given by the Free Dictionary that relatedness is a “close harmonic connection”. Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines it as “the fact of being connected with something/somebody in some way”. “It is a sense of relatedness and interdependence of life”. However, in Psychology Dictionary, relatedness is defined as “a reciprocity of factors like trust and empathy between two or more persons in a relationship”. All these definitions refer to social relatedness, which means interpersonal intimacy, empathy, and shared subjectivity.

Relatedness is an inner need of each human being to care about and be cared about by others (Legault, 2017; Vansteenkiste, 2020). It is a natural and psychological need to be connected without ulterior motives. It has

something to do with the development and maintenance of close personal relationship such as friends, partners, or groups (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Such a need is not only universal; it belongs to all people: they want to interact, be connected to, and experience caring for others, and to be cared for by others. Alderfer (1969) argued that it is a social and external esteem. It is necessary to be involved with family, friends, co-workers, and employers. According to the Self-determination theory, relatedness is classified as one of the core innate psychological needs of a person (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is argued that each human being has an innate need to connect with others. Each needs to love and care for others, and to be loved and cared for. The need for relatedness motivates people to engage in mutually enjoyable activities that provide both pleasure and a sense of connectedness and shared experience. Through common activities, a person experiences support from peers, experiences cooperation, and receives mutual rewards (Rigby & Ryan, 2011). Through common activities, a person fulfills their need to relate to others, be listened to, and receive others' attention. This suggests that the work environment must help the relatedness need be met, with employees supporting one another and reducing feelings of isolation (Patterrer et al., 2022). In the relationship motivation theory (RMT) (Knee & Brown, 2023), a sub theory of SDT, some interaction is not only desirable for most people but also essential for well-being because it satisfies the relatedness need of a human being.

Relatedness as a need was already discussed by Alderfer (1969, 1972) to simplify Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Alderfer simplified needs into three types: existence, relatedness, and growth (Niemela & Kim, 2014). Alderfer argued that needs do not develop in an orderly fashion because any desire to fulfill a need can be activated at any point in time without following an order (Furnham, 1994). Existence needs relate to a person's physiological and safety needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, and security, and without these basic needs, people cannot survive. These are the first two steps of the pyramid, which people now use to represent Maslow's theory (Quigley, 2015). Relatedness needs are about a person's interpersonal needs in personal and professional settings. The need includes social and external relationships with friends, family, and co-workers, which fall within the third and fourth ranks of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020). Growth needs are a person's needs for personal development. This need reflects Maslow's internal esteem and self-actualization needs (Legault, 2017). ERG theory of needs is a simplification of Maslow's five needs: physiological, safety, belongingness, recognition/esteem, and self-actualization.

Competence Need

Competence is the innate propensity to develop skill and ability, and to experience the effect or the output of a certain action (Legault, 2017). In each person, there is a desire to meet the optimal challenge, and when that challenge is met, they experience satisfaction. This is essential for psychological growth and well-being (Phan et al., 2017; Vittersø, 2014; Horikoshi, 2023). This need does not grow on its own. Developing such a need depends on the social and cultural environment that fosters competence. Criticism from management and peers can undermine the satisfaction of competence needs. Deci (1971) found that giving people unexpected positive feedback on a task increases their intrinsic motivation to do it and satisfies their sense of competence. In fact, giving positive feedback on a task increased people's intrinsic motivation and decreased their extrinsic motivation (Legault, 2020). Giving negative feedback will hamper the fulfillment of the intrinsic motivation and hinder the realization of the competence need (Legault, 2020). Vallerand and Reid (1984) noted that negative feedback has the opposite effect. It discourages people from developing their competence needs.

