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Influence of Organisational Culture on Insourcing Decisions: Comparative Insights from Shared Value and Multi-Sourcing Models

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Insourcing the internal performance of organisational functions has evolved from an operational choice to a strategic lever reflecting organisational culture, values, and long-term objectives. In healthcare, insourcing decisions influence service quality, member satisfaction, and operational efficiency, highlighting the need to align decisions with organisational culture.*
Objectives: *This study investigated how organisational culture shaped insourcing decisions and compared the efficacy of the shared value and multi-sourced models in aligning cultural, strategic, and operational priorities.*
Methods: *A qualitative, multiple case study design examined two Health Insurance companies in South Africa, HealthCare and WellTrust. Data were collected through document analysis of annual reports, strategic plans, and operational guidelines, complemented by secondary sources such as policy documents and industry analyses. Thematic analysis guided the identification of patterns in how organisational culture informed insourcing strategies.*
Results: *HealthyCare, guided by a Shared Value Model, prioritises mission, values, and member-centric outcomes, resulting in high employee engagement and stakeholder satisfaction, with moderate operational efficiency. WellTrust, following a Multi-Sourced Model, emphasises performance metrics and capacity, achieving high operational efficiency but only moderate engagement and slightly lower stakeholder satisfaction. Comparative analysis suggests hybrid approaches, integrating cultural alignment with operational performance metrics, provide a balanced strategy for sustainable and effective insourcing.*
Conclusions: *Organisational culture is critical in shaping insourcing decisions, which affect employee engagement, operational performance, and stakeholder satisfaction. The integration of Shared Value and Multi-Sourced approaches enabled the balance of cultural alignment with operational effectiveness, providing a structured framework to guide strategic, ethical, and sustainable decision-making in healthcare management.*

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INTRODUCTION

Insourcing the practice of performing organisational functions internally rather than outsourcing has evolved from a purely operational choice into a strategic lever that reflects an organisation's culture, values, and long-term objectives. Evidence suggests that bringing previously outsourced services in-house can be a viable strategic option, particularly when systematic evaluation, coordinated organisational actions, and stakeholder involvement are incorporated, as these elements foster high-performance operational capabilities and reduce the likelihood of reversing outsourcing decisions (Damanpour, Magelssen, & Chiu, 2013). In the healthcare sector, such decisions directly influence service quality, member satisfaction, and overall organisational efficiency, underscoring the criticality of cultural alignment for sustainable outcomes.

Organisational culture, particularly dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism, has been shown to shape health sector reforms' implementation in low- and middle-income countries through communication, management style, and participatory decision-making (Mbau & Gilson, 2018). Moreover, cultures that emphasise optimised work processes, supportive environments, and employee well-being contribute to higher job satisfaction, translating into superior patient care and sustainable healthcare delivery (Hoxha, Simeli, & Theocharis, 2024). When implemented in supportive cultural contexts, approaches such as Green Lean Six Sigma simultaneously enhance operational efficiency, workforce satisfaction, and environmental sustainability.

This study examines how organisational culture informs insourcing decisions through the lens of two guiding frameworks: the Shared Value Model and the Multi-Sourced Model. The Shared Value Model prioritises alignment with mission, values, and strategic objectives, fostering engagement, loyalty, and ethical consistency. At the same time, empirical evidence indicates that shared values enhance strategic implementation by aligning employee behaviour with organisational goals (Ejoh & Omoile, 2024). Embracing a purpose organisational culture further strengthens employee commitment and transformation outcomes, improving overall performance (Carreno, 2024). In contrast, Multi-Sourced Models focus on operational efficiency and performance metrics, using data-driven analyses and benchmarking to inform decision-making. Integrating insights from strategic management literature, including data-driven approaches such as Management Information Systems (MIS) and hybrid multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) frameworks, underscores the importance of evidence-based decision-making. MIS implementation improves operational efficiency, resource allocation, and competitive advantage in technology-focused businesses (Mokogwu, Achumie, Adeleke, & Ewim, 2024), while MCDM frameworks enable transparent evaluation of business development models, identifying top-performing strategies across scalability, adaptability, financial sustainability, and market relevance (Wei, 2025). Similarly, aligning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with strategic objectives enhances organisational outcomes, reflecting the interplay between culture, metrics, and decision-making (Mtau & Rahul, 2024).

