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Human Resource (HR) Culture Alignment and Dynamic Capability of Deposit Money Banks in Rivers State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The paper examines the relationship between human resource (HR) culture alignment and the dynamic capability of deposit money banks in Rivers State, Nigeria. The survey was based on 23 deposit money banks in Rivers State, with a sample size of 354 bank staff. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the bank staff. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested. The statistical tool used to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that there is a relationship between human resource culture alignment and dynamic capability. Therefore, the study concluded that when there is a strong HR culture alignment in deposit money banks, it minimizes confusion and ensures that employees understand what is expected of them. As it leads to teamwork, innovation, adaptability, and a shared sense of purpose, resulting in increased success and sustainability. Thus, recommendations are made on the bases that, banking organizations conduct a comprehensive assessment of their current HR culture and adaptability levels. This will help determine the level of employee engagement and satisfaction within the organization. They should also cultivate a culture of open and transparent communication, ensuring that employees are well-informed about the organization's strategies, challenges, and the role they play in achieving resilience.

KEYWORDS: Human Resource Culture Alignment, Dynamic Capability, Proactivity, Responsiveness, Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

The business environment is changing dramatically and deep uncertainty is becoming the new normal (Teece, 2022). In the contemporary global business environment, organizations are confronted with an ever-increasing pace of change, competition, and disruption. Businesses are faced with rapid changes, intense competition, and disruptive forces that include government policies and regulations, exchange rates, consumer preferences, pandemics, economic crises, price competition, and technological advancements. The financial services industry, especially deposit money banks, operates in a complex and dynamic environment that is susceptible to various internal and external challenges. In recent times, this sector has faced unprecedented disruptions, including economic crises, technological advancements, regulatory changes, and global pandemics, which have significantly impacted their businesses. The sector has experienced financial crises that strain the banks' balance sheets, leading to potential liquidity issues and credit risks. These crises hamper the social fabric of our country as they decrease economic growth, reduce access to credit, and increase unemployment. They have also experienced rapid technological advancement, which includes the rise of fintech companies, digital payment systems, online banking platforms, mobile money platforms (such as Opay digital, M-cash, PalmPay, Momo, etc.), and blockchain-based financial services. These platforms have become increasingly popular in recent years because they offer a convenient and affordable way to manage money. Hence, it is a great concern that traditional banks must adapt to these changes and invest in their technological infrastructure to remain competitive and relevant.

To thrive and remain competitive, businesses must not only anticipate and respond to dynamic shifts but also actively shape their capabilities to navigate and innovate in turbulent environments. Businesses are expected to be proactive, agile, and innovative in their approach to overcome challenges and achieve success. Organizations must not only react to change but also anticipate it. This requires a deep understanding of market trends, customer behaviours and emerging technologies. Therefore, dynamic capability refers to a firm's ability to efficiently integrate, build, and adjust its internal and external competencies in order to respond to rapid changes in its operating environment. It is the ability of an organization and its management team to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal as well as external competencies to proactively address a rapidly changing environment (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). It adopts an explicit entrepreneurial perspective, placing a strong emphasis on identifying and proactively creating business opportunities. Additionally, it orchestrates strategies, thereby enhancing flexibility and adaptability. So, for companies to excel, they must employ the three forms of dynamic capabilities: sensing (opening up the innovation process and using business model frameworks), seizing and transforming, to actually seize opportunities (Landau, 2019).

Dynamic capabilities enable an organization to generate a competitive advantage, achieve success, and ultimately survive over extended periods of time through the processes of sensing, seizing, and transforming (Landau, 2019). The sensing, seizing, and transforming forms of dynamic capability enable organizations to identify and create business opportunities, mobilize internal resources to address and exploit opportunities, as well as align all resources and activities of the organization to capitalize on opportunities. This integration of dynamic capability into an organization's routines and processes must be acquired and cultivated over time; and with human resource culture alignment, companies can undergo a complete transformation, seize opportunities, and adapt to environmental changes. The human resource culture alignment enhances the long-term success of an organization, its adaptability to change, and employee engagement and retention. A culture that aligns with HR initiatives can attract individuals who share similar values and are more likely to remain with the organization for an extended period. This can help reduce turnover and the associated costs. This paper aims to ascertain the relationship between HR culture alignment and the dynamic capability of deposit money banks in Rivers State, as shown in Figure 1 below.

