

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE FACTORS ON TALENT RETENTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Ana-Maria SĂCUIU, Angela-Eliza MICU

„Ovidius” University of Constanța, Romania

sacuiu.ana-maria@365.univ-ovidius.ro, angela-eliza.micu@365.univ-ovidius.ro

Received 30 September 2025; Accepted 22 December 2025

Abstract:

This article explores the influence of organizational culture on talent retention within three successful global companies: Infosys (India), Salesforce (USA), and SAP (Germany), selected for their recognized success in talent management and employee engagement. The analysis is based on the Denison model, which conceptualizes organizational culture through four essential dimensions: engagement, coherence, adaptability, and mission. The study aims to identify how each of these companies builds, communicates, and sustains an internal culture that fosters employee loyalty, and reduces staff turnover. Through a qualitative and comparative approach, the research highlights best practices, cultural initiatives, and leadership strategies that contribute to human resource retention. Public documents, organizational statements, and specific initiatives in the areas of continuous learning, diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility are analyzed to identify common patterns and contextual differences in how organizational culture supports retention. The results emphasize that a coherent organizational culture, well aligned with employee values, is an essential factor in retaining talent in the long term. The study also highlights the need to adopt an integrated perspective on organizational culture as a strategic retention tool in the context of an increasingly competitive labor market.

Key words: organizational culture, talent retention, Denison model, employee engagement, human resources

JEL Classification: M12, M14, J63, O15, L20

1. INTRODUCTION

In an economic context marked by volatility, talent retention has become a strategic priority for organizations around the world. Companies are increasingly facing difficulties in retaining valuable employees, especially in knowledge-based industries where professional mobility is high. Recent studies highlight that retention can no longer be explained solely by extrinsic factors such as salary or material benefits, but is strongly influenced by more subtle dimensions such as organizational culture, meaning of work, and alignment of individual values with institutional values (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010).

Organizational culture, defined as the set of values, norms, and practices that shape employee behavior, thus becomes a key determinant in the retention process. Beyond established conceptual models, such as those of Schein or Hofstede, the Denison model offers a structured and applicable approach to how four essential cultural dimensions—engagement, coherence, adaptability, and mission— influence human resource performance and loyalty (Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, & Neale, 2008).

However, the literature offers relatively few comparative studies that analyze how these cultural dimensions manifest themselves in successful international organizations and influence talent retention. Especially in the post-pandemic context, where work patterns have become more flexible and employee expectations have changed, it is essential to investigate how organizational culture is built, adapted, and translated into real talent management practices.

This article aims to comparatively analyze how three global technology companies—Infosys (India), Salesforce (USA), and SAP (Germany)—use organizational culture as a strategic tool for employee retention. The study is based on the Denison model and uses a qualitative approach, based on the analysis of validated secondary sources, to identify dominant cultural traits, associated organizational practices, and correlations with publicly reported retention rates.

These companies were selected for their exemplary reputation in terms of employee engagement, internal career development, and cultural innovation.

By adopting a qualitative, multi-case approach based on Denison's cultural framework, this research aims to:

1. Identify the cultural elements most strongly associated with talent retention;
2. Understand how these cultural dimensions are operationalized in successful organizations;
3. Highlight cross-cultural similarities and contextual differences in cultural retention strategies.

The article contributes both to the theoretical understanding of cultural retention dynamics and to the practical discourse on how organizations can build retention-oriented cultures. In this way, it answers a critical managerial question: What cultural foundations are necessary to retain talent in a highly competitive and rapidly changing global labor market?

The original contribution of the research lies in the systematic application of the Denison model in a cross-cultural comparative framework, with the aim of highlighting common patterns and relevant differences in cultural retention strategies. The results offer useful insights for researchers and human resource practitioners who want to better understand how organizational culture can be transformed into a sustainable competitive advantage.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Organizational culture is an essential construct in understanding organizational behavior and employee performance. It is defined as the set of values, beliefs, norms, and practices shared by members of an organization, which influence how they interact, make decisions, and respond to change (Geraghty, 2023). Culture functions as a mechanism for internal integration and external adaptation, having a direct impact on employee engagement, loyalty, and job satisfaction.

Talent retention, in this context, is defined as the process by which organizations manage to retain valuable employees in the medium and long term, thus ensuring the continuity of critical skills and reducing the costs associated with staff turnover (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). The literature distinguishes between extrinsic factors (salary, benefits, working conditions) and intrinsic factors (meaning of work, autonomy, recognition), the latter being closely linked to the cultural elements of the organization (Silva, Dias, & Pereira, 2023).