To illustrate the practical application of these insights, this study draws on a comparative analysis of two South African schemes: WellTrust and HealthyCare Medical Scheme. WellTrust emphasises public service values and equity, whereas HealthyCare prioritises innovation and client-centred performance, offering distinct cultural lenses for insourcing decisions. Building on these insights, a conceptual framework is proposed to integrate vision, mission, values, culture, and performance metrics, guiding informed insourcing decisions. By combining Shared Value and Multi-Sourced perspectives, the framework demonstrates how cultural alignment and operational performance jointly influence employee engagement, efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction, providing a blueprint for sustainable organisational practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organisational culture is a critical determinant of strategic decision-making, shaping employee behaviour, engagement, and operational outcomes (Nneji & Asikhia, 2021; Saif Ghaleb, 2024). Culture encompasses shared assumptions, norms, values, and beliefs, influencing how employees interpret strategic priorities and interact with organisations (Praveena & Fonceca, 2023). Strong, aligned cultures have been consistently linked to improved performance, enhanced employee satisfaction, and innovation, with psychological safety and collectivism fostering innovation while high power distance impedes it (Zhang, Zeng, Liang, Xue, & Cao, 2023; Tsai, 2011). Moreover, organisational culture is proactive in driving sustainability, integrating people-, growth-, productivity-, and stability-oriented values to support effective organisational change (Wijethilake, Upadhaya, & Lama, 2021).

The interplay between culture and operational strategy becomes particularly evident in insourcing and service management contexts. Culture shapes which functions are retained internally, influencing service quality, accountability, and alignment with organisational identity (Chabaya, Govender, & Kanengoni, 2024;

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Metz, Ilieș, & Nistor, 2020). Empirical studies show that strong cultural alignment enhances customer service effectiveness and ethical conduct, while integrating sustainability principles promotes social, economic, and environmental performance (Metz, Ilieș, & Nistor, 2020). Similarly, effective organisational culture, supported by leadership and employee incentives, underpins the successful adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies, highlighting that socio-technical integration is as important as technological advancement for operational efficiency and responsiveness (Liu, Fan, Luh, & Teng, 2022).

Decision-making frameworks in public- and private-sector contexts demonstrate the need to balance cultural alignment with operational efficiency. Shared Value Models prioritise employee loyalty and mission alignment, retaining core functions that influence organisational identity and member experience, but may reduce flexibility or increase costs (Crane et al., 2014). Multi-Sourced Models, by contrast, emphasise performance metrics, benchmarking, and data-driven evaluation to guide insourcing decisions, enhancing operational efficiency but potentially undervaluing culture and engagement (Gunasekaran et al., 2015; Murray, Kotabe, & Westjohn, 2009). Integrating insights from these approaches can produce a hybrid framework that aligns culture, strategy, and operational performance, supporting sustainable, ethical, and efficient outcomes, as demonstrated in insurance and healthcare contexts (Gharizadeh Beiragh et al., 2020).

Patient engagement research further highlights the strategic importance of aligning culture with operational practices. High-level engagement strategies, such as co-design and partnerships, produce more substantial outcomes, including improved care processes, governance, and population-level health impacts, whereas consultative engagement mainly yields discrete outputs like educational tools or policy documents (Bombard et al., 2018; Laurance et al., 2014). Insourcing functions that directly affect member experience or ethical conduct foster high engagement and satisfaction, illustrating that cultural coherence, stakeholder involvement, and strategic alignment are critical for operational success and long-term sustainability.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Schein's (2010) Organisational Culture Theory, Porter and Kramer's (2011) Shared Value perspective, and Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Competing Values Framework (CVF). These frameworks collectively provide a multi-dimensional lens to examine how organisational culture shapes strategic insourcing decisions, balancing operational efficiency, employee engagement, and alignment with organisational values.

