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Abstract

This dissertation examines how everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture within the United States technology sector, a setting whose firms publish unusually explicit values while operating under close public scrutiny. Although the relationship between leadership and culture is well established, existing research works largely at the level of leadership styles and espoused values, leaving the step by step process by which an observed behaviour becomes a shared norm comparatively undeveloped. The study adopts an interpretivist philosophy and a qualitative, secondary design. A two strand corpus was assembled: twenty peer reviewed empirical studies, and recorded employee voice comprising sixty six extracts from four published qualitative studies of technology sector workplaces. The corpus was analysed through thematic synthesis, with Braun and Clarke's six phases as the coding procedure and a framework integrating Schein's levels of culture with Bandura's social learning theory as a sensitising lens. Four themes were generated: employees audit words against deeds; what is rewarded and tolerated forms an enacted curriculum, whose lessons depend on who is excused as well as what; single incidents of leader response are where norms form fastest; and the leader's signal has boundaries. Across the corpus, enacted conduct defeats espoused declaration wherever the two conflict. The contribution is the audit and consequence model of cultural transmission, which repositions espoused values from channel of influence to audit standard. Recommendations direct leadership development at everyday behaviour, since interventions aimed at value statements alone are unlikely to succeed.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	5
1.1 Introduction.....	5
1.2 Background of the Study.....	5
1.3 Problem Statement.....	6
1.4 Aims and Objectives	6
1.5 Research Questions/Hypotheses	7
1.6 Significance of the Research	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	7
1.8 Rationale of the Study	7
1.9 Structure/Organisation of the Report.....	8
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Organisational Culture: Concepts and Models.....	9
2.3 Leadership Behaviour: Concepts and Theories	10
2.4 The Relationship Between Leadership Behaviour and Organisational Culture ...	11
2.5 Theoretical Framework.....	13
2.6 The Research Gap.....	15
Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology	17
3.1 Introduction.....	17
3.2 Research Philosophy	17
3.3 Approach to Theory Development	18
3.4 Methodological Choice	18
3.5 Research Strategy	19
3.6 Time Horizon.....	19
3.7 Data Collection and Data Analysis	19
3.8 Ethical Considerations of the Research	23
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussions	24
4.1 Introduction.....	24
4.2 Profile of the Source Corpus.....	24
4.3 Main Analysis.....	26
4.4 Discussion of Findings	30
4.5 Implications of the Findings.....	32
4.6 Summary.....	33
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations	33
5.1 Introduction.....	33
5.2 Conclusions on Each Research Issue/Objective	33

5.3 Conclusions on the Research Problem	34
5.4 Summary of Research Findings and Outcomes	34
5.5 Original Contribution of the Research	34
5.6 Limitations of the Research	35
5.7 Recommendations and Areas for Further Research	36
5.8 Summary	37
References	37

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Structure of the dissertation.....	8
Figure 2.1 The three levels of organisational culture (adapted from Schein, 2010).....	10
Figure 2.2 The behavioural transmission of organisational culture (author's synthesis)	14
Figure 3.1 The research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019)	17
Figure 3.2 Corpus selection process for both strands	22
Figure 4.1 Completed corpus selection flow with counts at each stage	25
Figure 4.2 Thematic map: four themes and their relation to the research question.....	29
Figure 5.1 The audit and consequence model of cultural transmission.....	35

List of Tables

Table 2.1 Theoretical tensions staged in the review and their treatment in the framework	15
Table 3.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria and sampling rules for the two corpus strands	21
Table 3.2 Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases as operationalised in this study.....	22
Table 4.1 Profile of the analysed corpus.....	26
Table 4.2 Themes by evidencing sources	29

The Influence of Everyday Leadership Behaviours on Organisational Culture: A Qualitative Study of the United States Technology Sector

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Organisations are widely assumed to shape their culture through the values they proclaim: mission statements, published codes and strategic messaging. In practice, its origins are less formal. Culture is sustained by what leaders actually do in ordinary moments, and employees tend to read an organisation's priorities from those everyday behaviours more than from its official pronouncements (Schein, 2010; Robbins *et al.*, 2019). This dissertation examines that distance between the stated and the lived in the United States technology sector, where firms set out their values in unusually explicit terms and the fit between declaration and practice attracts sustained scholarly and public attention. The study asks how the routine conduct of leaders, a manager's reaction to a mistake, whose work is singled out for praise, becomes embedded as the shared norms that make up an organisation's culture. It is a qualitative, interpretivist and secondary study, read through two lenses: Schein's (2010) three levels of culture and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. The chapter defines the problem, states the aim, objectives and research question, then significance, scope, rationale and structure.

1.2 Background of the Study

Organisational culture is usually defined as the shared assumptions, values and norms that inform 'how things are done' within a workplace (Schein, 2010; Kummerow and Kirby, 2013). Two developments have sharpened interest in how it is formed. The first is the disruption of working routines: the pandemic unsettled practices previously taken for granted (Spicer, 2020), and hybrid working has arguably thinned the incidental interactions from which employees once inferred acceptable conduct, making deliberate leader behaviour more consequential and more closely watched. The second is intensified scrutiny of whether organisations practise what they declare. The United States technology sector brings these pressures into sharp relief: its leading firms codify culture to an unusual degree and operate under visibility that quickly exposes misalignment between word and practice. Leadership carries particular weight there, because employees infer what an organisation rewards and tolerates largely from the conduct of those in authority (Yukl, 2013).

1.3 Problem Statement

Although the relationship between leadership and culture is well established, much of the literature works at the level of broad styles, transformational, transactional or authentic, or of formally espoused values. Less attention has fallen on the granular, everyday behaviours through which culture is actually reproduced (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Alvesson, 2013). This leaves a specific gap. Argyris and Schön (1974) distinguished the values organisations espouse from the theories that actually govern conduct, yet the behavioural process connecting the two appears to be traced in detail far less often than its importance would suggest, a claim Chapter Two develops and substantiates. It is one matter to observe that leaders influence culture; it is another to explain, step by step, how an observed behaviour is imitated, reinforced and eventually taken for granted as the way things are done. The problem matters most where words and practice are furthest apart, and the technology sector is a conspicuous case; this study therefore treats everyday leadership behaviour as its unit of analysis and articulates, through social learning theory, how such behaviour becomes shared expectation.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to examine how everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture within the United States technology sector. This aim is pursued through four linked objectives:

1. To review and synthesise the literature on the relationship between everyday leadership behaviour and organisational culture.
2. To identify the everyday leadership behaviours that shape employee perceptions of acceptable conduct in the technology sector.
3. To explore how leadership behaviour contributes to the gap between espoused and enacted culture.
4. To develop recommendations for how leaders can strengthen organisational culture through everyday leadership behaviours.

1.5 Research Questions/Hypotheses

The research is guided by a single question: *How do everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture within the United States technology sector?* As an interpretivist, qualitative and inductively oriented study, it advances a research question rather than hypotheses: the aim is to interpret patterns of meaning within existing scholarship, not to test propositions defined in advance.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The significance is theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study offers a behavioural account of how leadership shapes culture at the level of mechanism, connecting Schein's (2010) levels to Bandura's (1977) processes of observation, imitation and reinforcement, a focus on transmission often lost beneath descriptions of what culture is. Practically, the study speaks to leadership development in a sector where cultural failures can carry reputational and commercial cost. If culture is reproduced through routine conduct, interventions aimed at values statements alone are likely to fall short, so the recommendations are directed at everyday behaviour itself. The contribution to policy is modest.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Everyday leadership behaviours require a deliberate boundary: here the term denotes the ordinary, observable acts by which leaders signal what is expected, the behaviours they notice and reward and those they quietly tolerate. It excludes formal strategy, isolated change programmes and codified human resource policy, which work through different channels. The empirical focus is the United States technology sector. The corpus combines general scholarship on leadership and culture with published studies of technology sector workplaces, so the general mechanism and its sectoral expression are examined together; employee perceptions are accessed through the interview and fieldwork accounts recorded in published studies, with selection explained in Chapter Three. The study is secondary throughout: no primary data are collected, and no claim is made to organisation specific or statistically generalisable findings. Its aim is to interpret and explain, not to measure.

1.8 Rationale of the Study

A secondary design suits the question because the mechanism linking everyday behaviour to cultural norm is already addressed, if unevenly, across a dispersed scholarship spanning culture, leadership and social learning, and synthesis can draw patterns from many contexts in a way a single case could not. The technology sector is well served by academic and

documentary sources, and its explicit cultural claims provide a demanding test of how far everyday behaviour accounts for the space between commitment and conduct. An interpretivist and inductively oriented approach, qualified in Chapter Three, suits a question about meaning and fits the ethical approval, which covers secondary research without human participants. The researcher's own interest lies in precisely that gap.

1.9 Structure/Organisation of the Report

The dissertation proceeds in five chapters (Figure 1.1). Chapter Two reviews the literature thematically and builds the framework integrating Schein's model with Bandura's social learning theory. Chapter Three justifies the interpretivist, qualitative and secondary design and details how the corpus of published research and employee voice was selected and analysed. Chapter Four presents the themes generated from that corpus as data and discusses them against the framework. Chapter Five concludes against each objective, states the original contribution, acknowledges limitations and offers recommendations.