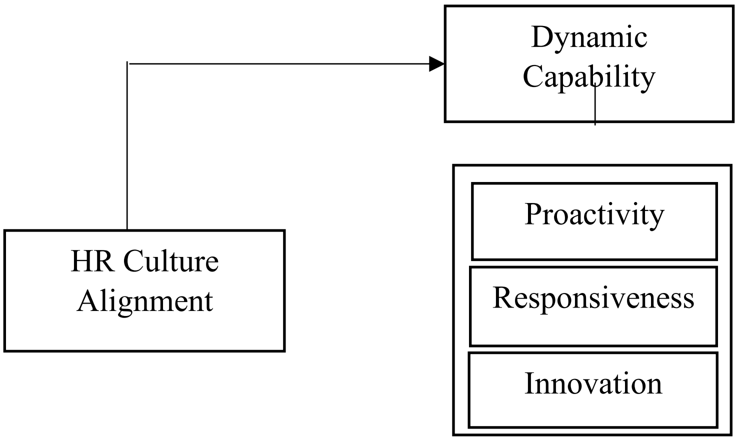

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework of HR Culture Alignment and Dynamic Capability

Source: Researcher (2023), Zeb-Obipi, et al., (2019), Accra Jaja & Amah (2014).

The figure indicates a relationship between HR culture alignment and dynamic capability which is measured using proactivity, responsiveness and innovation. Hence, three research questions and hypotheses were suggested respectively, thus:

i. To what extent does HR culture alignment affect the proactivity of deposit money banks in Nigeria?

H01. There is no significant relationship between HR culture alignment and the proactivity of deposit money banks in Rivers State.

ii. To what extent does HR culture alignment affect the responsiveness of deposit money banks in Nigeria?

H02. There is no significant relationship between HR culture alignment and responsiveness of deposit money banks in Rivers State.

iii. To what extent does HR culture alignment affect the innovation of deposit money banks in Nigeria?

H03. There is no significant relationship between HR culture alignment and innovation of deposit money banks in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Culture Alignment

HR culture alignment refers to the specific set of values, beliefs, and norms that guide the HR function within an organization. It involves creating a cohesive and unified organizational culture, which is a key ingredient for organizational success. Culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, and practices that guide how team members behave and interact on a daily basis. It is what makes an organization unique and defines the way business is conducted. Every organization has its own culture that drives business performance. According to a study by Gartner (2018), aligning an organization's workforce with its culture can result in up to 9% better performance in achieving revenue goals, a 22% improvement in employee performance, and up to 16% better reputation outcomes for the firm. When the HR department establishes a connection between every employee and the overall organizational culture on an individual level, it fosters a shared understanding of the organization's goals and the most effective methods to achieve them. According to Gartner (2018), employees need to align with the organization's culture in three key areas: knowledge (understanding what the culture entails), mindset (believing in the culture), and behaviour (acting in a manner that aligns with the culture). A misalignment between an organization's culture and its workforce can lead to a decline in work performance. The HR culture alignment entails HR-Organizational Value, HR-Organizational Code, and HR-Organizational Standard, as discussed below., HR-Organizational Code, and HR-Organizational Standard as discussed below.

