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QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: CASE STUDY OF WELCH PACKAGING GROUP

Evaluación cualitativa del impacto de la cultura organizacional en el desempeño operativo: estudio de caso de Welch Packaging Group

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Master of Business Administration Program

QUALITATIVE EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: CASE STUDY OF WELCH PACKAGING GROUP

Special Degree Project submitted as a partial requirement for the degree of Master in Business Administration

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Acceptance Page

The present Master's Thesis entitled:

"Qualitative Evaluation of the Impact of Organizational Culture on Operational Performance: Case Study of Welch Packaging Group".

has been reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements established by Sabal University for the degree of **Master in Business Administration**.

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Dedication

To God, for being my constant guide, my unwavering strength, and the light that has illuminated every step of this challenging yet enriching journey. Without His presence, none of this would have been possible.

To my parents, who raised me with love, discipline, and strong values. Thank you for teaching me the importance of hard work, integrity, and resilience for being my example and my unconditional support. I owe who I am, both as a person and a professional, to you.

To my wife Anghy, my tireless partner in this journey, for her unwavering support, for walking beside me through difficulties, and for always being a source of strength, understanding, and love.

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To my aunt Marlene and my niece Andrea, for their words of encouragement, their unshakable faith in me, and for being present with love, positive energy, and blessings. This thesis also reflects the affection and strength you have given me to keep moving forward.

To each of you, thank you for being a fundamental part of this achievement. This milestone is not mine alone; it is the result of the love, faith, and support you have given me every step of the way.

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Abstract

This research evaluates the impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group, a company recognized for its management model centered on the customer, the employee, and the community. In a context marked by territorial expansion and increasing operational complexity, it becomes essential to understand how shared values, beliefs, and practices translate into efficiency, innovation, interdepartmental coordination, and continuous improvement.

Using a qualitative and interpretive approach, this study analyzes the perceptions and experiences of leaders and collaborators to identify the degree of cultural alignment among the various business units, as well as its relationship to organizational performance. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews and content analysis, allowing for the detection of both consistencies and potential gaps between institutional discourse and everyday practices.

The findings aim to provide meaningful evidence of the strategic role of organizational culture, particularly in organizations with decentralized structures, and to serve as a foundation for the design of predictive diagnostic tools that anticipate internal dysfunctions before they affect cohesion or productivity. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of culture as a key factor for operational sustainability, offering relevant insights for both the academic field and contemporary business management.

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Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

In the contemporary business landscape characterized by constant innovation, competitive pressure, and the accelerating pace of organizational change organizational culture had acquired unprecedented strategic relevance. Far from being a merely symbolic or complementary dimension, it represented a dynamic network of values, beliefs, norms, and practices that guided collective behavior and shaped the way organizations responded to operational challenges. In this context, understanding how organizational culture influenced fundamental aspects such as efficiency, interdepartmental coordination, innovation capacity, and continuous improvement became essential.

In this regard, the present research focused on the case study of **Welch Packaging Group**, a family-owned company with nearly four decades of experience, which had established itself as a significant player in the U.S. corrugated packaging industry. Its value proposition, known as the "Ultimate Corrugated Experience," was supported not only by a robust technical infrastructure and comprehensive logistical solutions, but also by an organizational culture deeply rooted in three fundamental pillars: the customer, the employee, and the community. This humanistic orientation aimed to transcend traditional productivity models by fostering an organizational environment that valued both performance and a sense of belonging and purpose.

Therefore, it was crucial to focus the analysis on productive effectiveness and its connection with organizational culture. This approach required addressing key questions that emerged from everyday practice, taking into account the lived experiences of various actors within the organization. The study sought to determine whether there was a tangible alignment between institutional values and daily behaviors, as well as to understand how these cultural dynamics influenced or failed to influence the generation of sustainable competitive advantages. In the context of geographic expansion and operational diversification faced by Welch Packaging Group, preserving a strong and cohesive cultural identity had become a strategically significant challenge.

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Taking all of this into account, the general objective of this research was to evaluate the impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group, through a qualitative approach that captured not only formal indicators but also the subjective experiences of leaders and employees.

Based on this aim, the study intended to determine the degree of cultural alignment within the organization, analyze how cultural elements affected operational processes, and identify potential gaps between units that could compromise organizational cohesion.

Additionally, the results of this research aimed to contribute valuable information for the development of predictive organizational diagnostic tools, designed to anticipate potential dysfunctions before they translated into operational losses.