Schein's (2010) Organisational Culture Theory conceptualises culture as a multi-layered system of shared assumptions, values, and artefacts that guide how members perceive, think, and behave. The three levels of artefacts (visible structures and processes), espoused values (stated strategies and philosophies), and basic underlying assumptions (deeply embedded beliefs) offer a comprehensive view of the cultural forces influencing decision-making. In insourcing, understanding these layers enables leaders to identify which functions should be retained internally to maintain service quality, accountability, and alignment with organisational identity.

Porter and Kramer's (2011) Shared Value perspective extends this analysis by linking strategic decision-making to societal impact. Creating Shared Value (CSV) encourages organisations to reconceive products and markets, redefine productivity in the value chain, and foster local cluster development. By emphasising alignment between strategy and core organisational values, CSV provides a framework for evaluating insourcing decisions on operational grounds and how they reinforce ethical conduct, stakeholder trust, and long-term sustainability.

The Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Yu & Wu, 2009) complements these perspectives by operationalising the balance between cultural and performance imperatives. The CVF identifies four culture types of clans: adhocracy, market, and hierarchy, each associated with distinct managerial priorities and organisational outcomes. Using the CVF and its tool, the Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), organisations can assess cultural orientations, evaluate trade-offs between flexibility and control, and align operational practices with strategic and cultural goals. This is particularly relevant in multi-sourced or hybrid insourcing models, where operational efficiency must be balanced against employee engagement and service excellence.

Integrating these three frameworks provides a robust theoretical foundation for analysing insourcing strategies. Schein's model elucidates the deep cultural drivers of behaviours, CSV emphasises strategic and societal alignment, and the CVF offers practical tools for assessing cultural coherence and operational performance. Together, they facilitate a holistic understanding of how organisational culture shapes strategic insourcing, optimises service delivery, and promotes sustainable organisational outcomes.

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METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative, comparative multiple case study design to examine two South African WellTrust and HealthyCare chosen for their contrasting operational and insourcing models. Qualitative case study methodology was recognised as a robust approach for investigating complex phenomena in real-world contexts, enabling theory development, program evaluation, and the generation of contextually relevant insights (Baxter & Jack, 2010). The approach allowed the study to explore how organisational culture, values, and strategic priorities shaped insourcing decisions in distinct institutional contexts.

The study followed a multiple-case design to enhance analytical depth and rigour. The multiple-case approach enabled the researchers to identify consistent patterns and divergent themes across cases, providing rich contextual insights while mitigating concerns regarding methodological rigour through replication strategies (Zach, 2006; Halkias, Neubert, Thurman, & Harkiolakis, 2022). Cases were selected purposively to ensure that each medical scheme provided information-rich insights relevant to the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015; Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). This sampling strategy emphasised contrast and diversity across cases, enhancing the transferability of findings.

Data collection relied primarily on qualitative document analysis, which examined annual reports, strategic plans, operational guidelines, and relevant policy documents, complemented by secondary sources such as industry analyses. Document analysis provided a flexible, cost-effective method for generating insights from pre-existing texts, particularly when field research was not feasible (Morgan, 2022). The study adopted the READ approach, reading materials, extracting data, analysing content, and distilling findings to systematically interpret documents and reveal underlying policy processes, organisational priorities, and cultural influences (Dalglish, Khalid, & McMahon, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Thematic Areas Informing the Conceptual Framework

Strategic Alignment of Vision and Mission

Strategic alignment ensures that organisational vision and mission are reflected in decision-making, guiding which functions are insourced or prioritised. Shared Value Models emphasise this alignment, linking corporate strategy with social and operational objectives to maintain organisational identity and stakeholder trust (Crane et al., 2014). In healthcare and insurance contexts, insourcing decisions aligning with organisational purpose, such as maintaining patient support and claims adjudication in-house, enhance operational effectiveness and ethical consistency, demonstrating that strategic clarity drives sustainable, long-term outcomes (Bombard et al., 2018; Laurance et al., 2014).