Successful cultural practices in retaining talent have been documented in multiple well-known organizations:

Google promotes a culture based on autonomy, innovation, and recognition. Studies show that this model reduces burnout and increases retention (Chen, 2024).

Zappos applies a culture of happiness through hiring for cultural fit, intensive onboarding, and a personal development fund (Trisca, 2025).

Southwest Airlines maintains a culture of collaboration and loyalty, in which employees are considered the organization's first customers: a philosophy that contributes to long-term retention (Gabreski, 2013).

These examples show that there is no single model of effective organizational culture, but common elements include consistency, recognition of individual value, openness to change, and building a common identity.

Several theoretical frameworks have been proposed to explain the relationship between organizational culture and retention:

Edgar Schein's three-level model (2010): identifies organizational culture in three layers: visible artifacts, assumed values, and fundamental assumptions. According to this model, retention is particularly influenced by values and beliefs related to employee development, work-life balance, and professional recognition (Geraghty, 2023).

Hofstede's six cultural dimensions model: highlights the role of national differences in employees' perceptions of the organization. Dimensions such as power distance or

individualism/collectivism can significantly influence attachment to the company and intention to stay (Nickerson, 2023).

Denison's model (1990): provides an integrative framework for organizational culture, identifying four essential dimensions—involvement, coherence, adaptability, and mission—as determinants of organizational performance and retention (Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, & Neale, 2008).

Compared to other models, the Denison model offers an operationalizable approach that allows organizational culture to be assessed using clear and comparable indicators (table no. 1). Commitment reflects the level of employee engagement and participation in the decision-making process. Consistency refers to the existence of a clearly defined and shared system of values and norms. Adaptability indicates the organization's flexibility in the face of external changes, and mission refers to the clarity of strategic objectives and organizational direction (Cercel, 2012).

Table no. 1. The Denison Model

	DESCRIPTION	IMPLICATIONS FOR RETENTION
INVOLVEMENT	Active participation of employees in decisions and development	Increases loyalty and sense of belonging
CONSISTENCY	Shared values and norms, clearly communicated	Reduces uncertainty and increases organizational stability
ADAPTABILITY	Capacity to learn and respond to change	Encourages engagement in dynamic environments
MISSION	Strategic clarity, shared vision and objectives	Connects employee effort to meaning and organizational purpose

Source: own contribution

Empirical studies show that organizations that score high on involvement and mission tend to have higher retention rates (Gillespie, Denison, Haaland, Smerek, & Neale, 2008). Furthermore, coherent organizational cultures, in which values are clearly communicated and reflected in managerial practices, contribute to reducing turnover and increasing employee loyalty.

Based on these premises, the present study adopts the Denison model as a conceptual framework for a comparative analysis of how organizational culture influences talent retention in three global companies. The model allows for the investigation of differences and similarities between organizations in terms of dominant cultural traits, providing a rigorous basis for interpreting human resource management strategies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative, comparative case study approach to identify how organizational culture contributes to employee retention in successful global organizations. Three international IT organizations were selected based on their recognized excellence in organizational culture and retention policies:

- Salesforce (USA) – technology, Ohana culture, focus on wellbeing.
- SAP (Germany) – enterprise software, participatory leadership, continuous learning.
- Infosys (India) – IT services, culture oriented towards development and stability.

These companies were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Awards or formal recognition in rankings such as Best Places to Work;
- Public reports on retention strategies and organizational culture;

- Geographical and cultural diversity (Asia, North America, Europe), necessary for a comparative intercultural analysis;
- Access to credible secondary sources (interviews, case studies, internal documents, academic literature).

Data collection was carried out exclusively from validated secondary sources. Selection criteria included:

- official company reports from 2022-2024 (annual, sustainability, ESG reports);
- peer-reviewed academic literature published after 2020;
- employee feedback platforms with substantial sample sizes (Glassdoor: >500 reviews/company; Comparably: >200 reviews);
- professional publications with verifiable authorship.

Sources were triangulated to ensure reliability.

A thematic analysis technique was used to extract relevant information related to the four dimensions of the Denison model: engagement, coherence, adaptability, and mission.

Each cultural dimension was assessed by identifying relevant organizational initiatives (training programs, wellbeing policies, communication of values, leadership mechanisms, etc.) and correlating them with reported data on employee satisfaction and annual turnover rates. This information was summarized in comparative tables to highlight the similarities and differences between companies (table no. 2).