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1.2 Problem Statement

In today's business landscape, organizations have faced growing structural and operational complexity driven by the acceleration of technological change, competitive pressure, and the constant need to innovate. In this context, business leaders agreed that market, technological, and macroeconomic factors play a decisive role in shaping organizational performance (Mocker & Weill, 2023). This reality has demanded more agile and adaptive structures, where organizational culture has emerged as a key element in sustaining productivity by aligning behaviors, strengthening responsiveness, and fostering environments conducive to innovation and operational efficiency.

Within this dynamic environment, organizational culture has ceased to be a merely symbolic or decorative element, consolidating instead as a strategic cornerstone that directly influences companies' operational performance. Its impact is evident not only in process efficiency, but also in adaptability, timely response, functional coordination, and the sustainability of operations (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Based on this premise, organizations operating across multiple regions or undergoing expansion processes as in the case of Welch Packaging Group face the dual challenge of preserving a cohesive organizational culture that serves as a shared identity, while effectively adapting that culture to diverse and constantly evolving operational contexts. Striking this balance is essential to sustaining a unified vision without sacrificing the agility needed to meet the specific demands of each business unit or operating environment.

Within this framework, key questions emerge regarding the meanings and forms that organizational culture takes across the different business units. In the case of Welch Packaging Group with over twenty production plants and one distribution unit a strong, coherent, and cross-cutting cultural alignment becomes essential. This alignment supports overall operational effectiveness and helps minimize dysfunctions that may arise from internal fragmentation.

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Welch Packaging Group is composed of twenty corrugated packaging plants and one distribution unit. In this context, a coherent operational alignment is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the system as a whole. The way in which cultural values are understood and implemented across these units directly impacts critical areas such as interdepartmental coordination, decision-making, capacity for innovation, and commitment to continuous improvement. When institutional principles are not translated into consistent practices across departments, organizational dysfunctions may emergesuch as duplicated efforts, excessive bureaucracy, diminished sense of belonging, or lack of employee motivation which ultimately affect both productivity and overall cohesion within the company.

From this deeper understanding, the research aspired to generate applicable knowledge that could serve as the foundation for developing diagnostic tools with a predictive focus, capable of anticipating cultural and operational dysfunctions before they significantly impact cohesion, performance, and organizational sustainability. These tools may include sentiment analysis and text mining to detect early signs of cultural shifts, machine learning models to forecast operational risks based on historical patterns, and dynamic dashboards for continuous, real-time monitoring. In doing so, the organization would not only react to challenges but also be equipped to foresee and proactively manage them, ensuring a resilient future aligned with its core values.

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1.3 Justification

In today's business environment characterized by constant innovation, competitive pressure, and the need for agile adaptation organizational culture has evolved from being a symbolic component to becoming a strategic factor. Its influence directly impacts operational efficiency, internal cohesion, and the sustainability of organizations (Daft, 2021). In this context, understanding how shared values, beliefs, and practices shape organizational dynamics becomes essential to navigating increasingly complex and volatile scenarios.

Based on this premise, the research evaluated the impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group. From a qualitative perspective, the study approached culture as a lived experience of the individuals who make up the company transcending reductionist views focused solely on quantitative indicators. A deep analysis of these dynamics enabled the formulation of concrete guidelines to strengthen the alignment between cultural values and operational functioning, thus fostering a more coherent, human-centered, and adaptive management model.

Likewise, the findings of this research had the potential to serve as the foundation for the development of organizational diagnostic tools with a predictive focus. Consequently, these tools could anticipate cultural dysfunctions, internal risks, or alignment gaps before they significantly affected operational outcomes. In this regard, organizational culture was conceived not merely as a reflection of corporate identity, but as a strategic driver that—when properly managed could enhance resilience, innovation, and organizational sustainability, particularly in contexts of geographic expansion.

Therefore, analyzing the relationship between organizational culture and operational performance in the case of Welch Packaging Group addressed not only an academic need to expand knowledge in business sciences but also offered practical value. The study generated useful evidence for the continuous improvement of operational activities, contributing to the development of organizations that are more efficient, sustainable, and people-centered.

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1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective:

To evaluate the impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of the company Welch Packaging Group.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives:

- ✓ To identify the influence of organizational culture on Welch Packaging Group's operational processes, focusing on efficiency, interdepartmental coordination, innovation capacity, and continuous improvement.
- ✓ To analyze the perceptions, experiences, and degree of alignment of Welch Packaging Group's employees and leaders with the values and practices that shape the organizational culture.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This research was limited to a qualitative analysis of the impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group, using its network of business units in the United States as a case study, particularly in the context of its expansion into new regions.