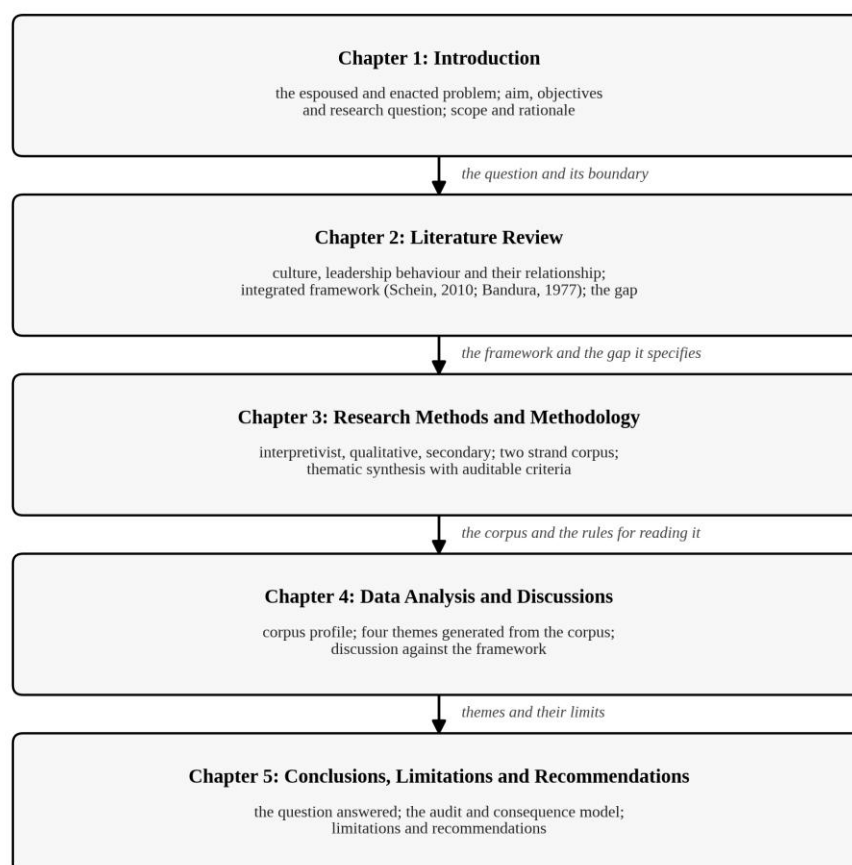


Figure 1.1: Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the ground on which the dissertation stands, moving through three areas: how organisational culture has been conceptualised; how leadership behaviour has been theorised; and what is known about the relationship between the two. The culture literature provides the architecture of the phenomenon, the leadership literature the actor, and the literature on their relationship exposes the question that motivates this study: by what process does an ordinary act of leadership become a shared norm? The question is pursued within the United States technology sector, with the study's corpus, defined in Chapter Three, analysed in Chapter Four. The chapter closes by integrating Schein's (2010) model with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory into the framework that orients that analysis, and by stating the gap.

2.2 Organisational Culture: Concepts and Models

Any claim that leaders shape culture rests on a prior question about what kind of thing culture is. Smircich (1983) drew the foundational distinction between culture as something an organisation has, a variable that can be diagnosed and managed, and culture as something an organisation is, a root metaphor: a pattern of meaning that constitutes the organisation itself. The distinction matters because it sets the limits of leadership influence. If culture is a possession, it can in principle be engineered; if it is a root metaphor, talk of shaping it becomes a category error. Much managerial writing assumes the first position without defending it (Alvesson, 2013). The evidence reviewed below suggests culture can be influenced, but through humbler, more behavioural channels than the managerial reading implies.

Within the tradition that treats culture as analysable, Schein's (2010) model remains the most widely used (Figure 2.1). Culture operates at three levels: artefacts, the visible structures, practices and observable behaviour; espoused values, its stated principles and justifications; and underlying assumptions, the taken for granted beliefs that actually direct conduct. The model's value for this study lies in its middle layer: by separating what an organisation says from what its members assume, Schein builds misalignment into the definition of culture itself, since espoused values may or may not correspond to the assumptions in use. Schein and Schein (2017) retain the architecture while giving greater emphasis to leaders' relational conduct, a shift that itself signals the field's movement towards behaviour.

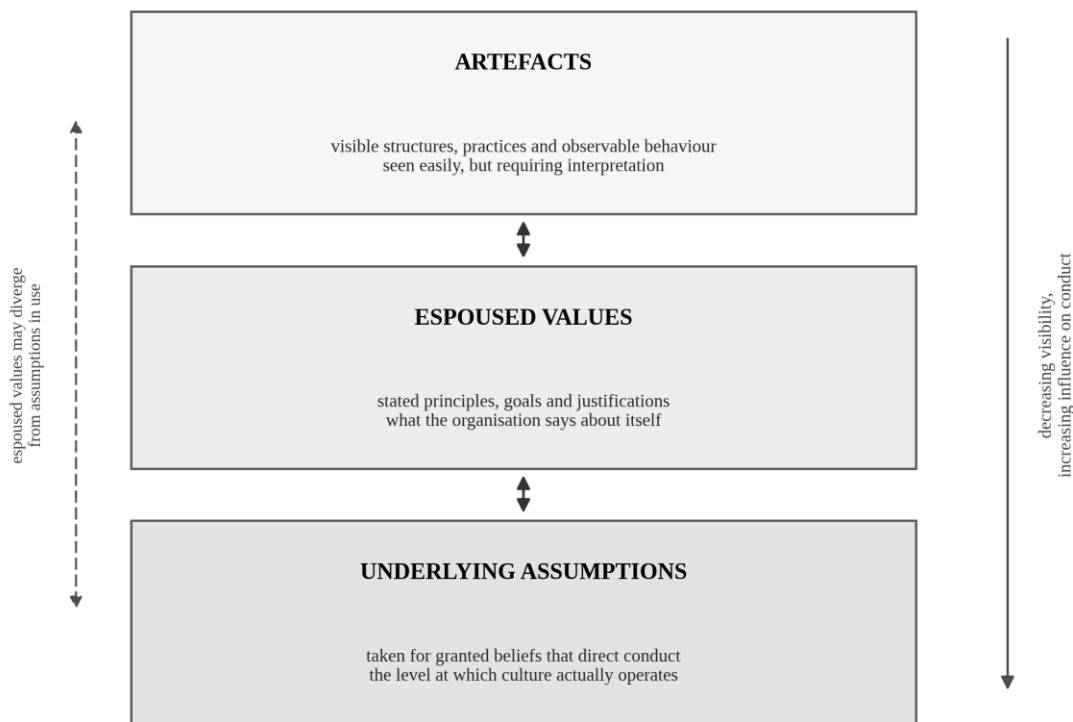


Figure 2.1: The three levels of organisational culture (adapted from Schein, 2010)

Two criticisms qualify the model, and a broader caution surrounds it. Hatch (1993) argues that the model is static: it names the strata of culture but says little about the continuous processes through which artefacts, values and assumptions produce one another. Martin (2002) questions the assumption of unity: organisations can be read through integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspectives at once, and the culture a leader supposedly shapes may in fact be several. The caution is definitional: Kummerow and Kirby (2013) document the field's long standing plurality, and typological models such as the Competing Values Framework classify cultures without explaining transmission (Hartnell, Ou and Kinicki, 2011), so they are set aside. The debate also has a contemporary front: culture is increasingly read from the everyday language employees produce, making enacted meaning observable at scale (Corritore, Goldberg and Srivastava, 2020a). These criticisms do not overturn the model; they specify what it lacks: an explanation of movement between levels, and alertness to plurality within any single organisation. Both requirements shape section 2.5.

2.3 Leadership Behaviour: Concepts and Theories

For much of its history, leadership research has operated at the level of style. Burns (1978) distinguished transactional exchange from transforming leadership that raises the motivation

of followers, and Bass and Riggio (2006) developed the distinction into a full range of leadership in which transformational conduct produces commitment beyond contract. The styles tradition established that leaders matter empirically. Its weakness is one of altitude. A style is an aggregate, typically assessed by questionnaire, abstracting away precisely what employees encounter: the specific, repeated acts of a particular manager on a particular day.

A second strand works closer to the ground. Yukl (2013) catalogues the concrete behaviours through which influence operates, including role modelling, reinforcement and the allocation of attention, describing conduct without yet explaining what it builds; two constructs have since given this behavioural level theoretical definition. Ethical leadership research defines the leader as a role model whose conduct teaches followers what is acceptable, grounding the construct explicitly in social learning theory (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005); a recent synthesis of fifteen years of evidence finds a consistent association between leaders perceived in these terms and favourable follower outcomes (Amory *et al.*, 2024). Behavioural integrity research narrows the focus further, to the perceived alignment between a manager's words and deeds; Simons (2002) argues that employees track this alignment closely and read it as information about what the organisation really requires. Twenty years of subsequent work has documented consistent consequences of that alignment for trust and performance while leaving its cultural dimension comparatively undeveloped (Simons, Leroy and Nishii, 2022).

The two strands thus reveal an uneven field: styles research connects leadership to outcomes but not to everyday conduct, while the behavioural constructs describe that conduct precisely but developed within the ethics literature, oriented to follower attitudes, not to culture as Schein defines it. The building blocks exist; their integration with a model of culture is the business of the next section.

2.4 The Relationship Between Leadership Behaviour and Organisational Culture

At first sight the integration the previous section found missing already exists, with distinguished advocates. Schein (2010) goes furthest: leaders embed their assumptions through what he calls primary mechanisms, among them what they pay attention to, what they measure and reward, how they react to critical incidents and the behaviour they model. On this account, everyday conduct is not one influence on culture among many; it is the primary teaching instrument. Bass and Avolio (1993) advance the complementary claim from the leadership side, arguing that transformational leaders can remake an organisation's culture. Both positions

assert a strong, directional and largely unqualified causal arrow from leader behaviour to shared meaning, and neither explains how the embedding occurs.

The empirical record recommends more caution. In an early large scale test, Ogbonna and Harris (2000) found that leadership style related to organisational performance only indirectly, through its association with culture: what leaders do reaches outcomes by way of cultural form, not around it. Later quantitative work, including meta analytic evidence, confirms the association while operating at the aggregate level of styles and culture types (Hartnell, Ou and Kinicki, 2011). The evidence is cross sectional, questionnaire based and, for Ogbonna and Harris, drawn from UK firms, so its caution is itself provisional for a behavioural question about the United States technology sector. Alvesson (2013) presses a further point: culture also operates on leaders, selecting who rises and shaping what is recognised as leadership, so the arrow runs both ways. The tension is better resolved by conditions than by compromise. The claim that leaders make culture is most plausible where conduct is visible, consistent and close at hand, and weakest where cultures are plural and histories long; these conditions are this study's own position, grounded in the visibility social learning requires (Bandura, 1977), the word and deed sensitivity Simons (2002) describes and the plurality Martin (2002) documents.