Human Resource-Organizational Value

When HR practices are closely aligned with the organization's values, it helps create a cohesive and purpose-driven work environment that contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives. Barney and Wright (1998) opined that certain HR practices can have an impact on both costs and revenues. For an organization to gain a lasting competitive advantage from its human resources, it is crucial to effectively utilize and capitalize on the appropriate systems and practices that enable the human resource attributes to fully manifest their potential benefits (Barney & Wright, 1998). The HR department prioritizes hiring candidates whose values align with those of the organization. They seek candidates who share the organization's principles and culture, and who foster a sense of belonging and commitment. When the company culture aligns with HR practices, employees are more likely to feel connected to the organization's mission and values, which leads to higher engagement and job satisfaction.

Human Resource-Organization Code of Conduct

A code of conduct is an important HR policy that outlines the standards of behaviour expected from every employee in the business. The code of conduct is written to provide clear instructions about what employees can and cannot do in the workplace. Accordingly, the HR manager, in the capacity of an employee champion, delineates the acceptable standards in the workplace. Reinforcing this position is the affirmation by Zeb-Obipi & Kpurunee (2023) that human resource management plays an essential role in protecting and promoting the effective enforcement of core labour standards and ensuring that workers' rights are protected in organizations. The purpose of this code is not to address every possible situation that may arise. It is designed to provide a frame of reference by which to measure any activities. Employees are guided by the following basic principles: avoiding any conduct that could damage or risk the reputation of the firm, acting legally and honestly, and putting the interests of the firm ahead of personal or other interests. Through interventions derived from these leading guidelines of organizational behavior, the company acquires abilities and patterns of behaviour that make it more efficient today and provide a valuable source of competitiveness for the future (Mitsakis, 2014).

Human Resource Organizational Standard

HR Organizational Standard is a set of established guidelines, practices, and norms that human resources (HR) departments or professionals adhere to within an organization. It ensures that HR functions are consistently and effectively carried out in compliance with legal regulations and best practices. O'Reilly & Chatman (1996) argued that HR organizational standards are derived from an organization's values. These standards assist employees in comprehending and assessing different events, establishing expectations for suitable behavior, and guiding their attitudes and actions. In the same vein, Zhang, Qing, Wang, and Chun (2023) stated that the leadership mindset influences people's perception and behavior within an organization. Based on this, it shapes the cultural norms and standards of behaviour and interaction among employees. Also, employees' standard learning mechanisms help them create an efficient work environment that guarantees a higher level of performance (Ratna & Singh, 2013). The ability to align both management systems with the quality of strategy execution tends to increase the level of desirable employee behaviour standards and their strategic focus. This alignment creates an "invisible asset" that is unique to the firm and not easily replicated by competitors (Becker et al., 2001). In a similar vein, Pfeffer (1994) argued that the "best practice" approach advocates for a standardized set of HR practices within high-performance work systems (HPWS), which can result in superior organizational performance. He further identified a list of seven HR practices of successful organizations, such as: (a) Employment security, (b) Selective hiring of new personnel, (c) Self-managed teams and decentralization of decision-making as the basic principles of organizational design, (d) High compensation contingent on organizational performance, (e) Extensive training, (f) Equal employment opportunities, and (g) Broad knowledge sharing and clear communication.

Dynamic Capability

Dynamic capability refers to an organization's capacity to effectively modify and adapt its resources, capabilities, and processes in order to meet the evolving market conditions, customer demands, and business requirements. It is the organization's flexibility and agility to scale up or down its operations and capacity effectively in order to meet fluctuating demands. Teece, et al. (2010) defined dynamic capability as "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments." The organization's ability to purposefully develop, expand, or adapt its resource base in response to changing market conditions, competitive pressures, and other external factors is crucial. The basic assumption of dynamic capability is that core competencies should be utilized to modify short-term competitive positions, which can then be leveraged to establish a longer-term competitive advantage. Teece et al. (1997) affirm that the literature on dynamic capabilities emerged from two main sources: (1) the resource-based view of the firm and (2) the concept of "routines" in evolutionary theories of the organization. It thus provides a bridge between the literature on economic-based strategy and evolutionary approaches to organization. They argue that three dynamic capabilities (sensing, seizing, and transforming or reconfiguring capabilities) are necessary to meet new challenges. Organizations and their employees need the capability to learn quickly and build strategic assets. New assets, such as capabilities, technology, and customer feedback, must be integrated within the organization. Existing strategic assets must be transformed or reconfigured. According to Teece (1997), what matters for businesses is corporate agility: the ability to sense and shape opportunities and threats, seize opportunities, and maintain competitiveness by enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the intangible and tangible assets of the business enterprise. Proactivity and responsiveness were given as measures of dynamic capability in this study.