The study focused on three levels of analysis:

1.5.1 General Organizational Level:

The influence of organizational culture on institutional cohesion during territorial expansion was analyzed.

1.5.2 Internal Structural Level:

The study examined how the organizational culture was expressed and aligned across different business units and functional areas.

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1.5.3 Experiential Level:

The research explored the perceptions, experiences, and alignment levels of leaders and employees regarding institutional values and cultural practices in their daily work environments.

The study was descriptive, interpretative, and exploratory in nature, employing techniques typical of the qualitative approach, such as semi-structured interviews and content analysis. It is important to note that the findings were not intended to be generalized to other organizations within the industry but were aimed at understanding the particular dynamics of the studied company.

This scope allowed for a deeper understanding of the complexity of cultural elements within a growing organizational environment, with emphasis on the consistency between institutional discourse and actual practices, as well as the impact of culture on key operational dimensions such as efficiency, coordination, innovation, and continuous improvement.

1.6 Study Limitations

Despite its interpretative and contextual value, this study presented certain limitations inherent to its design and approach, which must be acknowledged:

1.6.1 Qualitative Approach:

The study did not aim to quantify variables or establish statistical causal relationships; therefore, results were focused on the depth of analysis rather than the generalization of findings.

1.6.2 Single Case:

By focusing exclusively on Welch Packaging Group as the object of study, the results were not directly generalizable to other organizations, although they could provide useful insights for similar contexts.

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1.6.3 Access to Information:

The quality and depth of the analysis were largely determined by the availability of collaborators and the willingness of leaders to participate in interviews or qualitative dynamics—factors that could directly affect the empirical scope of the study.

1.6.4 Subjective Perception:

Since the research was approached from the lived experience of organizational actors, perceptions could have been influenced by personal or situational factors beyond the researcher's control. However, strategies such as triangulation and rigorous categorization were applied to ensure internal validity.

1.6.5 Study Temporality:

The analysis was limited to the organization's current context during the research period, thus not accounting for a longitudinal view of the cultural impact across different stages of the expansion process.

Chapter II

2.1 Theoretical Framework:

Organizational culture was understood as a structured system of shared meanings that directly influenced how employees acted, made decisions, and related to one another within the organization. Throughout the study, it was considered that this culture did not operate in isolation, but in interaction with elements such as leadership, institutional values, cultural identity, and the alignment between discourse and practice.

From this perspective, key concepts were integrated to understand how these cultural components impacted operational performance, particularly in organizations undergoing territorial expansion. The theoretical framework was based on recent contributions from recognized authors, complemented by the researcher's perspective, who interpreted organizational culture as a strategic factor that, when properly managed, strengthened internal cohesion, improved efficiency, and facilitated adaptability to change.

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2.1.1 Organizational Culture:

Organizational culture is a shared system of values, beliefs, norms, and practices that guide the behavior of members within a company (Schein, 2010). This system not only defined "how things are done," but also shaped the organization's identity and influenced its operational performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Along these lines, Hofstede (2010) argued that organizational culture represented collective mental patterns that distinguished one organization from another and guided responses to changing environments.

Based on the qualitative analysis conducted, organizational culture was conceived as a dynamic system of shared meanings that directly influenced the company's operational capacity to adapt, innovate, and maintain institutional cohesion in contexts of territorial expansion.

2.1.2 Operational Performance:

Operational performance refers to the set of outcomes resulting from process efficiency, functional coordination, product or service quality, and adaptability to change (Daft, 2021). Contemporary business literature recognized that a well-aligned organizational culture significantly contributes to optimizing these dimensions (Denison, 2000). Kaplan and Norton (1996) also emphasized that operational performance depended on the organization's ability to align internal processes with strategic performance indicators.

Operational performance was understood as a direct consequence of internal cultural coherence among key organizational actors, especially human resources, where the synergy between shared values and functional processes enhanced organizational efficiency and responsiveness in the face of territorial expansion.

2.1.3 Cultural Alignment:

Cultural alignment is the congruence between institutional values promoted by top management and the daily practices observed across all business units (Kotter & Heskett,

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1992). This alignment was considered a critical factor to prevent internal fragmentation that could undermine cohesion, efficiency, or decision-making. Cameron and Quinn (2011) noted that aligned cultures facilitated effective strategy implementation and the preservation of organizational identity.