The two literatures meet most productively on alignment. Argyris and Schön (1974) distinguished the espoused theories people offer to explain their conduct from the theories in use that actually govern it, and argued that practice runs on the latter. Applied to organisations, it gives the leadership and culture relationship its sharpest edge: if members learn culture from what is done, then a leader whose conduct contradicts the organisation's stated values is not failing to transmit culture but transmitting a different one. Simons (2002) gives this process its perceptual core at the level of the individual manager. A practitioner analysis of a large employee review corpus points the same way: accounts of toxic workplaces dwell on disrespect and unethical behaviour, the enacted signal dominating the espoused when the two diverge (Sull, Sull and Zweig, 2022). Yet the step by step passage from witnessed act to shared assumption remains the least developed part of this literature; the most recent synthesis of behavioural integrity research records strong evidence for the consequences of alignment and little on its cultural workings (Simons, Leroy and Nishii, 2022).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The framework is built from the two theories this review has repeatedly approached. From Schein it takes its architecture: culture as three levels, with the possibility of misalignment between espoused values and underlying assumptions built into the model. What the model leaves untheorised, as Hatch (1993) makes clear, is the traffic between levels. Hatch's own remedy locates those dynamics in symbolic processes difficult to observe directly; for a study whose unit is the visible everyday act, Bandura (1977) offers a mechanism better matched to the material. Social learning theory holds that people acquire behaviour by observing models, imitating what appears effective or approved, and adjusting to the reinforcement that follows. Such learning requires no instruction and no intention on the part of the model; it requires only visibility and consequence. The theory is adopted knowingly: it is nearly five decades old, and Bandura (1986) later extended it into a fuller social cognitive theory; the 1977 formulation is retained for its parsimony and its focus on observable modelling, suited to a secondary study of visible conduct. It is also a theory of individual acquisition, so applying it to the collective life of organisations stretches it beyond its native use, a limit that matters below.

Joined, the two theories yield a specific account of transmission. A leader's routine act is an artefact in Schein's terms, visible and interpretable; employees observe it, and Bandura's processes convert observation into conduct. Behaviour seen to be rewarded is imitated; imitation that is reinforced becomes habit; and habit repeated across an organisation hardens into expectation, the point at which it approaches the assumption level. Non response belongs in the same chain. Conduct a leader tolerates reads as approved, the absence of sanction functioning as reinforcement in Bandura's terms and as a reaction to a critical incident in Schein's. The framework therefore attends to five behavioural levers, all already present in the material reviewed above: what leaders attend to, what they reward, how they respond to incidents, what they model and what they tolerate.

Empirical work supports the early links in this chain. Ethical leadership research finds that followers of leaders perceived as ethical are more willing to raise problems and to give effort, a pattern consistent with role modelling (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005), and Edmondson (1999) shows that psychological safety varies team by team with how leaders respond to questions, admissions and risk. Read through the chain, a question met without penalty is more likely to be repeated and copied until speaking up becomes the team's expectation. The final link, from many private imitations to a genuinely shared and taken for granted assumption, is the one the literature leaves least evidenced, and it is also the point at which an individual

theory of learning is asked to do collective work. The framework therefore does not close the gap identified in section 2.4; it specifies it, converting a vague thinness into a defined passage that analysis can examine. Figure 2.2 depicts this integration.

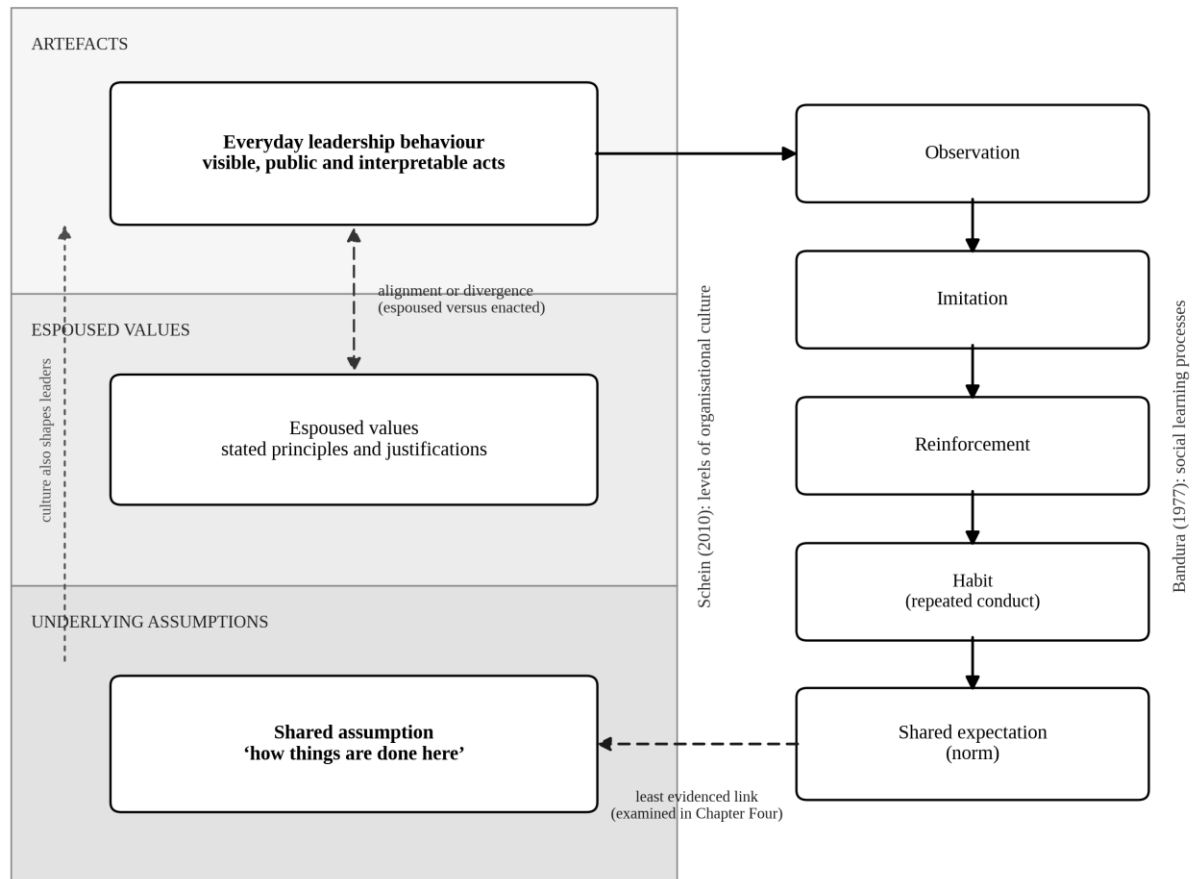


Figure 2.2: The behavioural transmission of organisational culture, integrating Schein's (2010) levels with Bandura's (1977) social learning processes (synthesis)

Adopting the framework brings obligations inherited from the critiques above. Because Bandura's processes operate through what people can see, transmission is local: employees learn from the leaders they actually observe, which anticipates Martin's (2002) subcultural variation rather than a single culture radiating from the top, and under her fragmentation reading the chain may not complete at all. Locality also means transmission concentrates in the leaders employees see daily, so the study's attention, and its eventual recommendations, bear chiefly on line and middle management conduct. The mechanism gives employees the active role, observation and interpretation, so influence is bounded by what followers notice and how they read it, conceding much of Alvesson's (2013) caution without abandoning the claim that behaviour matters. Founder accounts of culture creation (Schein, 2010) are set aside on the same logic: the study concerns how culture is maintained by ordinary leaders, not how it

originates. Here the study takes its position in Smircich's (1983) contest: culture is partially open to influence through behavioural channels, a middle course between possession and pure metaphor. Advanced as a lens and not a law, the framework accepts that culture is also made by history, by systems and by members themselves.

Recent conditions make the sector a demanding test in the framework's own terms: codified value statements raise the espoused baseline, so divergence is wider and easier to see, while visibility, the mechanism's precondition, is under strain. Spicer (2020) observes that the pandemic interrupted the routine practices through which culture is enacted, and evidence from information workers shows remote work weakened the ties through which conduct is observed (Yang *et al.*, 2022). Enacted culture has meanwhile become newly observable: everyday language and digital traces permit analysis at scale (Corritore, Goldberg and Srivastava, 2020b), and employee review data has characterised cultures across hundreds of firms, the technology sector prominent among them (Sull, Sull and Zweig, 2022). Chapter Three draws the study's corpus from the published record of such workplaces; Table 2.1 summarises the tensions staged here and the framework's response to each.

Table 2.1: Theoretical tensions staged in this review and their treatment in the framework

Tension	Source	Treatment in the framework
Culture as possession versus culture as root metaphor	Smircich (1983)	Middle course: culture treated as partially open to influence through behavioural channels
Levels named without transmission between them	Hatch (1993)	Bandura's processes supply the missing movement between levels
Unitary culture versus subcultures and fragmentation	Martin (2002)	Transmission is local, so plural and incomplete norm formation is expected, not assumed away
Leader agency overstated; influence runs both ways	Alvesson (2013); Ogbonna and Harris (2000)	Influence bounded by follower observation and interpretation; scope conditions stated
Individual learning theory asked to explain shared assumptions	Bandura (1977; 1986)	Named as the least evidenced link and examined directly in Chapter Four

2.6 The Research Gap

Three bodies of scholarship emerge from this review in good order, and one junction between them does not. Culture theory offers mature models of what culture is; leadership research offers validated accounts of what leaders do; the literature on their relationship offers strong claims and indirect evidence that the two are connected. What remains underspecified is the transmission process: how a particular, ordinary, observable act of leadership travels from witnessed event to workplace norm, and how that transmission widens or narrows the space

between what an organisation professes and what it practises. That divergence is unusually well documented in the technology sector (Sull, Sull and Zweig, 2022), which makes it the setting where the transmission question can best be pursued. The study addresses the question through the framework developed above: it explores how everyday leadership behaviour contributes to the gap between espoused and enacted culture, and through that gap answers the broader question of how everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture within the United States technology sector. Insofar as the analysis bears out the mechanism, the recommendations address the levers it identifies, what leaders attend to, reward, tolerate and model, and how they respond to incidents, before the values organisations declare.