Core Organisational Values

Core values underpin employee behaviour, attitudes, and performance, anchoring organisational culture and operational norms. Studies show that customer orientation, integrity, and sustainability enhance service quality, foster ethical practices, and promote socio-environmental outcomes (Metz, Ilieș, & Nistor, 2020; Maulana, 2022). Aligning organisational activities with these values strengthens cultural coherence, supports employee commitment, and guides strategic decisions, ensuring that operational priorities reflect the organisation's fundamental principles (Wijethilake, Upadhaya, & Lama, 2021).

Culture and Shared Assumptions

Culture comprises collective beliefs, assumptions, and conventions that influence employees' understanding of strategic aims and daily behaviours (Praveena & Fonceca, 2023). It influences innovation, collaboration, and organisational change, with psychologically safe and collectivist cultures fostering higher performance and adaptability, while high power distance may impede effectiveness (Zhang, Zeng, Liang, Xue, & Cao, 2023; Tsai, 2011). In insourcing contexts, organisational culture determines which functions are retained internally, affecting service quality, accountability, and alignment with institutional identity (Chabaya, Govender, & Kanengoni, 2024).

Performance Metrics and Operational Efficiency

Performance measurement is essential for evaluating operational outcomes and guiding insourcing or outsourcing decisions. Multi-Sourced Models and data-driven approaches, such as Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) combined with Principal Component Analysis (PCA), enhance accuracy, efficiency, and sustainability assessment in decision-making (Gharizadeh Beiragh et al., 2020; Gunasekaran et al., 2015). These frameworks enable organisations to objectively assess financial, operational, and strategic dimensions, optimise resource allocation, and maintain alignment with corporate goals while balancing efficiency with cultural and ethical priorities (Murray, Kotabe, & Westjohn, 2009).

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Employee Engagement and Stakeholder Impact

Engaged employees and stakeholders are critical for achieving organisational objectives, as engagement drives performance, satisfaction, and innovation. High levels of co-design, partnership, and participatory decision-making in healthcare and insurance sectors demonstrate that involvement of staff, patients, and families enhances care processes, governance, and population-level outcomes (Bombard et al., 2018; Laurance et al., 2014). Aligning engagement strategies with organisational culture and values ensures that stakeholders are motivated, committed, and aligned with operational and social objectives, creating a sustainable impact.

Case Study: HealthCare vs. WellTrust

The comparative examination of HealthyCare and WellTrust elucidates the nuanced influence of organisational culture on insourcing decisions. HealthyCare, operating under a Shared Value Model, foregrounds alignment with its mission, core values, and member-centric objectives, producing high levels of employee engagement and stakeholder satisfaction, albeit with only moderate operational efficiency. Conversely, WellTrust applies a Multi-Sourced Model that privileges performance metrics, capacity considerations, and data-driven decision-making, achieving elevated operational efficiency but only moderate engagement and marginally lower stakeholder satisfaction. This juxtaposition demonstrates that culture-centric approaches foster organisational loyalty, ethical consistency, and long-term sustainability, whereas metrics-focused strategies enhance efficiency and flexibility. A critical synthesis of these cases suggests that hybrid models, which integrate Shared Value principles with multi-sourced performance assessments, may provide a more balanced framework, enabling organisations to reconcile operational demands with cultural coherence.
Table 1 offers a structured comparison of the insourcing strategies adopted by the two schemes. HealthyCare's approach reinforces cultural alignment and strategic purpose, promoting high engagement and stakeholder satisfaction, while operational efficiency remains moderate. In contrast, WellTrust prioritises operational performance metrics, resulting in superior efficiency but only moderate engagement outcomes. The comparative overview underscores that Shared Value approaches consolidate cultural cohesion and member-centred outcomes, whereas multi-sourced approaches optimise operational metrics. Integrating these approaches into a hybrid strategy can potentially harmonise efficiency with culture.