In line with the authors referenced and based on the findings of this study, cultural alignment was interpreted as a transversal phenomenon that sustained the operational unity of the company by enabling the consistent expression of institutional values across all branches even in heterogeneous territorial contexts.

2.1.4 Cultural Leadership:

Cultural leadership is the ability of executives to create, manage, and communicate the values, beliefs, and basic assumptions that constitute the organizational culture, in a way that reflects and supports the business strategy (Schein, 2010). Yukl (2013) added that cultural leaders directly influence motivation, collective behavior, and strategic direction, acting as key drivers of change.

Cultural leadership was understood as a stabilizing agent, as leaders served as bridges between the institutional vision and everyday actions, thereby helping preserve cultural coherence throughout the organizational expansion process.

2.1.5 Qualitative Organizational Diagnosis:

Qualitative organizational diagnosis was not limited to numerical indicators, as it explored lived experiences, interactions, and the meanings attributed by internal actors to organizational culture (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey, 2013). More recently, Sutcliffe, Vogus & Weick (2015) stressed that this type of analysis was essential for understanding an organization’s capacity to respond reliably under dynamic conditions and adapt safely in the face of contingencies.

It is a tool to investigate "thick data" from the operational level to top management. This perspective allows for the precise mapping of cultural strengths (identity, cohesion,

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commitment) and the detection of subtle deviations in everyday practices. The approach provided a solid foundation for proposing predictive tools tailored to Welch Packaging Group's operational reality, aimed at anticipating cultural variations before they impacted performance.

2.1.6 Operational Productivity:

Operational productivity has traditionally been defined as the ratio between outputs generated and the inputs used to produce them, seeking maximum efficiency (Slack & Lewis, 2011). More recent research by Ahmad et al. (2022) argued that productivity now depends not only on technical efficiency but also on organizational factors such as cultural coordination and learning capacity. Similarly, Khosrow-Pour (2023) highlighted that in dynamic environments, operational productivity is driven by the integration of technological processes, agile structures, and a cohesive organizational environment.

From the researcher's perspective, and based on the qualitative findings, operational productivity was understood as a direct consequence of the synchronization between shared organizational values and the efficient execution of processes in multicultural environments. This view revealed that optimizing resources is not enough; it is essential to ensure an aligned culture that fosters commitment, collaboration, and adaptability in each operational unit.

2.1.7 Cultural Identity:

Cultural identity was defined as the set of historical characteristics, symbols, and narratives shared by members, which distinguished the organization from others and formed the basis of internal cohesion. More recently, Piñeyro Prins (2020) described organizational identity as a dynamic construct of central and distinctive attributes, emerging from shared sensegiving and sensemaking processes. Additionally, Gioia et al. (2013) argued that organizational identity is mutable and subject to continuous renegotiation between leaders and employees.

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Cultural identity was understood as a relational system in motion, where institutional symbols and narratives were continuously reinterpreted at each branch. This approach revealed how identity articulated internal cohesion and the sustainability of organizational culture during the expansion process.

2.1.8 Geographic Expansion:

Geographic expansion was conceptualized as a strategic and planned process through which an organization aims to establish new branches or production facilities in different regions or countries to access local markets, diversify risks, and optimize logistics (Gartner, 2023; Hutzschenreuter & Verbeke, 2023). Recent studies have shown that the success of this process was conditioned by the organization's ability to manage cultural distance between branches. Notably, Hutzschenreuter and Verbeke (2023) demonstrated that geographic diversification increased cultural and operational complexity, requiring specific managerial skills to preserve institutional cohesion.

Moreover, studies on cultural intelligence (CQ), such as Nosratabadi et al. (2020), indicated that leaders with high CQ significantly improved organizational performance in culturally diverse environments by adapting interaction styles and operational practices.

From the perspective of this research, geographic expansion was understood not only as physical growth but as a strategic cultural expansion. It required active management of cultural identity at each branch and culturally intelligent leadership capable of articulating operational coherence and institutional cohesion in diverse contexts. For the company under study, this approach helped maintain alignment between practice and cultural values while consolidating territorial presence, strengthening resilience and adaptability during the expansion process.

2.1.9 Organizational Values:

Organizational values are the explicit beliefs that guide members' decisions and behaviors, serving as criteria for evaluating what is important. Over the last decade, Denison (2016) noted that organizational values were essential for establishing strategic

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direction and internal coherence. Frey et al. (2019) added that well-integrated values led to more proactive interaction and a climate of trust, especially in companies with multiple branches.