Proactivity

This is an organizational quality characterized by taking initiative and anticipating future challenges or opportunities, rather than simply reacting to events as they occur. It involves being forward-thinking, planning, and proactively identifying and addressing potential issues before they escalate into problems. Parker et al. (2010) defined proactivity as a forward-thinking process of envisioning an alternative way that things could be, planning how to achieve such a goal, acting on those plans in the face of obstacles, and perhaps also reflecting on how to amend actions to better achieve the desired goal. People engage in setting and striving towards proactive goals to achieve meaningful change in themselves and/or their environments (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Consistent with these definitions, proactivity can involve anticipating and acting upon the need to change oneself (such as enhancing one's skills) as well as anticipating and acting upon the need to solve problems or make other changes in the work environment. Proactivity is a process of independently anticipating, planning, and taking action that can be applied to any goal, rather than being linked to a specific behavior, such as problem-solving, that may have been initiated by another party. Much of the research on proactivity has taken a dispositional approach, viewing the tendency to act proactively as a stable characteristic of individuals. Proactive personality, as defined by Bateman & Crant (1993), refers to a lasting inclination to strategize, take action, and persist in effecting change, regardless of situational limitations. Fuller and Marler's (2009) meta-analysis shows that, across numerous studies, this characteristic has been associated with various outcomes, including career success, work performance, and motivation to learn. Employees with a proactive personality are rated by supervisors as being more innovative (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Additionally, they are more likely to be involved in formal avenues for process innovation and quality improvement (Parker, 2000). All of these outcomes suggest that proactivity is valuable for an organization that aims to achieve sustainability. As a result, several organizations have started to include proactive personality (or other related individual characteristics) in their personnel selection systems.

Responsiveness

The organization's ability to respond quickly and effectively to changing circumstances, demands, or opportunities is crucial. It is also the ability to address customer inquiries, feedback, and concerns promptly and effectively. This involves being agile, adaptive, and proactive in meeting the needs and expectations of stakeholders, customers, or the environment. When a business responds quickly and effectively to customer inquiries, it enhances customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers are more likely to become loyal and make repeat purchases (Kpurunee, 2023). Responsiveness is a valuable characteristic for organizations as it enables them to remain relevant, competitive, and efficient in a fast-paced and dynamic world. It is the delivery of high-quality service that plays a crucial role in exceeding customer expectations. Kumar, Kee, and Charles (2010) state that the willingness and preparedness of employees to provide service should take into consideration the timeliness of services. Responsiveness is vital in satisfying customer expectations and, therefore, important in creating a positive impression in the minds of customers. This is likely to increase their inclination to maintain a long-term relationship with the organization. It is crucial to recognize that the current business environment is volatile, with increasing product varieties, spontaneous changes in customers' tastes and preferences, shorter product life cycles, and more intense competition (Danese, Romano & Formentini, 2013).