Chapter 3: Research Methods and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two specified the gap and proposed the framework; this chapter defends the methodological choices through which the examination proceeded. It follows the research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Figure 3.1), from philosophy through approach, strategy and time horizon to data collection, analysis and ethics. Each choice is argued in relation to the research question, and the design's tensions are stated openly.

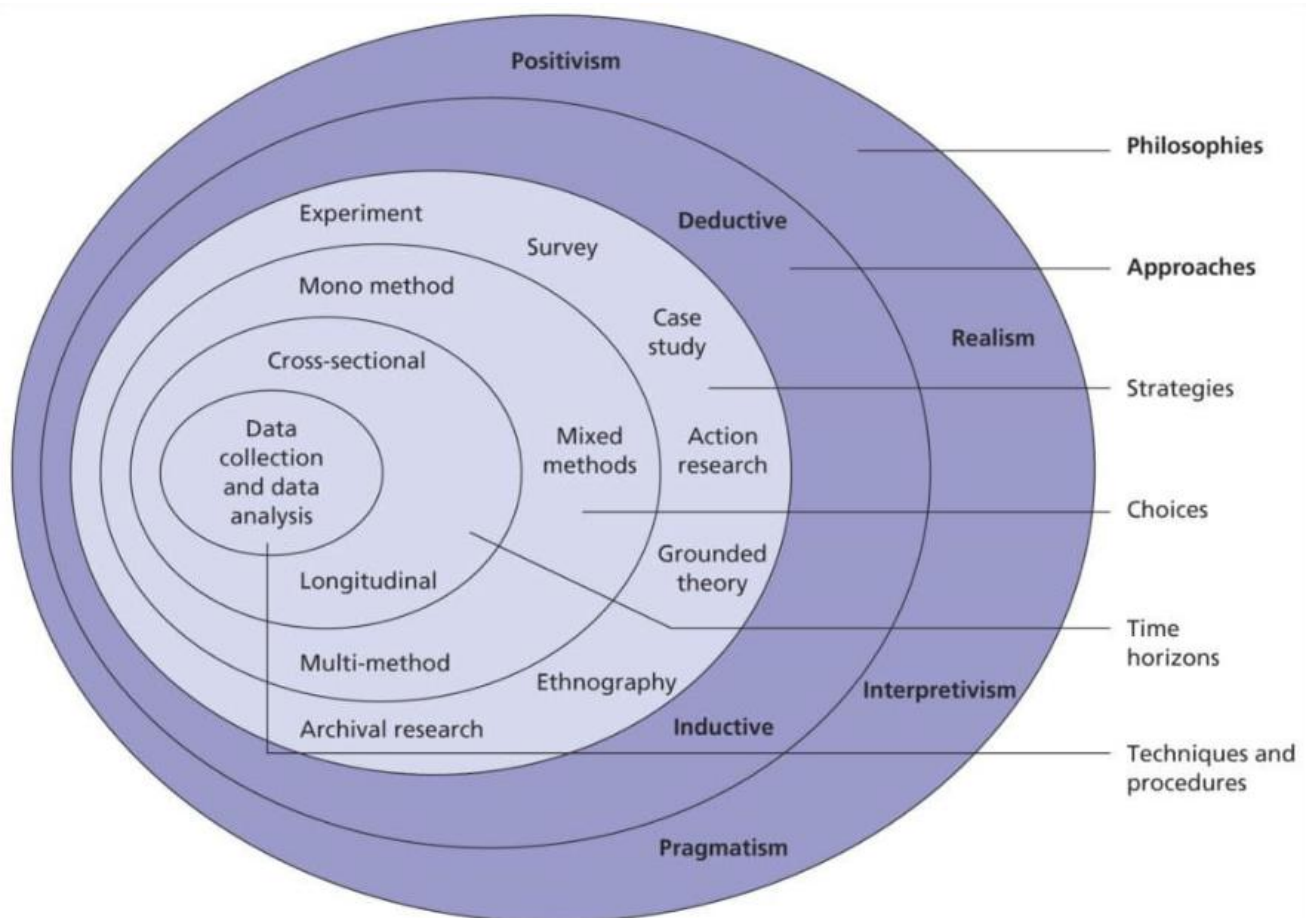


Figure 3.1: The research onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019)

3.2 Research Philosophy

The study adopts an interpretivist philosophy. The research question concerns meaning: how employees read the everyday conduct of leaders and convert what they see into shared expectations of acceptable behaviour. Norms, in this reading, are not objects that exist independently of the people who hold them; they are interpretations, sustained through observation and social learning (Bandura, 1977) and expressed in the assumptions Schein (2010) places at culture's deepest level. Two alternatives were weighed. Positivism, seeking

regularities through measured variables, cannot reach the interpretive work employees perform on what they witness. Critical realism is the stronger rival, since transmission could be framed as a generative structure beneath observable events (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019); it is set aside because the mechanism here is constituted by interpretation itself, a behaviour becoming a norm only through how employees read it, so interpretivism reaches the phenomenon more directly. Interpretivism also places the researcher inside the interpretive chain: the account is itself a reading, disciplined and audited through section 3.7.

3.3 Approach to Theory Development

The approach to theory development is inductive in orientation, with one qualification stated plainly. Induction is present in the analytic procedure: themes are generated from the corpus through open coding, and no hypotheses are tested (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Yet a purely inductive description would overstate the case: the study arrives at its data with two lenses already committed, and Chapter Two argued their integration in advance. In Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) terms the practice is closer to abduction: analysis moves between data and theory, allowing the framework to sensitise interpretation without dictating the codes. Braun and Clarke (2006) draw the same distinction between inductive and theoretical thematic analysis, and this study sits deliberately between the two. Coding begins with what the texts say; the framework is applied at the interpretive stage, when codes are organised into themes and read against the transmission chain. Naming this position is preferable to claiming a purity the design does not possess; section 3.7 holds the framework to its sensitising role.

3.4 Methodological Choice

An interpretivist reading of norm formation shapes the methodological choice: the design is mono method and qualitative (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The question asks how conduct is read and converted into expectation, situated meaning that frequency counts cannot answer and qualitative analysis preserves in context. Quantitative analysis of review and language data demonstrably characterises enacted culture at scale (Corritore, Goldberg and Srivastava, 2020a; Sull, Sull and Zweig, 2022), so a mixed design was a live option. It was set aside because the object of this study is the mechanism, not the distribution: what is needed is a close reading of how conduct is described and received, not a count. Quantifying the behavioural levers the framework identifies is noted in Chapter Five as a direction for further research.

3.5 Research Strategy

The strategy is secondary and documentary: no primary data are collected, and existing written sources are analysed as documents that record how a phenomenon is experienced and represented (Bowen, 2009). Because part of the corpus consists of published research, the study draws on thematic synthesis, a method developed for generating new themes across existing qualitative studies (Thomas and Harden, 2008). The borrowing is an acknowledged adaptation: thematic analysis was developed with researcher generated data such as interview transcripts (Braun and Clarke, 2006), and applying it to documents requires the discipline Bowen (2009) and Thomas and Harden (2008) supply, and the division of labour Chapter Two anticipated: sources appear as interlocutors in Chapter Two and as evidence in Chapter Four. One boundary governs those roles: the works that constitute the framework itself are barred from data roles, since material that defines the lens cannot also be audited through it. The justification is epistemic as well as practical: a single case could observe conduct directly but only in one setting, while the documentary record trades directness for breadth, recording how conduct is represented and received across many settings. The limit is stated with the choice: no secondary synthesis can demonstrate that a witnessed behaviour caused a norm; it yields a disciplined interpretive account of the transmission chain.

3.6 Time Horizon

Because the strategy analyses an existing record, the time horizon is cross sectional: the record is examined as it stood at the time of research, without tracking change in any organisation. The corpus spans two windows (Table 3.1; section 3.7), and one qualification applies. Chapters One and Two argued that the conditions of visibility on which social learning depends changed with the pandemic and the growth of hybrid working (Spicer, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2022), so patterns in material gathered at different periods may be period sensitive. The fieldwork period of each source was therefore recorded during coding, and apparent period effects were noted in the analysis, while the inability to draw longitudinal conclusions is acknowledged as a limitation and carried to Chapter Five.

3.7 Data Collection and Data Analysis

The corpus has two strands. Strand A comprises peer reviewed empirical studies of leadership behaviour and culture, with qualitative and mixed methods work on technology sector workplaces prioritised; its window opens in 2000, the point from which the modern empirical literature dates (Ogbonna and Harris, 2000). Strand B comprises existing qualitative material

of the kind the supervisory guidance names: verbatim employee and manager voice, the quoted interview and fieldwork extracts recorded in published qualitative studies of technology sector workplaces. The two strands therefore draw on the same documentary record in different ways. Strand A takes what researchers concluded; Strand B takes what the people they studied actually said; and the distinction is maintained at coding, where an author's claim and a participant's quoted words are never merged. A single publication may contribute to both strands in these different roles. Selection in both strands is purposive: the aim is information rich material bearing directly on the research question, not statistical representativeness (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Strand A was identified through Google Scholar, JSTOR and the UWTSD Library in two passes: a core string combining leadership terms ("leadership behaviour" OR "leader behaviour" OR "management conduct") with culture terms ("organisational culture" OR "organizational culture" OR "workplace norms"), and a sector pass adding technology terms ("technology" OR "tech" OR "software"). Sector relevance is applied at screening, not retrieval, so that the general scholarship the corpus requires is not excluded by the search itself. Searches were run in the first week of August 2026; the first one hundred results per string per database, ranked by relevance, were screened at title and abstract; duplicates were removed; and full texts were assessed against Table 3.1, to a target of fifteen to twenty included studies.