In the context of this study, organizational values were conceived as cultural vectors materialized in concrete operational practices. This allowed for mapping their direct influence on interdepartmental coordination and rapid response to environmental changes.

2.1.10 Operational Performance:

Operational performance is the effectiveness and efficiency with which an organization transforms resources into products or services, considering indicators such as utilization rate, cycle time, and defect levels. Neely, Gregory, and Platts (1995) proposed this classic metric. In a recent update, Neumann et al. (2023) showed that operational performance was enhanced by cultural adaptation within agile methodologies. Nosratabadi et al. (2020) also demonstrated that cultural intelligence (CQ) in leadership had an impact on operational efficiency in international contexts.

Operational performance was reinterpreted as an emergent outcome of the synergy between optimized processes and cohesive culture. Operational metrics were explicitly linked to cultural indicators, establishing an integrative model that anticipated performance improvements derived from strengthened identity and values.

Chapter III

3. Methodological Framework

The research was based on a qualitative and interpretive approach, suitable for exploring complex, symbolic, and contextually situated organizational phenomena such as organizational culture. A holistic case study design was selected, which enabled an in-depth understanding of the cultural dynamics that influenced the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group, especially in scenarios involving geographic expansion and functional diversification. The methodological strategy included techniques such as semi-

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structured interviews and document analysis, which facilitated the reconstruction of shared meaning among leaders and collaborators. Additionally, criteria for validity, ethical considerations, and sampling schemes were established to reinforce the rigor of the research process.

The following sections detail the methodology used, the type and design of the research, the adopted epistemological paradigm, as well as the data collection and analysis techniques, validity criteria, ethical considerations, and sampling strategies that underpin the research process.

3.1 Methodology

A qualitative methodology with a phenomenological and interpretive focus was adopted, as it allowed for a deeper understanding of the experiences and meanings attributed by organizational actors to culture and its influence on operational performance. The methodological choice was driven by the interest in capturing not only observable facts but also the perceptions, symbols, and internal dynamics that manifested in everyday work life.

From our experience, this approach proved particularly relevant, as it enabled the interpretation of narratives from the perspective of those who experienced the cultural processes in the context of sustained geographical expansion. This choice aligns with Creswell and Poth (2017), who emphasize that the phenomenological approach seeks to understand the shared essence of human experience, and with Towers, Hearn, and Broad (2020), who assert that qualitative interpretation allows for the exploration of complex organizational phenomena from a relational, situated, and meaningful perspective.

3.2 Type of Research

The study was conducted as descriptive and interpretive research, since the primary objective was to rigorously document the internal cultural manifestations of Welch Packaging Group and explore how they influenced operational efficiency. Throughout the process, it was recognized that these cultural expressions were not always explicit,

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making it necessary to interpret symbolic codes, shared narratives, and behavioral patterns that sustained the organizational dynamic.

The research strategy made it possible to establish connections between seemingly unrelated elements of the organizational environment, revealing how cultural values, norms, and leadership were directly linked to specific operational practices. This approach was theoretically supported by Stake (1995), who emphasized the utility of descriptive analysis in case studies that prioritize contextual understanding, and by Baxter and Jack (2008), who confirmed that deep interpretation in qualitative studies facilitates the identification of relationships between complex phenomena without requiring statistical generalization.

3.3 Research Design

A single-case study design with a holistic focus was used, exclusively centered on Welch Packaging Group as the unit of analysis. This decision responded to the need to thoroughly study an organization undergoing geographical expansion, in which cultural cohesion played a key role in sustaining operational performance.

From a research practice perspective, the case study allowed simultaneous analysis of multiple dimensions (structural, symbolic, experiential) of organizational culture, addressing its expressions in both central offices and new branches. This methodological decision aligns with Yin (2018), who highlighted that holistic case studies are suitable for exploring phenomena in real contexts with multiple interdependent variables. Furthermore, the integration of various sources of evidence interviews, internal documents, observations enhanced data triangulation, strengthening the internal validity of the study, as recommended by AllMeld (2024) and current qualitative research guidelines in globalized organizations.

3.4 Research Paradigm

The study was conducted under the interpretive or constructivist paradigm, which holds that reality is neither objective nor singular, but socially constructed through the interactions, perceptions, and meanings individuals assign to their environment (Guba &

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Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm was congruent with the adopted qualitative approach, as it facilitated a deep understanding of how organizational actors experienced, interpreted, and reproduced organizational culture within the operational context of Welch Packaging Group.