Competence is one of the three basic psychological needs that are innate in each human being. People have a need that motivates them to develop mastery over tasks important to them (Sagor, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2023). Legault (2017) argues that the desire to satisfy competence needs motivates people to persist, maintain effort, and exercise self-determination to continue improving their skills and abilities. This is shown through the behavior of people who never

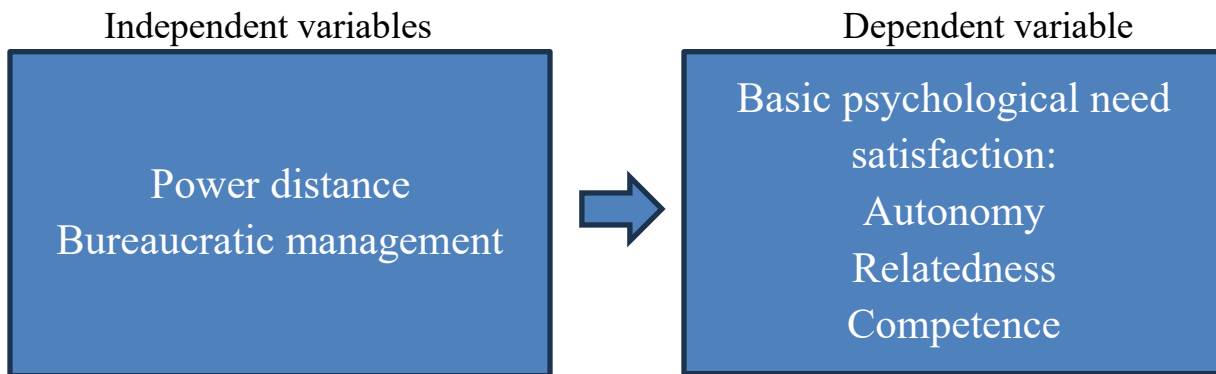
surrender to external criticism when they are determined to achieve something. A study found that satisfying autonomy and competence needs will improve engagement, intrinsic motivation, low proneness to negative affect, and achievement (Jang et al., 2009).

Psychological need frustration

In self-determination theory (SDT), Ryan and Deci (2000) argued that the satisfaction of these psychological needs (relatedness, autonomy, and competence) is essential for human optimal functioning and well-being. However, when these needs are frustrated or not satisfied/fulfilled, it can result in demotivation (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013). All humans are equipped with those innate psychological tendencies, and when these inner tendencies are realized, people are happy. The satisfaction of the three needs is essential for the integration process of extrinsic motivation and promotes well-being. On the contrary, when these needs are not met, an individual's growth is hampered, leading to deficiencies and ill-being.

The need for autonomy is a need to control one's own life and self. There is a need to control the outcome of a situation. It is the experience of self-determination, full willingness, and volition when carrying out an activity. This need is frustrated when one lacks control over their decision, direction, and the outcome of a situation due to external pressures (deCharms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1985). While relatedness is the inner desire to interact with, be connected to, and experience caring for others, and to be cared for by others (Ryan, 1995). When this need is not fulfilled or frustrated, the individual experiences isolation and loneliness. Competence involves a sense of mastery, skillfulness, and effectiveness, as well as the ability to achieve desired outcomes (Deci, 1975; Ryan, 1995). The frustration of the need can lead one to feel incompetent and doubtful of one's self-efficacy.

Conceptual framework



Source: Hofstede (1980), Langer, et al. (2017), Ryan and Deci (2000)

Figure 1: The conceptual framework explains the objective of the study. It shows that power distance and bureaucratic management can affect employees' basic psychological needs.

Statement of the problems

The study aims to examine the impact of power distance, organizational culture, and bureaucratic management practices on employees' basic psychological needs. It specifically answers the following questions:

1. What is the power distance organizational culture of the institution in terms of:
 - a. Decision-making
 - b. Work relationship

2. What are the bureaucratic management practices of the institution?

3. What are the basic psychological needs of the employees in terms of
 - a. Autonomy
 - b. Relatedness
 - c. Competency
4. Is there a relationship between power distance organizational culture and basic psychological needs satisfaction?
5. Is there a relationship between bureaucratic management practice and basic psychological needs satisfaction?