Strand B was drawn from transcript rich qualitative studies of technology sector workplaces: the qualitative and mixed methods studies already in Strand A, plus a dedicated pass for ethnographies and interview studies rich in quoted employee voice, including Kunda (2006), Turco (2016) and Perlow (1999). An extract qualifies if it is a quoted participant account, or a researcher recorded episode or artefact of leader conduct, that describes leadership or management behaviour or a norm attributed to it; the two categories are logged separately, since an episode carries the researcher's framing where a quotation carries the participant's. Every qualifying extract in each included source was taken, so selection operated at source level while the extract level was exhaustive. The fieldwork period of each source was recorded. One property of this material must be stated at the outset: published extracts have already been selected once, by the original researchers, to illustrate their own arguments. This curation is Strand B's version of sampling bias, and the safeguards below state how it is handled. Source counts were kept deliberately manageable, since thematic analysis does not equate quality with volume (Braun and Clarke, 2019), and collection was reviewed against saturation, with the judgement recorded. Table 3.1 states the criteria for both strands, and Figure 3.2 shows the

selection process; the completed flow, with counts at each stage, is reported in the corpus profile in section 4.2, adapted from systematic reporting conventions (Page *et al.*, 2021).

Table 3.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria and sampling rules for the two corpus strands

Criterion	Strand A: scholarly studies	Strand B: employee voice extracts
Include	Peer reviewed empirical studies of leadership behaviour and organisational culture; qualitative or mixed methods prioritised; English language; published 2000 to 2026	Published qualitative studies and ethnographies of technology sector workplaces containing quoted participant accounts; an extract qualifies if quoted voice, or a researcher recorded episode or artefact, records leadership or management conduct or a norm attributed to it; English language; published 1999 to 2026
Exclude	Purely conceptual pieces with no empirical material (engaged in Chapter Two instead); duplicate records across databases; non peer reviewed sources; studies with no relevance to workplace culture; sources constituting the theoretical framework (barred from data roles to avoid circularity)	Sources with no quoted participant voice or recorded leader conduct; quotes with no leadership or norm content; practitioner or journalistic sources; duplicated reporting of the same fieldwork
Sampling rule	First one hundred results per string per database screened; target of fifteen to twenty included studies	Source level purposive selection of transcript rich studies; extract level exhaustive: every qualifying quoted extract in an included source is taken

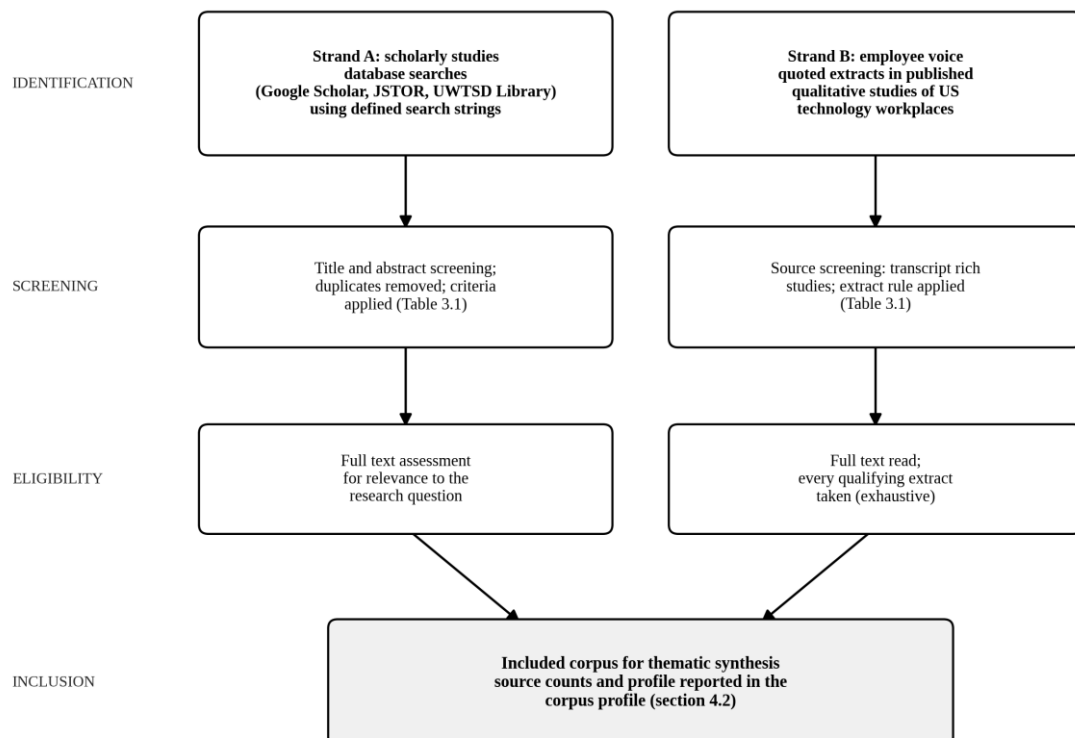


Figure 3.2: Corpus selection process for both strands, from identification to inclusion

Analysis follows the six phases described by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition and reporting. The study follows those phases while adopting the reflexive orientation of the method's later development, in which the audit trail documents judgement without claiming to eliminate it (Braun and Clarke, 2019; Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Coding is semantic in the first pass, staying near the language of the texts; the transmission chain and five levers enter at the interpretive stage as sensitising concepts, as defended in section 3.3. Two commitments hold them to that role. Material that does not fit the chain, norms with no leader referent or conduct that fails to propagate, is actively sought, coded and reported, an outcome the fragmentation reading treats as possible. The researcher's position is stated: the study was approached expecting everyday conduct to matter, and the reflexive notes record where the texts resisted that expectation. The code book records each theme's lever and leadership level, line, senior or unspecified, so Chapter Five's recommendations can be traced lever by lever to themes. Coding attends symmetrically to conduct that builds norms and conduct that erodes them. Table 3.2 maps each phase to its operationalisation and audit artefact.

Table 3.2: Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases as operationalised in this study

Phase	Operationalisation in this study	Audit artefact
Familiarisation	Close reading of included studies and reviews; initial notes per source	Reading notes
Coding	Semantic codes close to the language of the texts, applied across both strands	Code book (versioned)
Theme development	Codes clustered into candidate themes; levers and transmission chain applied as sensitising concepts	Theme map drafts
Theme review	Themes checked against coded extracts and full corpus; negative cases actively sought; strand specificity labelled	Audit trail entries
Theme definition	Themes named and defined; lever and leadership level recorded per theme	Final code book
Reporting	Themes presented in Chapter Four with paraphrased evidence and corpus profile	Chapter Four and section 4.2

Trustworthiness is pursued through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Nowell *et al.*, 2017): dependability and confirmability rest on the trail, code book and reflexive notes, transferability on the thick corpus description in section 4.2. Two credibility techniques are unavailable by design, member checking and multiple coders, so confirmability depends wholly on the documented trail; naming that

dependence is part of the strategy. Three further safeguards address the known weaknesses of this material. First, curation: quoted extracts were chosen by their original authors to support particular arguments, so no theme is accepted on the strength of a single publication; a theme must be evidenced in at least two independent sources, and the provenance of every extract, its study, method, setting and fieldwork period, is recorded in the code book. Second, the strand rule: themes appearing in both strands are reported as cross strand themes, while themes appearing in one strand are retained but labelled strand specific, with an interpretation of the other strand's silence. Third, quoted voice is treated throughout as perception, evidence of how conduct was experienced and narrated, never as a factual record of what any organisation did. The research was conducted between June and August 2026, with the corpus locked on 4 August and analysis completed in the days that followed.

3.8 Ethical Considerations of the Research

A design without human participants narrows, but does not remove, the ethical questions the study must answer. There are no interviews, questionnaires or personal data, and the study operates entirely within its approved ethical scope: every text analysed is already published scholarly material. Participants voiced in Strand B extracts were recruited, consented and anonymised by the original researchers under their own approvals, protection this study inherits. Extracts are quoted only as published, with their original anonymised attributions, and no attempt is made to identify any speaker or organisation beyond what the publication states. Fair representation is the second obligation: extracts are read in the context of the reporting study, and the curation safeguard prevents any single author's selection from driving a theme. Integrity otherwise rests on transparent sourcing, a clear separation between evidence and interpretation, and the explicit criteria of Table 3.1. All working materials are stored on a password protected device accessible only to the researcher, consistent with the approved ethics application and the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports what the corpus shows: the profile of the material analysed (4.2), the four themes generated from it (4.3), their discussion against the framework (4.4) and their implications (4.5). Two commitments from Chapter Three govern what follows. Themes are accepted only where they are evidenced in at least two independent sources, and material that resists the framework, norms without leaders and leader conduct that failed, is reported with the same care as material that fits. Sources appear here in their data role: what follows analyses what studies record and what employees are quoted as saying, not what their authors argue.

4.2 Profile of the Source Corpus

The corpus comprises twenty one unique sources in two strands. Strand A holds twenty peer reviewed empirical studies, published between 2001 and 2025, identified from thirty two verified candidates through the staged flow Figure 4.1 reports, with twelve excluded against the criteria in Table 3.1. Two fell to the framework rule: sources constituting the theoretical lens cannot also serve as data. Seven of the twenty included studies are qualitative or mixed methods; the remainder are quantitative studies of field and archival data. Settings span Silicon Valley startups, established technology firms and software and game development teams, plus single sector studies (health care, military, service) entering as construct level evidence and flagged where they carry weight. Strand B holds recorded employee voice from four full text sources, extracted exhaustively: Perlow's (1999) ethnography of a Fortune 500 software group; Hodgson and Briand's (2013) game studio case study; Alfrey and Twine's (2017) interviews with women and gender fluid engineers in Silicon Valley; and Alami, Zahedi and Krancher's (2023) interview study of agile teams. The retrieved texts of the second and third were verified word for word; quotations are reproduced verbatim, with pages, only from those two, and material from the other two is paraphrased with attribution.