Relationship between Human Resource Culture Alignment and Dynamic Capability

Human Resource practices and policies align with the organization's dynamic capability. A strong organizational culture, built on shared values and norms, fosters a sense of purpose and identity among employees. This, in turn, enhances their commitment to the organization and its mission, making them more willing to adapt, innovate, and respond effectively to rapidly changing external and internal environments. The HR Culture Alignment plays a significant role in shaping employee engagement and commitment. A positive and supportive culture that values employees' well-being and growth leads to increased job satisfaction and loyalty. Gallup (2013) found that companies with engaged employees have 21% higher profitability than companies with disengaged employees. The study also found that engaged employees are more likely to be productive, have lower turnover rates, and experience higher job satisfaction. Engaged and committed employees are more likely to stay with the organization during turbulent times, contribute their best efforts, and weather challenging situations. This ultimately strengthens organizational resilience (Vance, 2006). An HR culture that embraces change and innovation is essential for organizational dynamic capability. When HR practices are flexible and adaptive, they facilitate smoother transitions during times of change or disruption. Employees who are accustomed to a culture of change are more open to new ideas, more willing to take risks, and better equipped to handle unexpected events. All of these factors contribute to the organization's ability to bounce back from challenges. HR Culture Alignment ensures that the organization's values are integrated into decision-making processes. When decisions are aligned with the organization's core values, it strengthens the sense of purpose and direction, helping the organization make more informed and ethical choices, even in challenging circumstances.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey method, which aims to generate data at a specific point in time. The study population consists of 4,436 bank staff in Rivers State (Human Resource Dept. of the firms) and the sample size for the study was 354, drawn from the population of firms, using Krejcie and Morgan's (1979) sample size determination table. Primary data for this study was generated using a structured questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique, and Bowley's (1964) formula was used to determine the sample frame. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using the content validity technique, and the reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. All the items scored above 0.70. The statistical tool used to test the strength and direction of the relationship between HR culture alignment and dynamic capability was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Data Results

S/N	Questionnaires	Frequencies
1	Number of questionnaires distributed	354
2	Number of questionnaires returned	290
3	Response rate	82%

Source: Field Survey, (2023)

Table 1 represents the response rate for the questionnaire items. 354 questionnaires were distributed to respondents, and 290 questionnaires were returned for analysis. The response rate for the study is 82%.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	132	45.5	45.5
	Female	158	54.5	54.5
	Total	290	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

Table 2 presents the gender of the respondents. Out of the 290 respondents, 132 (45.5%) were males, while 158 (54.5%) indicated their gender as females. This data reveals a higher representation of females in the banking industry compared to males. However, this does not influence the outcome of the study.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	25 – 30	69	23.8	23.8
	31 – 35	84	29.0	29.0
	36 – 40	104	35.9	35.9
	41 and above	33	11.4	11.4
	Total	290	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

The age distribution data fell within four cardinal age brackets. 69 representing 23.8% of the respondents fell within the age bracket of 25-30 years; 84 representing 29.0% of the respondents are within the ages of 31- 35 years; 104 representing 35.9% of the respondents fell within the age bracket of 36 -40 years, while 33 representing 11.4% fell within the age bracket of 41 years and above. By this age distribution, it is evident that most of the employees of deposit money banks in Rivers State are between the ages of 36 to 40 years.

Table 4: Level of Education of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	OND	45	15.5	15.5
	HND/B.Sc	106	36.6	36.6
	PG Degree	139	47.9	47.9
	Total	290	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey, (2023).

The educational qualification of respondents presented shows that most of the bank workers have PG Degrees. 139 representing 47.9% of the respondents have a PG degree. 106 representing 36.6% of the respondents have HND/B.Sc; 45 representing 15.5% of the respondents have OND.

Hypothesis 1

Ho1 There is no significant relationship between HR culture alignment and proactivity of deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Table 5: Correlation between HR Culture Alignment and Proactivity

		HR Culture Alignment	Proactivity
HR Culture Alignment	Pearson Correlation	1	.415**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	290	290
Proactivity	Pearson Correlation	.415**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	290	290

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Table 5 revealed that there is a positive relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Proactivity. By interpretation, with $r = .415$ at $p = 0.00 < 0.05$, the result indicates a moderate positive and significant relationship between HR culture alignment and proactivity. This indicates that a one-unit increase in HR culture alignment will also result in a .415 increase in proactivity. Since the correlation is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05, with a P-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This suggests a significant relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Proactivity.

Hypothesis 2.