Hypothesis

Organizational culture and management practices can positively or negatively affect performance. Studies have suggested that positive organizational culture affects employees' productivity and performance (Niswaty et al., 2021; Abane et al., 2022), and the same is true for bureaucratic management practices, which can influence employees' organizational commitment (Suzuki & Hur, 2019). The current study also hypothesizes that power distance organizational culture and bureaucratic management practices can affect employees' satisfaction of basic psychological needs.

Scope and delimitation of the study

The current study limits its investigation to one dimension of organizational culture presented by Hofstede (1980), namely power distance and bureaucratic management practices, and their effects on the basic psychological needs of autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Research methodology

To carry out the study, an appropriate research methodology is used. Therefore, this part will discuss the research design, data-gathering instruments, population, study locale, data-gathering procedures, and statistical treatment of data.

Research design

Since the study is quantitative research, it used descriptive assessment and a correlational research design. The nature of a descriptive study is to describe what is found in the data collected through questionnaires. It involves the description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered. It is a fact-finding with adequate interpretation. It assesses, determines, and reports the way things are. In other words, it describes the data collected on the research sample, describing "what is" about the data gathered (Ariola, 2006).

In line with the current study, descriptive assessment and correlational methods were deployed. The study determines the levels of power distance, organizational culture, bureaucratic management practices, and psychological need satisfaction, and examines their correlations.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted at Divine Word College of Laoag, in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

Population

The study population comprised all employees, teaching and non-teaching, of Divine Word College of Laoag. Since the total number of employees is limited, total enumeration is the study's sampling design.

Data gathering instruments

The study utilized questionnaires. The questionnaires were adapted from the power distance scale by Adamovic (2023) and the basic psychological need satisfaction and frustration scale by Chen (2015) to assess need satisfaction and frustration at work. While questionnaires and bureaucratic management practices were adapted from Langer et al. (2017), which was adopted by Abun (2021).

Data gathering procedures

In the process of data gathering, the researcher sent letters to the President of the College, requesting permission to distribute his questionnaires within the college. The researcher personally met with the Presidents and employees and asked them to complete the questionnaires.

The retrieval of questionnaires was arranged by the President's representative and the researcher, with the help of the college's employees and faculty.

Statistical treatment of data

In line with the study's descriptive research design, inferential statistics are used. The weighted mean and Pearson r will be used to measure the level of power distance culture and bureaucratic management practices, and to assess the correlation between power distance culture and bureaucratic management practices, and between power distance culture and basic psychological need satisfaction.

The following ranges of values with their descriptive interpretation will be used:

Statistical Range	Descriptive Interpretation
4.21-5.00	<i>Strongly agree/ very High/Very satisfied (SA/VH/VS)</i>
3.41-4.20	<i>Agree/High/Satisfied (A/H/S)</i>
2.61-3.40	<i>Somewhat agree/Moderate/Somewhat satisfied (SWA/M/SWS)</i>
1.81-2.60	<i>Disagree/Low/Dissatisfied (D/L/D)</i>
1.00-1.80	<i>Strongly disagree/very low/very dissatisfied (SD/VL/VD)</i>

Data presentation and analysis

1. ***What is the power distance organizational culture of the institution in terms of:***
 - a. ***Decision-making***
 - b. ***Work relationship***

Indicator	Mean	DI
Decision-making		
Managers/administrators make most decisions without consulting subordinates	3.19	SWA/M/SWS
Managers/administrators seldom ask for the opinions of employees	3.14	SWA/M/SWS
Employees should not disagree with management decisions	2.75	SWA/M/SWS