Nine sources were considered: six transcript rich studies carried over from Strand A (Baron, Hannan and Burton's study was not carried forward, its published extracts too sparse to qualify) and the three from the dedicated pass. Three of the nine, Detert and Treviño (2010), Sharp and Robinson (2004) and Mamatha and Geetanjali (2020), were excluded because no lawful full text could be obtained, and the book length ethnographies of Kunda (2006) and Turco (2016) because only partial text was available. Exhaustive extraction yielded sixty six extracts, mainly direct quotations plus eight researcher recorded episodes and one documented artefact, each

logged with attribution, location and fieldwork period; one author analysis passage was reassigned to the findings level record. Saturation was judged reached at the fourth source and the judgement recorded. Three sources contribute to both strands in the different roles Chapter Three defined. One property must be weighed before the themes: access shaped the corpus. The five Strand B exclusions were driven by availability, not relevance, and the four remaining sources skew towards software work and towards authors interested in control, safety and inequality. Geographically the strand spans two United States settings, one Canadian studio and one multi country sample, disclosed because the study's frame is the United States sector; the claims below are anchored in, not exclusive to, that country. The two source rule and the negative case commitment mitigate the risk that one author's selection drives a theme; the profile lets the reader judge the base of every claim below. Figure 4.1 completes the selection flow, and Table 4.1 summarises the profile.

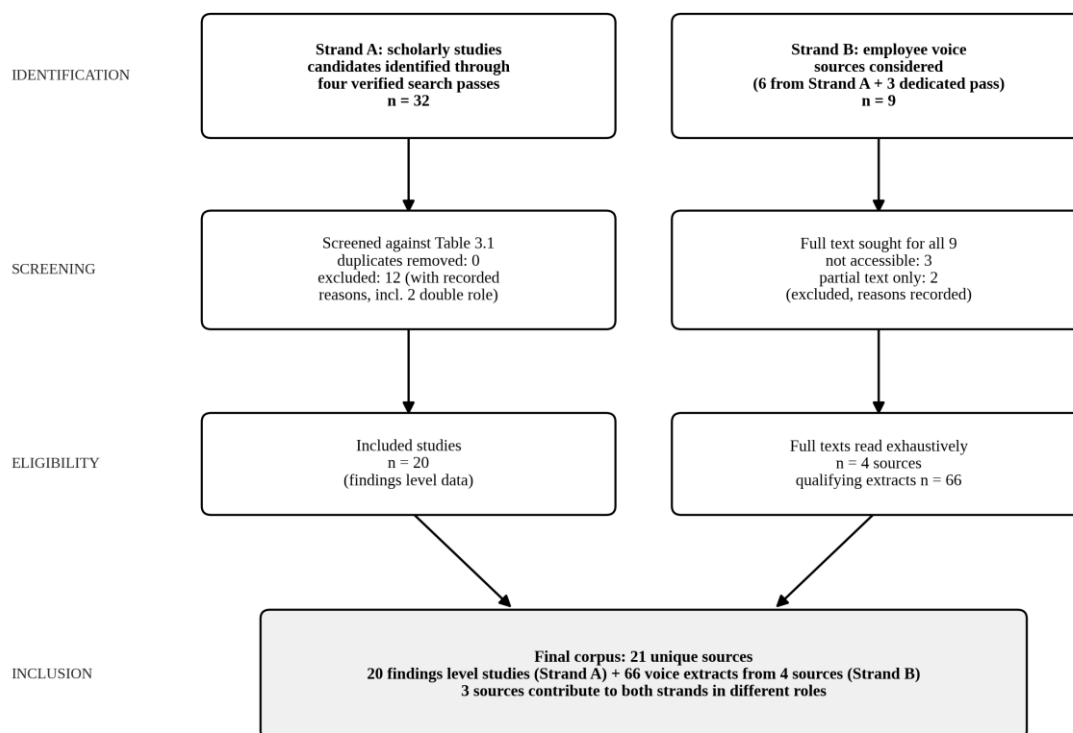


Figure 4.1: Completed corpus selection flow with counts at each stage

Table 4.1: Profile of the analysed corpus

Property	Strand A: findings level	Strand B: employee voice
Sources	20 peer reviewed empirical studies	4 full text sources (of 9 considered)
Publication years	2001 to 2025	1999 to 2023
Fieldwork periods	As reported per study	1990s to mid 2010s (three co located settings); 2022 (multi country agile teams)
Methods	7 qualitative or mixed; 13 quantitative (field and archival)	Ethnography (1), case study (1), interview studies (2)
Settings	Technology firms and teams; single sector studies (health care, military, service) as construct level evidence	Fortune 500 software group (US); Canadian game studio; Silicon Valley firms; multi country agile software teams
Unit analysed	Reported findings	66 extracts: quotations, 8 recorded episodes, 1 artefact (plus negative case set)
Dual role sources	3 sources also contribute voice to Strand B	Perlow (1999) is Strand B only

4.3 Main Analysis

Four themes were generated through the phases of section 3.7, each defined, evidenced from both strands and tagged by lever and leadership level. Their order follows the chain: what employees do with declarations, what consequence teaches, where single moments teach, and where leader influence stops. All four met the two source rule; none survived review as strand specific, leaving no silences to interpret. Figure 4.2 maps the themes to the research question, and Table 4.2 shows which sources evidence each theme.

Theme 1: words audited against deeds. Across all four voice sources, employees appear not as passive receivers of culture but as auditors: declarations are collected and tested against what leaders then do. In the agile teams study, a participant weighs the values booklet against managerial practice and concludes that what matters is whether managers embody the behaviour, the declaration alone proving nothing (Alami, Zahedi and Krancher, 2023). The game studio supplies the audit's other side. A producer who espouses working in 'convince mode' (Hodgson and Briand, 2013, pp. 316-317), and team leaders who call themselves 'coaches' (p. 317), presented an organisation chart assigning decision making power to the producer while the experts' band carried no reference to power at all (p. 319), hierarchy re inscribed inside a nominally flat culture. In Perlow's ethnography, a vice president publicly credited a collaborative scheduling practice, quiet time, while the reward system that contradicted it stayed untouched, and engineers believed the reward system, not the praise

(Perlow, 1999, p. 74). The Silicon Valley interviews audit in the same way: a stated standard of conduct is tested against whom it is applied to (Alfrey and Twine, 2017).

The findings level record gives the audit its consequences: perceived gaps between what supervisors espouse and practise produce judgements of hypocrisy that raise intentions to leave (Greenbaum, Mawritz and Piccolo, 2015). Both strands carry the theme; the lever is modelling, at senior and line level alike.

Theme 2: the enacted curriculum. Theme 1 described the audit as the employee's perceptual work; this theme is what the audit finds. What organisations reward and tolerate teaches the norm, whatever is declared, and the theme carries the strongest evidence in the corpus, much of it from one ethnography, a dependence Table 4.2 makes visible. Perlow records a year end ranking meeting at which managers' commendations for top rated engineers cite eighty to one hundred hour weeks and working days and nights, while lower rated colleagues are marked down for average contribution. The appraisal system prices hours; engineers respond by seeking crisis work visible to managers and rationing help, since helping earns nothing (Perlow, 1999, pp. 67-70). Toleration teaches as loudly as reward. A security engineer describes two trainees who broke into machines and displayed offensive material being excused by managers, 'Okay, you get a pass. They're new. They don't know what they're doing. It's okay' (Alfrey and Twine, 2017, p. 44), while her own smaller errors attracted no such empathy; both trainees were later hired. Perlow's ethnography records the same asymmetry: the top ranked engineer's belittling of colleagues drew no sanction, and constant interruption was praised in appraisal while helping went unrecognised (Perlow, 1999, pp. 69-70). Across two voice sources, then, toleration operates person contingently: the same error draws latitude for some and none for others, so what is learned is not only which conduct is acceptable but whose.

The findings level record points the same way: unit leaders' conduct predicts shared ethical climate, which predicts collective behaviour (Kuenzi, Mayer and Greenbaum, 2020); disturbing founders' early blueprints destabilises young firms, evidence of how deeply early models embed (Baron, Hannan and Burton, 2001); and employee accounts of everyday conduct predict later misconduct beyond what observable firm characteristics explain (Campbell and Shang, 2022). The theme also contains the decisive negative case: Perlow's engineers abandoned quiet time once the study ended, one stating plainly there was no incentive to keep it, because leaders had endorsed the practice but never altered what the ranking meeting paid for (Perlow, 1999, p. 74). The episode evidences this theme and the first at once, holding both

an audit and a consequence structure. Espousal without reinforcement decayed. Both strands carry the theme; the levers are reward operating jointly with toleration, set by senior leadership and operated by line management.

Theme 3: the incident is the lesson. The corpus repeatedly locates norm formation in single remembered moments when a leader responded to mistake, pressure or dissent. Where the response protects, safety and effort follow: interviewees describe a team lead who defended a frustrated member to management, a manager who backed a participant while leaving accountability intact, and a senior manager whose refusal to blame changed how hard the team would work for him (Alami, Zahedi and Krancher, 2023). Where the response exposes, the lesson inverts: a senior engineer describes a manager who ‘would storm out to me and start screaming at me for something that wasn’t even my fault’ in front of the team, and she left the team because of it (Alfrey and Twine, 2017, p. 37). Perlow’s counterpart is quieter: a manager’s late night call asking an engineer to be in at seven is met with silent accommodation, and the norm of constant availability is reproduced without a word of dissent (Perlow, 1999, pp. 68-69).

At scale the pattern repeats: employees read managerial openness as the signal of whether speaking up is safe (Detert and Burris, 2007); leader inclusiveness predicts the safety that lets lower status members contribute, in health care teams whose hierarchies are steeper than most software settings (Nembhard and Edmondson, 2006); and supervisors reproduce the conduct of managers above them (Mayer *et al.*, 2009). These studies capture accumulated perceptions, not single incidents, corroborating the theme’s consequences at scale while the incident level claim rests on the voice extracts. Both strands carry the theme; the lever is incident response, the level overwhelmingly line management.