From this perspective, knowledge was not seen as an absolute truth to be discovered, but as a dynamic construction that emerged through dialogue with participants, who were recognized as legitimate knowledge holders by virtue of living the values, symbols, and cultural practices of the organization on a daily basis (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Therefore, the aim of the study was not to validate generalizable hypotheses, but to capture the diversity of meanings, tensions, and cultural dynamics that influenced the company's operational performance.

This paradigm also made it possible to address the inherent complexity of organizational phenomena, acknowledging that shared values and behaviors did not necessarily manifest homogeneously across all organizational units. In a context like that of Welch Packaging Group a growing company with multiple locations it was crucial to analyze the coherence between institutional discourse and operational practices, as well as to identify potential gaps or cultural tensions across different hierarchical levels (Creswell, 2014).

3.5 Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative approach, both appropriate and strategic, to analyze the impact of organizational culture on operational performance. It began with the recognition that cultural phenomena cannot be fully understood through a quantitative lens, as they involve symbolic, subjective, and context-based dimensions that manifest in beliefs, practices, and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The qualitative approach allowed for the exploration of these phenomena in their natural context, without reducing them to numerical variables, enabling a deep and rich understanding of the meanings that collaborators and leaders attribute to their organizational environment, particularly in a context of expansion and transformation.

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3.5.1 Characteristics of the Applied Qualitative Approach

3.5.1.1 Interpretive: Understands the meanings constructed by organizational actors from their experience with corporate culture (Stake, 1995).

3.5.1.2 Descriptive and Exploratory: Details cultural elements present in Welch Packaging Group and explores how they influence efficiency, interdepartmental coordination, innovation, and continuous improvement (Hernández-Sampieri et al., 2014).

3.5.1.3 Contextualized: Anchored in a specific organizational reality, recognizing the unique nature of the studied case.

3.5.1.4 Emergent: Allows categories of analysis to arise from collected data, without imposing rigid theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2014).

3.5.1.5 Dialogical: Fosters interaction between researcher and participants, facilitating co-construction of knowledge (Flick, 2007).

This approach was consistent with the interpretive paradigm that guided the research and with the techniques employed, such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and, when possible, non-participant observation. These tools were ideal for identifying cultural patterns, assessing their alignment with operations, and generating input for the development of future organizational diagnostics with a predictive focus.

Moreover, the qualitative approach was particularly appropriate given the nature of the study object: organizational culture, understood as a dynamic social construct that must be interpreted through the lived experiences and narratives of those who embody it daily (Schein, 2010).

3.6 Population and Sample:

The study population consisted of employees and leaders from various hierarchical levels within Welch Packaging Group, distributed among its production plants and the distribution unit. The sample was selected intentionally and theoretically, choosing

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strategic participants that enabled the analysis of the relationship between organizational culture and operational performance, following criteria proposed by Creswell and Poth (2018).

Aligned with the case study design and in order to ensure a broad and representative perspective, the selection of informants was based on criteria of functional diversity and organizational relevance. Priority was given to roles that involved high cultural interaction and significant decision-making capacity.

Specifically, strategic profiles (general manager and sales manager), middle management (plant supervisors and area coordinators), and operational personnel with extensive experience in the company were included, aiming to capture a diversity of perspectives and constructed meanings across different hierarchical levels.

3.7 Data Collection Techniques:

To capture the complexity of the cultural phenomenon from multiple dimensions, the following qualitative techniques were employed:

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews:

These were based on thematic guides designed to explore organizational values, cultural experiences, operational practices, and the alignment between institutional discourse and concrete actions (Saldaña, 2021).

3.7.2 Document analysis:

This included the review of organizational charts, manuals, job descriptions, internal reports, corporate communications, and strategic presentations, with the aim of identifying the official discourse on culture and its link to practice (Nowell et al., 2017).

3.7.3 Non-participant observation (optional):

When access was permitted, observations were conducted in meetings or organizational spaces to contrast what was expressed in interviews with observable behaviors (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.8 Data Analysis:

The data collected were processed through thematic content analysis, coding relevant units of information and grouping them into emerging categories that addressed the study

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objectives. Methodological triangulation across sources and techniques was applied to reinforce the validity of the findings (Saldaña, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

Emerging categories included: cultural alignment, value-practice coherence, impact on operational processes, leadership, communication, and sense of belonging.