Managers/administrators use authority and power when making decisions	3.13	SWA/M/SWS
Employees should not disagree with management decisions	2.86	SWA/M/SWS
Composite Mean	3.01	SWA/M/SWS
Work relationship		
Lower-level employees cannot go directly to the top management when solving problems	3.28	SWA/M/SWS
Distinct reporting relationships are clearly shown in the organizational structure	3.46	A/H/S
All employees are reminded to follow the chain of command	3.58	A/H/S
There is a social distance between employees and those who are in a position	3.03	SWA/M/SWS
Employees are reluctant to discuss their problems with their superiors.	3.34	SWA/M/SWS
Composite Mean	3.34	SWA/M/SWS
Overall Mean	3.18	SWA/M/SWS

Source: Hofstede (1980)

Legend:

- 4.21-5.00 *Strongly agree/ very High/Very satisfied (SA/VH/VS)*
- 3.41-4.20 *Agree/High/Satisfied (A/H/S)*
- 2.61-3.40 *Somewhat agree/Moderate/Somewhat satisfied (SWA/M/SWS)*
- 1.81-2.60 *Disagree/Low/Dissatisfied (D/L/D)*
- 1.00-1.80 *Strongly disagree/very low/very dissatisfied (SD/VL/VD)*

Based on the data in the table, the institution's power distance organizational culture has an overall mean rating of 3.18, which is considered moderate (somewhat agree). It suggests that the institution's power distance organizational culture is moderate rather than very high or very low. Even when the dimensions are considered separately, both were rated at the same level, moderate. Regarding the decision-making process, the raters somewhat agreed that most decisions are made by administrators and that they seldom consult employees. There is little room for expressing disagreement with the higher-ups. Employees must consult their superiors when making decisions, and their superiors' opinions matter. These practices are consistent with the nature of the established model of power-distant culture, which is marked by three features: top-down decisions, respect for hierarchy, and centralized authority (Shah et al, 2015; Hofstede, 2011; Daniels & Greguras, 2014). Regarding the work relationship, employees also somewhat agreed that when there is a problem, they cannot go directly to top management but must follow the process at the lower level. Employees are required to follow the chain of command and the reporting line. Such a distance apparently discourages employees from discussing their issues with their superiors. These practices are consistent with the characteristics of organizations that are operating within power distant culture (Khatri, 2009; Adamovic, 2023)

Problem 2: What are the bureaucratic management practices of the institution?

Table 2: Bureaucratic practices

Indicator	Mean	DI
Employees do the same job, in the same way, every day	3.33	SWA/M/SWS
Employees are not allowed to do things on their own	2.90	SWA/M/SWS
There can be little action taken until a supervisor approves a decision	3.19	SWA/M/SWS
Even small matters have to be referred to someone higher up for a final answer	3.41	A/H/S
In general, a person who wants to make their own decisions would be quickly discouraged in this agency	3.05	SWA/M/SWS
There are so many rules and policies to be followed	3.32	SWA/M/SWS

Decisions are always delayed because they have to go through several processes and procedures	3.42	A/H/S
Lower-level managers are not free to make decisions	2.94	A/H/S
People are afraid to violate the policies because it means punishment	3.37	SWA/M/SWS
Ordinary employees have no voice in decision-making	3.14	SWA/M/SWS
Employees are afraid to take the risk of	3.37	SWA/M/SWS
Overall Mean	3.22	SWA/M/SWS

Source: *Langer, et al. (2017)*

As indicated by the table data, the institution's bureaucratic management practices received an overall mean rating of 3.22, which is “somewhat agree” or “moderate”. It implies that, overall, the institution's bureaucratic practices are moderate rather than very high or very low. Even if the indicators are taken separately, the employees somewhat agreed that they are always doing the same thing every day because they are not allowed to do things on their own. Employees are required to follow the rules and their job descriptions, and if they encounter any problems, they must refer them to their superiors. These management practices are consistent with the principles of bureaucratic management (Ullah, 2021; Tadesse Bogale & Debela, 2024; Lunenburg, 2012).