Theme 4: where the signal fails. The corpus is equally clear that the leader’s signal has edges. In the game studio, management imposed agile methods the artists, in the producer’s own account, detested; artists withheld accurate data, and managers retreated to informal enquiry, a two track culture, one official and one real, tolerated because it could not be changed (Hodgson and Briand, 2013, p. 320). The same study records developers declining an espoused gift: time set aside for creative freedom was read as waste and as a sign their talent was not valued (p. 321). In the Silicon Valley interviews most exclusionary conduct is carried by peers, managers absent from the account, and in the agile teams study several safety norms, no blame retrospectives among them, are team owned with no leader referent; the same study’s survey

strand found autonomy did not significantly predict psychological safety, a caution against what its own interviewees praised (Alami, Zahedi and Krancher, 2023). Even in a sector where norm consensus is measurable and consequential (Chatman *et al.*, 2014), the corpus shows pockets leader conduct does not reach: subcultures that resist, peers who transmit, gifts that are refused. This is not noise but a finding about boundaries. The theme is cross strand; no single lever carries it, since it marks where the levers stop reaching, and its findings level side rests partly on the publication that supplies its voice, a dependence acknowledged openly.

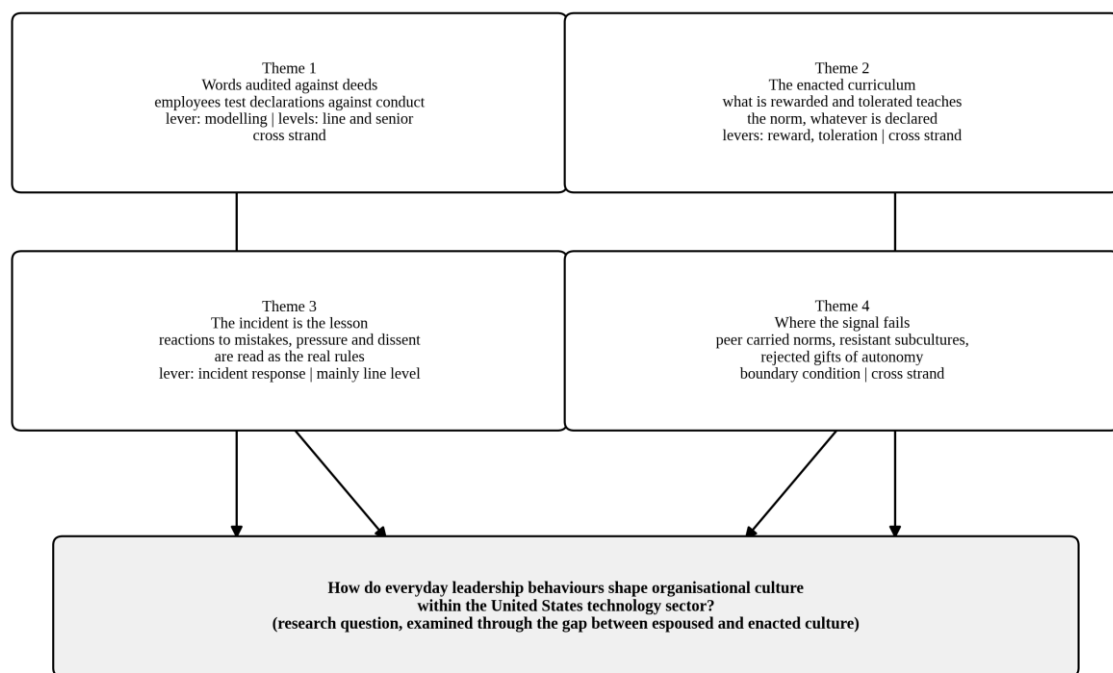


Figure 4.2: Thematic map: four themes and their relation to the research question

Table 4.2: Themes by evidencing sources (extract counts are indicative of contribution, not prevalence claims; extracts may evidence more than one theme or none)

Theme	Strands	Strand B sources (extracts)	Strand A studies	Negative case
1 Words audited against deeds	Both (cross strand)	Alami (2); Hodgson and Briand (4); Perlow (2); Alfrey and Twine (1)	Greenbaum et al. 2015	Quiet time episode (shared with Theme 2)

2 The enacted curriculum	Both (cross strand)	Perlow (9); Alfrey and Twine (2); Alami (1)	Kuenzi et al. 2020; Baron et al. 2001; Campbell and Shang 2022	Quiet time collapse
3 The incident is the lesson	Both (cross strand)	Alami (5); Alfrey and Twine (1); Perlow (1); Hodgson and Briand (1)	Detert and Burris 2007; Nembhard and Edmondson 2006; Mayer et al. 2009	None
4 Where the signal fails	Both (cross strand)	Hodgson and Briand (4); Alfrey and Twine (2); Alami (6)	Chatman et al. 2014 (contrast); Alami survey strand	Constitutive of theme

4.4 Discussion of Findings

Read against the framework, the themes confirm the chain at some links and reorder it at others. The early links hold: employees observe conduct closely, including conduct leaders do not know is instructive, the audited values booklet, the remembered telephone call, the ranking commendations, and imitation follows, in visibility seeking, silent accommodation and help rationed to match what appraisal rewards. The corpus also shows the neglected fifth lever working: toleration taught more in the excused trainees episode than any declaration could, as the framework's reading of non response predicted.

The reordering concerns the levers' relative weight, and one lever must be accounted for first. Attention barely appears as an independent force, and its near silence is informative: where it surfaces it has already fused with reward, engineers competing for crisis work because crises were what management watched, presence at two in the morning admired because attention and appraisal pointed at the same conduct (Perlow, 1999). The ranking meeting is an attention allocation device with consequences attached. In this material, attention operates through reward, not beside it, and the model below treats it as reward's targeting mechanism. One rival reading is conceded: consequence free attention is close to invisible to interview and ethnographic records, so its near silence may reflect what these methods can detect, and the attention clause of the model is treated as conditional. The results then divide into a firm claim and a provisional one. The firm claim is that enacted conduct defeats espoused declaration wherever the two are recorded in conflict, and it is cross source: quiet time collapsed against an unchanged ranking system, espoused coaching collapsed against an organisation chart, and a values booklet was discounted against managerial practice (Perlow, 1999; Hodgson and

Briand, 2013; Alami, Zahedi and Krancher, 2023). The provisional claim concerns the contest inside enacted conduct. Reinforcement defeated modelling in the one recorded case where the two directly opposed, the quiet time episode, and a single case does not meet the study's own two source rule; the ordering is therefore advanced as provisional and carried to Chapter Five's limitations. A further caution belongs beside it: the voice sources were authored by researchers interested in control, safety and inequality, a corpus in which reinforcement's victories are the findings most likely to have been recorded, so the dominance claim is a claim about this corpus, tested against Theme 4's negative cases and not generalised beyond them. What survives these cautions untouched is the best evidenced plank. Espoused values do not function in this corpus as a channel of transmission at all; they function as the standard against which employees audit enacted conduct, and the audit's verdict, not the declaration, is what sediments towards assumption, settling slowly into the taken for granted.

The quiet time case shows the passage in miniature, the corpus's answer to the link Chapter Two called least evidenced: a practice declared, modelled and publicly praised was observed, imitated and briefly normalised, and once the study's scaffolding was removed the unchanged ranking system reasserted the old assumption, because the consequence structure had never moved (Perlow, 1999). What the framework describes as hardening into expectation is visible here as a survival test: a norm hardens not when it is endorsed but when the organisation keeps paying for it, repeatedly and visibly. Simons's (2002) behavioural integrity construct gains a collective mechanism on this reading, since alignment matters because employees are auditing, and Schaubroeck *et al.*'s (2012) finding that ethical culture embeds across levels, in military units whose hierarchy is more explicit than most workplaces, gains a behavioural route: the downward reproduction of incident response that both strands record. The person contingent pattern in toleration extends the framework once more: vicarious reinforcement is target specific, so uneven excusal teaches an assumption about whose conduct counts as well as which, connecting the corpus to the differentiation reading the framework already carries (Martin, 2002).

Theme 4 disciplines the whole account. The chain is local, as Chapter Two conceded: it did not run into the artists' subculture, it ran peer to peer without leaders in parts of the Silicon Valley material, and one source's quantitative strand declined to confirm what its interviewees asserted, boundaries that vindicate Martin's (2002) plurality and Alvesson's (2013) scepticism of leader centred accounts. The fieldwork periods add a further observation. The sources in which leaders transmit most directly were studied in co located workplaces between the 1990s

and the mid 2010s; the corpus's only distributed era source is also where team owned norms without leader referents cluster (Alami, Zahedi and Krancher, 2023). That pattern is consistent with the visibility argument of Chapters One and Two: where observation thins, transmission shifts towards peers. On four sources this is an observation, not a finding, and it is carried to Chapter Five as a question for further research. All of it marks the epistemic limit: perception level evidence, synthesised across contexts, demonstrating patterned interpretation, not causation; two strand convergence strengthens confidence without converting perception into fact.

4.5 Implications of the Findings

Theoretically, the study's contribution is a refined transmission account: an ordered lever model in which reinforcement, understood as reward and toleration acting together, is on this evidence the durable teacher, its lessons repeated until they hold, an ordering section 4.4 states as provisional; incident response is the acute one, teaching in single moments; modelling supplies the material employees audit; attention, conditionally, targets what reward then teaches; and espoused values set the audit standard without transmitting anything themselves. Toleration's person contingent operation is the model's most novel element: it teaches whose conduct counts, not only which. Chapter Five states this as the dissertation's original contribution and draws the model.

Practically, the findings speak lever by lever to technology sector work organisation, anchored in but not exclusive to the United States, whose codified value statements raise the audit standard. On reward, senior leadership and human resources should review rating criteria, promotion cases and commendation language against stated values, since what appraisal meetings praise, not what the policy document states, teaches the real curriculum (Perlow, 1999). On toleration, excusal is public policy making by the line manager, and its discipline is consistency, the same latitude for the same error whoever commits it, since uneven excusal taught a sharper and more divisive lesson than any code of conduct (Alfrey and Twine, 2017). On incident response, the clearest point of leverage found, a manager's reaction to mistakes, pressure and dissent should be treated as a trainable behaviour with disproportionate cultural return. On attention, what senior management visibly tracks is reward's targeting mechanism, so meeting agendas and recognition language deserve the same audit as pay criteria. On modelling, the line manager's task is knowing which gaps between saying and doing subordinates are recording. On espoused values, each published value should be pairable with

an enacted consequence that would change if it were breached; a value with no such pair raises the audit standard while giving the organisation no means of passing it. For distributed teams, a caution consistent with the evidence though not demonstrated by it: where observation thins, transmission shifts toward peers, so remote and hybrid managers must create deliberate observation moments, visible incident responses and explicit reinforcement in shared channels.