3.9 Validity and Reliability:

To ensure the credibility of the results, several strategies inherent to the qualitative approach were employed:

3.9.1 Source and method triangulation (Flick, 2018).

3.9.2 Cross-validation of categories through peer review.

3.9.3 Participant feedback to confirm interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.9.4 Rigorous documentation of transcripts, codifications, and analysis matrices.

3.10 Ethical Considerations:

Participant confidentiality was guaranteed, and the data were used exclusively for academic purposes. Before the interviews, informed consent was obtained, ensuring anonymity and voluntary participation. Furthermore, the principles of scientific integrity, analytical objectivity, and respect for Welch Packaging Group's organizational culture were upheld (Emanuel et al., 2008).

Chapter IV

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results:

Based on the qualitative treatment of the information gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis, consistent patterns were identified that confirmed the positive impact of organizational culture on the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group. The data analyzed revealed a strong alignment between institutional values and daily practices, which validated the central hypothesis of the researchnamely, that Welch Packaging Group's organizational culture functioned as a key strategic factor enhancing its productive and operational performance.

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One of the most relevant findings was the transversal cultural coherence observed across the various business units, despite the organization's geographical dispersion. The interviewed leaders emphasized that the cultural pillars customer, employee, and community were not only present in the institutional discourse but were also reflected in concrete actions such as collaborative work, decentralized decision-making, and a clear focus on continuous improvement. These elements fostered conditions conducive to efficient, adaptable, and innovative operations, as noted by authors such as Cameron & Quinn (2011) and Denison (2000).

From the employees' perspective, a high degree of identification with the corporate culture was perceived, which translated into greater commitment, a sense of belonging, and openness to change. The presence of leaders who acted as cultural transmitters, such as the General Manager and the Sales Manager East, was key to maintaining organizational cohesion across diverse operational environments, consistent with the perspectives of Yukl (2013) and Daft (2021).

Additionally, the customer-oriented and flexible organizational structure supported operational agility and timely responsiveness, reinforcing the idea that Welch Packaging Group’s culture not only drove efficiency but also became a key intangible asset for sustainability and competitiveness.

Regarding potential misalignments, although slight variations were detected in the interpretation of certain values among units, these did not represent significant ruptures. Rather, they were seen as opportunities for continuous improvement that could be addressed through internal diagnostic tools with a predictive focus, as proposed by Schneider, Ehrhart, and Macey (2013).

4.2 Conclusions:

This research confirmed that organizational culture represents a fundamental strategic component in the operational performance of Welch Packaging Group. Through a qualitative approach centered on the experiences of both leaders and employees, it was shown that the organization maintains a strong alignment between its institutional values

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and operational practices, which enhances its efficiency, internal cohesion, and adaptability to changing environments.

Welch Packaging Group owes a significant part of its operational performance to the strength of its organizational culture, which is grounded in pillars such as customer commitment, employee appreciation, and community contribution. These principles are effectively translated into collaborative dynamics, continuous improvement processes, functional coordination, and decision-making aligned with corporate strategy.

It was demonstrated that cultural elements directly influence operational processes, generating positive synergies between departments and fostering a culture of efficiency, innovation, and agile problem-solving. The analysis of perceptions and experiences revealed a high level of identification with the organizational culture, reinforcing cohesion among the various production units, even within a context of geographical expansion.

In summary, the organizational culture at Welch Packaging Group is not merely rhetorical it is lived, practiced, and serves as a driver of sustained performance. The company demonstrates that a well-managed corporate culture can be translated into real, sustainable, and scalable competitive advantages.

In conclusion, the results confirm that the organizational culture at Welch Packaging Group exists not only as a symbolic statement but is actively and consistently manifested, functioning as a strategic driver of its operational performance. The organization shows that its productivity is not solely the result of technical or logistical capabilities but of a cohesive culture, lived and shared by its members.

4.3 Recommendations:

4.3.1 Development of Cultural Diagnostic Tools with a Mixed-Methods Approach:

It is recommended to design and implement diagnostic instruments that combine qualitative methods (such as interviews and focus groups) with quantitative approaches (such as structured surveys). These tools should validate internal perceptions and

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anticipate cultural misalignments. It is advisable for the Human Talent Management team and organizational analysts to conduct these diagnostics quarterly, with the aim of identifying cultural deviations that may impact operational performance and proposing concrete corrective actions.