Problem 3: What are the basic psychological needs of the employees in terms of

- a. *Autonomy*
- b. *Relatedness*
- c. *Competency*

Table 3: Basic psychological needs

Indicator	Mean	DI
Autonomy		
At work, I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things I undertake.	3.74	A/H/S
I feel that my decisions at my job reflect what I really want	3.85	A/H/S
I feel my choices at work express who I really am.	3.99	A/H/S
I feel I have been doing what really interests me in my job	4.03	A/H/S
Composite Mean	3.90	A/H/S
Relatedness		
I feel that the people I care about at work also care about me	3.86	A/H/S
I feel connected with people who care for me at work and for whom I care at work	3.97	A/H/S
At work, I feel close and connected with other people who are important to me	3.99	A/H/S
I experience a warm feeling with the people I spend time with at work	4.03	A/H/S
Composite Mean	3.96	A/H/S
Competency		
I feel confident that I can do things well in my job	4.13	A/H/S
At work, I feel capable of what I do	4.15	A/H/S
When I am at work, I feel competent to achieve my goals	4.15	A/H/S
In my job, I feel I can complete a difficult task	4.07	A/H/S
Composite Mean	4.13	A/H/S
Overall Mean	4.00	A/H/S

Ryan & Deci (2000)

As shown in the table, employees' basic psychological need satisfaction received an overall mean rating of 4.00, indicating a high level. It suggests that employees' basic psychological needs are satisfied, not very low or moderate. Taken individually, the three dimensions measured by the current study received the same high mean rating. In terms of autonomy, the employees agreed that they have a sense of choice and independence because they can choose to do what matters to them or interests them. Under Self-Determination Theory (SDT), autonomy means allowing people to act independently, at their own choice, without many interventions from an external party (Howard et al., 2025; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Regarding relatedness needs, the employees agreed that they are closely connected at work and acknowledged the existence of a caring relationship. In other words, they are not just close physically and emotionally to each other, but they also care for one another. Under the Self-Determination Theory, the fulfillment of relatedness needs means that people's need for belongingness is met, with acceptance by the group to which they belong. Their innate desire to form a close, meaningful, and secure relationship within the group or communities they belong to (Coxen et al, 2021; Huang et al., 2023). Lastly is the need for competency. The data also suggests that employees feel their need for competence is met to a great extent, indicating they feel confident and capable in what they do, and that they accomplish their work. Under the SDT, competency refers to people's intrinsic need to feel effective, capable, and masterful in their dealings with their environment. It involves the feeling that one can successfully execute challenging tasks and achieve the desired goals (Diab & Green, 2024; Vignati & Crivelli, 2025; Yang & Sun, 2020).

Problem 4: Is there a relationship between power distance organizational culture and satisfaction of basic psychological needs?

Table 4: Correlation between power distance and satisfaction of basic psychological needs

		autonomy	relatedness	competency	Overall Basic psychological needs of employees
Decision-making	Pearson Correlation	-.249**	-.249**	-.361**	-.322**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
Work relationship	Pearson Correlation	-.029	.005	-.161*	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.682	.941	.024	.379
Overall power distance organizational culture of the institution	Pearson Correlation	-.165*	-.149*	-.294**	-.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021	.036	.000	.001

The analysis shows a significantly negative relationship between power distance organizational culture and employees' satisfaction of basic psychological needs. Overall, higher levels of power distance are associated with lower satisfaction of autonomy, relatedness, competence, and overall psychological needs ($r = -0.225, p = .001$).

A closer look at the dimensions indicates that decision-making is the key driver of this relationship, showing strong correlations with competence ($r = -0.361, p < .01$), Overall Needs Satisfaction ($r = -0.322, p < .01$), Autonomy ($r = -0.249, p < .01$), and Relatedness ($r = -0.249, p < .01$). In contrast, the work relationship dimension shows weaker, mostly non-significant correlations, with only a small negative effect on Competence ($r = -0.161, p = .024$). This suggests that power distance practices are the primary factors that undermine employees' psychological need satisfaction.