4.6 Summary

This chapter profiled a corpus of twenty one sources and sixty six voice extracts, presented its four themes, and discussed them against the framework. Employees audit words against deeds; reward and toleration constitute the enacted curriculum; incident response supplied the moments where norms were made; and the leader's signal has boundaries the framework must respect. The final chapter draws conclusions against each objective, states the refined framework as the study's contribution, and derives its recommendations from the levers the analysis has provisionally ranked.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes against each objective, answers the research question, summarises the findings, states the contribution as a model, acknowledges limitations, and closes with recommendations.

5.2 Conclusions on Each Research Issue/Objective

The first objective was to review and synthesise the literature on the relationship between everyday leadership behaviour and organisational culture. Chapter Two met it by staging the field's tensions, integrating Schein's (2010) levels with Bandura's (1977) learning processes, and locating the gap: the passage from witnessed act to shared assumption was asserted far more often than traced. The second objective was to identify the everyday leadership behaviours that shape employee perceptions of acceptable conduct in the technology sector. The analysis identified them by lever: what leaders reward, what they tolerate and for whom, how they respond to mistakes, pressure and dissent, what they model, and what they visibly attend to, with reward, toleration and incident response the most formative in the corpus analysed, an ordering Chapter Four states as provisional. The third objective was to explore how leadership behaviour contributes to the gap between espoused and enacted culture. The analysis concluded that the gap is a product of the audit employees continuously run: where

consequence contradicts declaration, employees side with consequence, confirming in the corpus what Chapter Two derived from Argyris and Schön: a leader whose conduct contradicts stated values does not fail to transmit culture but transmits a different one. The fourth objective was to develop recommendations for how leaders can strengthen organisational culture through everyday leadership behaviours. It is met in section 5.7: the recommendations derive from the ranked levers, are directed at behaviour, and each traces to a lever and a theme.

5.3 Conclusions on the Research Problem

The research question asked how everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture within the United States technology sector. The study's answer is behavioural and specific. Leaders shape culture by supplying the observed material that employees convert into shared expectations through observation, imitation and reinforcement. On this evidence the durable teacher is consequence, reward and toleration applied repeatedly, visibly and, the corpus suggests, person contingently, while the acute teacher is the remembered incident, an ordering advanced as provisional because its decisive case is single source. In the corpus analysed, declared values shape nothing directly; they serve as the standard against which conduct is audited. The influence is real but bounded: it requires visibility and proximity, it can be refused by subcultures, and the corpus is consistent with, though cannot demonstrate, transmission passing to peers where observation thins. In a sector whose firms publish unusually explicit values, the practical meaning of the answer is that every declaration raises the standard of an audit that only enacted conduct can pass.

5.4 Summary of Research Findings and Outcomes

From a corpus of twenty one sources and sixty six voice extracts, four themes were generated. Employees audit words against deeds; what is rewarded and tolerated constitutes the enacted curriculum, and its lessons are person contingent; single incidents of leader response were where norms formed fastest; and the leader's signal has edges, marked by resistant subcultures, peer carried norms and refused gifts. Read against the framework, the themes confirmed the transmission chain's early links, identified sustained consequence as the survival test a norm must pass to sediment, and returned one firm cross source claim: enacted conduct defeats espoused declaration wherever the corpus records the two in conflict.

5.5 Original Contribution of the Research

The contribution is the audit and consequence model of cultural transmission, drawn in Figure 5.1, which refines Chapter Two's framework in four ways. It repositions espoused values from

transmission channel to audit standard, a role in which declarations transmit nothing but determine what employees test conduct against. It orders the levers by durability of effect, with reinforcement the durable teacher and incident response the acute one, an ordering stated as provisional because its decisive case is single source. It makes toleration person contingent: uneven excusal teaches whose conduct counts as well as which, connecting vicarious learning (Bandura, 1977) to the differentiated reading of culture (Martin, 2002). It retains attention conditionally, as reward's targeting mechanism rather than an independent teacher, the condition reflecting a limit of what interview and ethnographic records can detect. And it builds the boundary conditions into the model itself, so that the account of how leaders shape culture carries within it the conditions under which they cannot. One element is inherited from the framework, not the corpus: the reciprocal return of norms into declarations, retained from Chapter Two's caution that influence runs both ways and drawn dashed accordingly. Each element is otherwise traceable to themes evidenced in at least two sources, and where the evidence is thinner, the model says so on its face.

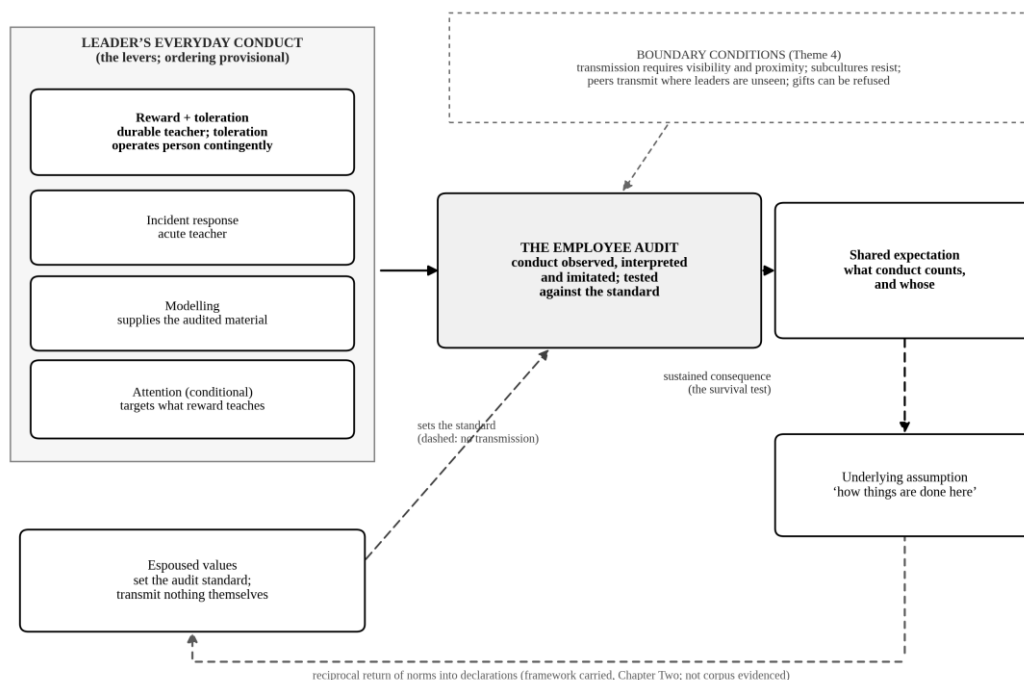


Figure 5.1: The audit and consequence model of cultural transmission

5.6 Limitations of the Research

The study is secondary and interpretive: it demonstrates patterned interpretation across published accounts, not causation, and its findings are claims about a corpus, not organisations directly. Access shaped that corpus: five of nine voice sources could not be obtained in usable

full text, and the four that remain skew towards software work, towards authors interested in control, safety and inequality, and towards co located settings studied before the pandemic; one setting is Canadian and one sample multi country, so the United States framing is anchored, not exclusive. The most consequential ordering, reinforcement over modelling, rests on a single recorded contest and is offered as provisional; the strongest theme draws much of its evidence from one ethnography, a concentration Table 4.2 makes visible. The near silence of the attention lever may reflect what interview and ethnographic records can detect, not what attention does. The design is cross sectional: it reads the documentary record at one point and cannot follow any norm's formation over time within one organisation, a real limit for a claim about sedimentation. Published extracts carry their original authors' curation, mitigated but not removed by the two source rule. Coding was single analyst, with confirmability resting on the documented trail; and the design is abductive in practice, so the framework sensitised what was seen even as negative cases were deliberately sought.

5.7 Recommendations and Areas for Further Research

For practice, the recommendations follow the levers. Senior leadership and human resources should audit what appraisal actually prices against stated values, because the corpus locates the written curriculum in commendation, not policy. Line managers should treat excusal as public policy making, holding latitude consistent across people as well as errors, since uneven toleration taught the sharpest and most divisive lessons in the corpus. Incident response, the clearest point of leverage the analysis found, should be built into line management development as scenario practice. Leaders should audit their own attention, the crises watched and the work commended, as the device the analysis conditionally identifies as reward's targeting mechanism, and should assume routine conduct is being recorded against every published value; a value the executive team cannot pair with an enacted consequence should not be published. Managers of remote and hybrid teams should schedule visibility deliberately: observation moments, incident responses and reinforcement all placed in shared channels, as a precaution consistent with the corpus's observation that where observation thins, transmission may pass to peers.

Four research directions follow. The provisional lever ordering invites a primary test in which reinforcement and modelling observably oppose. Person contingent toleration deserves development as a construct linking behavioural integrity (Simons, 2002) to fairness and membership. The visibility question, whether distributed work shifts transmission from leaders

to peers, is researchable now, most directly through a comparative case study of co located and distributed teams within one firm, and matters most to the sector studied. And the road this study could not take remains open: a primary or platform based study of employee voice would quantify the levers the model orders qualitatively, testing the framework at scale.

5.8 Summary

This dissertation asked how everyday leadership behaviours shape organisational culture in the United States technology sector. Its answer is that culture travels through conduct: employees audit what leaders do against what organisations say, consequence decides the verdict, and the verdict, repeated, becomes the way things are done. The contribution is a model of that passage with its limits built in; the recommendations ask leaders to pass the audit they are already undergoing. Chapter One opened with the assumption that organisations shape culture through the values they proclaim, and the study ends by inverting it without discarding it. Declared values do shape culture, but not by transmitting it; they set the standard of an audit that only everyday conduct can pass, which means the surprise is not that deeds defeat words, but that words are never harmless.

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