4.3.2 Periodic Application of Predictive Cultural Assessments:

Growing companies like Welch Packaging Group are encouraged to conduct biannual cultural evaluations using defined indicators (e.g., turnover, employee engagement, satisfaction, organizational climate) for each operational unit. This task should be carried out by the Human Resources department in coordination with process leaders to timely detect cultural deviations and prevent them from escalating into operational failures. The main goal is to maintain cultural cohesion aligned with strategic objectives.

4.3.3 Expansion of the Study to Include Longitudinal Analyses:

It is recommended to expand the scope of this study by incorporating longitudinal analyses that measure the evolution of organizational culture and its correlation with productivity over time. The internal research team, supported by external consultants if needed, should annually apply statistical models (such as factor analysis or multiple regression). This initiative will allow for the assessment of the sustained impact of organizational culture on operational results and enable proactive adjustments to cultural strategies.

4.3.4 Replication of the Study in Other Industrial Sector Organizations:

It is advised to replicate this research in industrial sector companies with diverse organizational structures and cultures. This task should be undertaken by university research teams or organizational development departments, using comparative studies or multiple case studies. Replications should be carried out annually in order to enrich applied knowledge, validate findings, and generate recommendations adapted to various organizational contexts.

4.3.5 Development and Training of Cultural Leaders:

It is proposed to implement cultural training programs targeting mid-level and

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operational leaders, with content tailored to the specific characteristics of each organizational unit. These programs should be conducted semiannually, coordinated by the Human Talent area in partnership with specialized facilitators. The goal is to strengthen leadership competencies in cultural transmission, positive influence, and the sustained reinforcement of organizational values over time.

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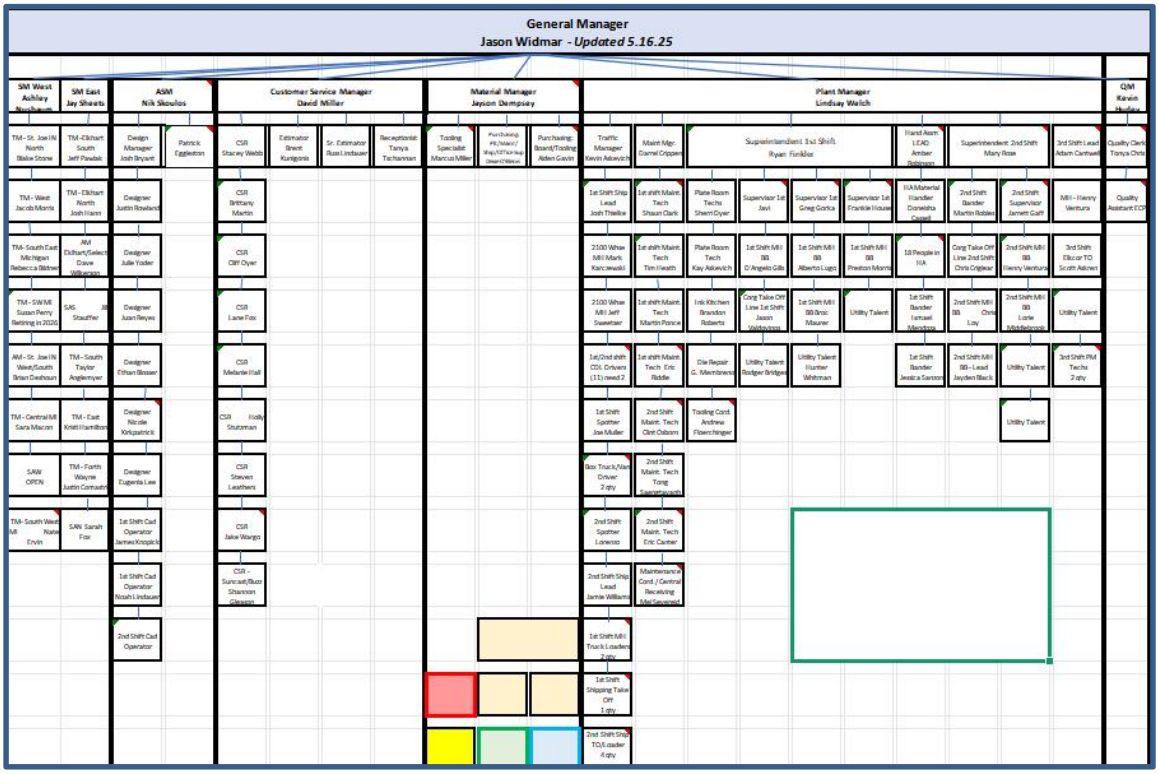
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Appendices



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