H02. There is no significant relationship between HR culture alignment and responsiveness of deposit money banks in Rivers State.

Table 6: Correlation between HR Culture Alignment and Responsiveness

		HR Culture Alignment	Responsiveness
HR Culture Alignment	Pearson Correlation	1	.540**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	290	290
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.540**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	290	290

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output

Table 6 above presents the relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Responsiveness. By interpretation, with $r = .540$ at $p = 0.00 < 0.05$, the result indicates a substantial positive and significant relationship between HR culture alignment and responsiveness. This indicates that a one-unit increase in HR culture alignment will also result in a .540 increase in responsiveness. Since the correlation is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05, with a P-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This suggests a significant relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Responsiveness.

Table 7: Correlation between HR Culture Alignment and Innovation

		HR Culture Alignment	Innovation
HR Culture Alignment	Pearson Correlation	1	.417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	290	290
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	.417**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	290	290

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: SPSS Output

Table 7 revealed that there is a positive relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Innovation. By interpretation, with $r = .417$ at $p = 0.00 < 0.05$, the result indicates a moderate positive and significant relationship between HR culture alignment and innovation. This indicates that a one-unit increase in HR culture alignment will also result in a .417 increase in innovation. Since the correlation is statistically significant at a significance level of 0.05, with a P-value of 0.000, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This suggests a significant relationship between HR Culture Alignment and Innovation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The tests of hypotheses one and two revealed that there is a positive correlation between HR culture alignment and the proactivity and responsiveness of deposit money banks in Rivers State. This implies the existence of a significant and direct relationship between HR culture alignment and dynamic capability. Prior research has consistently emphasized that when an organization's culture aligns with its HR practices, employees tend to be more engaged; and when employees feel that their values and beliefs are in harmony with the organization's, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work (Bamidele, 2022; Kpurunee & Nwibaede, 2023). More so, when employees' behaviors and decisions align with the bank's values, they are more likely to engage in innovative thinking and contribute to the bank's dynamic capability by creatively responding to emerging situations. This is supported by Smith, Johnson, and Martinez (2017), whose study found that HR culture characterized by trust, open communication, and employee empowerment positively influences organizational resilience. The study surveyed 500 employees from various industries and found a strong positive correlation between HR culture and organizational resilience. Indeed, organizations that have a strong HR-culture alignment tend to perform better. Employees are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and connection to the organization when they perceive their values, goals, and beliefs as aligned with those of the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examines the relationship between HR culture alignment and the dynamic capability of deposit money banks in Rivers State. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between HR culture alignment and both proactivity and responsiveness. This study concludes that a strong HR culture alignment in deposit money banks minimizes confusion and ensures that employees understand their expectations. As a result, this leads to teamwork, innovation, adaptability, and a shared sense of purpose, which in turn results in increased success and sustainability. Several other studies also agree that a strong alignment between HR and organizational culture can lead to increased consistency and clarity in processes, ultimately enhancing the organization's dynamic capability. Therefore, recommendations include that:

i. Banking organizations should conduct a comprehensive assessment of their current HR culture and levels of adaptability. They should use surveys, interviews, and benchmarking against industry best practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This will help gauge the level of employee engagement and satisfaction within the organization. Engaged and satisfied employees are more likely to be productive and stay with the organization for a longer period of time, which reduces turnover and associated costs; and a positive HR culture plays a significant role in attracting top talent to the organization and retaining current employees.

ii. They should cultivate a culture of open and transparent communication, ensuring that employees are well-informed about the organization's strategies, challenges, and their role in achieving resilience. Open and transparent communication fosters a sense of inclusion and involvement among employees. They feel like they are part of something larger, which can significantly increase their engagement and commitment to the organization. Clear communication helps employees understand the purpose of their work and how it contributes to the organization's resilience.

iii. They should also offer programs that support employee well-being, including mental health initiatives, work-life balance, and stress reduction. Resilient employees are more likely to make a positive contribution to the organization's culture.

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