Table 1. Insourcing Approaches in HealthyCare and WellTrust

Aspect	HealthyCare (Shared Value Model)	WellTrust (Multi-Sourced Model)
Core Focus	Cultural alignment and mission	Operational efficiency and metrics
Employee Engagement	High	Moderate
Operational Efficiency	Moderate	High
Stakeholder Satisfaction	High	Moderate-High
Decision Basis	Strategic importance, values	Performance metrics and capacity
Risk of Misalignment	Low	Medium

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the dynamic interplay between organisational culture and insourcing decisions. It positions vision, mission, and values as foundational inputs that shape organisational culture, influencing the insourcing decision-making process. Insourcing decisions are examined through the dual lenses of the Shared Value and Multi-Sourced Model, capturing cultural alignment and operational efficiency considerations. The framework demonstrates how these decisions impact key outcomes, including operational efficiency, employee engagement, stakeholder satisfaction, and long-term sustainability, providing a structured approach to align strategy, culture, and performance.

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Figure 1. Culture-Driven Insourcing and Performance Framework

Discussion

This study used the Shared Value and Multi-Sourced Models as analytical lenses to examine how organisational culture influences insourcing decisions in South Africa. The findings align with prior research emphasising the strategic role of culture in shaping organisational outcomes (Schein, 2010; Mbau & Gilson, 2018). HealthyCare's Shared Value Model demonstrates that aligning insourcing decisions with mission, values, and member-centric objectives fosters employee engagement and stakeholder satisfaction, echoing Hoxha, Simeli, and Theocharis (2024), who argue that supportive work environments and optimised processes enhance job satisfaction and sustainable healthcare delivery. Conversely, WellTrust's Multi-Sourced Model prioritises operational efficiency, mirroring findings by Gunasekaran et al. (2015) and Murray, Kotabe, and Westjohn (2009) that data-driven approaches improve measurable outcomes but may underemphasise cultural and ethical alignment. These comparisons indicate that cultural alignment and operational performance are complementary, yet distinct, determinants of insourcing effectiveness.

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The analysis highlights critical trade-offs between culture-centric and metrics-driven models, a theme consistent with broader literature on strategic decision-making in healthcare and insurance contexts. Shared Value approaches reinforce loyalty, ethical conduct, and long-term sustainability (Porter & Kramer, 2011; Carreno, 2024), whereas Multi-Sourced Models enhance efficiency, scalability, and flexibility (Denison, 1990; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The empirical evidence supports previous calls for hybrid strategies that combine the normative guidance of culture with the analytical rigour of performance metrics (Crane et al., 2014; Gharizadeh Beiragh et al., 2020). This integration allows organisations to reconcile competing priorities, ensuring that insourced functions maintain service quality and align with strategic and ethical objectives.

Furthermore, the findings underscore the practical significance of cultural dimensions, such as collectivism, participatory decision-making, and uncertainty avoidance, which shape engagement, innovation, and operational responsiveness. These observations resonate with studies in low- and middle-income health systems, where culture mediates the implementation of reforms through communication, management styles, and participation (Mbau & Gilson, 2018). The study also supports research on employee well-being and sustainable performance, indicating that culture-driven insourcing simultaneously enhances job satisfaction, operational efficiency, and stakeholder outcomes (Hoxha, Simeli, & Theocharis, 2024; Zhang et al., 2023).

Incorporating performance assessment tools such as Management Information Systems and multi-criteria decision-making frameworks further strengthens decision-making by providing objective benchmarks for resource allocation, as suggested by Mokogwu, Achumie, Adeleke, and Ewim (2024) and Wei (2025). The proposed conceptual framework consolidates these insights by positioning vision, mission, and values as foundational drivers of insourcing decisions, mediating their impact on efficiency, engagement, and stakeholder satisfaction. This aligns with prior theoretical perspectives on the intersection of culture and strategy (Schein, 2010; Porter & Kramer, 2011; Cameron & Quinn, 2011), while extending practical guidance for organisations. By integrating Shared Value and Multi-Sourced perspectives, the framework offers a structured, evidence-informed approach for balancing cultural coherence with operational performance, demonstrating that sustainable, high-quality insourcing decisions depend on the deliberate alignment of culture, strategy, and measurable outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Both organisational culture and operational performance influence insourcing decisions. The Shared Value Model prioritises alignment with vision, mission, and values, enhancing engagement and service quality. Multi-Sourced Models emphasise efficiency and measurable outcomes. Integrating these models into a conceptual framework allows organisations to make informed insourcing decisions that balance cultural integrity with performance excellence, fostering sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction.

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