Problem 5: Is there a relationship between bureaucratic management practice and basic psychological needs satisfaction?

Table 5: Correlation between bureaucratic management and basic psychological need satisfaction

		Bureaucratic management practice
autonomy	Pearson Correlation	.104
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.145
relatedness	Pearson Correlation	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.411
competency	Pearson Correlation	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.641
Overall basic psychological needs of employees	Pearson Correlation	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.501

The analysis indicates no significant relationship between bureaucratic management practices and employees' satisfaction with basic psychological needs. Correlations are weak and non-significant across all dimensions: Autonomy ($r = 0.104$, $p = .145$), Relatedness ($r = 0.059$, $p = .411$), Competence ($r = -0.033$, $p = .641$), and overall needs satisfaction ($r = 0.048$, $p = .501$). This suggests that the presence of formal rules, procedures, and structured work roles neither enhances nor undermines employees' sense of autonomy, connectedness, or competence in this organizational context.

Results and discussions

The study aimed to examine the influence of a power-distant organizational culture and bureaucratic management practices on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The study found that power distant culture, bureaucratic practices considered moderate, while basic psychological need satisfaction was high. However, the results of the correlation test suggest a significant correlation between power-distant culture and basic psychological need satisfaction, while there is no correlation between bureaucratic management and basic psychological need satisfaction. The results suggest that power-distant practices are primary factors that undermine employees' basic psychological need satisfaction. The way people perceive and accept power inequality in the organization affects their ability to meet their fundamental psychological needs, such as autonomy, relatedness, and competence (Pardede & Kovac, 2023; Johnstone & Beusch, 2025). In a culture with higher power distance, people tend to accept and respect authority, which can lead to lower satisfaction of autonomy need. In contrast, in cultures with lower power distance, equality and individual freedom are prioritized, promoting autonomy and self-expression (Zhang et al, 2018; House, 2004). The current findings indicate that power distance is negatively correlated with the satisfaction of basic psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This implies that in high power-distance cultures, these needs may be less satisfied, potentially impacting well-being and motivation. Research suggests that power distance is negatively correlated with satisfaction of basic psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Abbate et al, 2025; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The lack of a significant correlation between bureaucratic management and the satisfaction of basic psychological needs suggests that the structure and rules of a bureaucratic organization don't necessarily affect employees' autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs. In other words, having a bureaucratic system in place doesn't automatically mean they will feel more or less satisfied in their psychological needs. Bureaucratic management emphasizes hierarchy, rules, and specialization (Abun et al, 2021; Matjie, 2022). While it is designed to promote efficiency, it can sometimes lead to impersonal relationships and reduced autonomy. However, the lack of correlation suggests that other factors, such as leadership styles and job design, might play a role in satisfying employees' psychological needs (Khan et al., 2025; Monteiro & Adler, 2022).

The significant correlation between power distance culture and basic psychological need satisfaction implies that organizations can take steps to reduce power distance practices, promoting employee autonomy, competence, and

relatedness. This can lead to increased employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction. Among other steps, decentralize authority to allow employees to make decisions and take ownership of their work. Open communication in which management encourages employees to provide feedback and engage in dialogue across all levels of the organization. Besides, it is important for management to allow employees to participate in the decision-making process and value their input. By implementing those recommendations, the organization can become an inclusive and empowering work environment.

Conclusion

The study intended to examine the effects of power distance, organizational culture, and bureaucratic leadership on the basic psychological needs satisfaction of employees. The findings indicate that the power distance organizational culture and bureaucratic management were moderate, while satisfaction of basic psychological needs was high. However, the correlation results suggest a significant negative correlation between power distance organizational culture and basic psychological need satisfaction, and therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. While there is no significant correlation between bureaucratic management practices and satisfaction of basic psychological needs, the hypothesis is rejected.

The study recognizes its limitation in coverage. There is a need to conduct a broader study involving a larger population and a more diverse set of organizations.

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