Although the study does not involve the collection of primary data, its qualitative approach allows for the formulation of relevant conclusions regarding the relationship between organizational culture and talent retention in multinational companies. By systematically applying the Denison model in a comparative framework, the research provides an integrated perspective on how different cultural configurations contribute to employee loyalty in distinct organizational contexts.

In the comparative analysis, we also use the Denison Model as a conceptual framework to assess how the identified cultural characteristics (engagement, adaptability, etc.) correspond to differences in retention. The following table illustrates the estimated employee retention rates (as a complement to the departure rate) in the three companies: Salesforce and SAP show higher values than Infosys, suggesting the impact of different cultural strategies.

Table no. 2. Retention Actions in the Three Companies

Company	Key Cultural Traits	Main Retention Initiatives	Estimated Annual Retention Rate
Infosys	Value- and technical skills-oriented culture	Continuous training programs (Wingspan, Leadership Institute); benefits mix (stock options, competitive salaries); health and wellness programs (HALE) (Sreeramana & Saldanha, 2024).	~86% (Bansal, 2025)
Salesforce	Ohana culture (family, inclusiveness, openness)	Building internal communities (local teams, equality groups); V2MOM sessions for aligning individual and team objectives; focus on leadership and flexibility (no strict office mandates) (Hays, 2023).	~87% (Salesforce, 2024)
SAP	Culture centered on employee health and wellbeing	Integrated mental and physical health programs (on-site medical care, counseling, flexible parenting programs); culture of sustainability and social responsibility (Purcell, 2019); annual BHCI employee wellbeing assessment.	~96.7% (SAP, 2024)

Source: own contribution

To strengthen the qualitative analysis and provide a perspective as close as possible to the real experience of employees, a perception analysis component was integrated, using publicly available data on platforms such as Glassdoor and Comparably (table no. 3). These sources provide standardized information on employee satisfaction levels in relation to several dimensions relevant to organizational culture: values and culture, work-life balance, career opportunities, leadership, and intention to recommend the company.

Table no. 3 Employee Perception Scores

Company	Overall Score	Values & Culture	Work–Life Balance	Career Opportunities	% Who Recommend the Company
SAP	4.2 / 5	4.3	4.0	4.0	89%
Salesforce	4.4 / 5	4.5	4.3	4.2	91%
Infosys	3.9 / 5	3.7	3.5	3.8	75%

Source: Glassdoor & Comparably

Employee perception data (table no. 3) shows Salesforce scores highest across all dimensions: overall score 4.4/5, values and culture 4.5, work-life balance 4.3, and 91% recommendation rate. SAP presents a balanced profile with scores above 4.0 in all categories and 89% recommendation rate. Infosys scores below 4.0 on most dimensions: work-life balance 3.5, values and culture 3.7, with 75% recommendation rate.

Our interpretation suggests these patterns partially confirm consistency between retention initiatives and employee perception. Salesforce's 4.5 score for values and culture may reflect internalization of the Ohana concept promoted in internal policies. SAP's balanced profile suggests coherent culture supported by participatory leadership and validated wellbeing programs (e.g., BHCI), correlating with its 96.7% retention rate. Infosys's lower scores, particularly in work-life balance, may signal a gap between official culture and employee experience, potentially explaining the lower recommendation percentage.

These data support the hypothesis that organizational culture perception is a relevant predictor of retention, though platforms like Glassdoor/Comparably may involve self-selection bias as noted in the limitations section.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

By comparatively analyzing the three cases, we observe that all companies rely on internal cohesion and employee development, but emphasize different cultural dimensions depending on their context. Salesforce and Infosys combine value orientation and engagement: Salesforce through the Ohana family spirit and internal community networks (Hyder, 2022), and Infosys through professional growth programs and consistent corporate values (Sreeramana & Saldanha, 2024). SAP differentiates itself through a focus on adaptability in the form of strategic well-being; its culture puts pressure on integrating health factors into business objectives (Purcell, 2019). In Denison terms, all three companies strengthen mission and involvement through clear communication of vision and investment in employees, and attempt to increase adaptability through continuous learning and flexible programs (Cercel, 2012).

However, risks may also arise. For example, Salesforce's Ohana culture, although promoting inclusion, may generate high expectations of managerial closeness. Infosys, by focusing on intensive technical programs, must avoid burnout among young employees facing demanding projects. SAP, by heavily investing in health, must ensure that the impact measurement (BHCI) accurately reflects actual employee satisfaction. A critical common point is the need for a centralized and transparent employee feedback database: both Salesforce and SAP mention the use of internal surveys and retention analytics to identify cultural blockages (Hyder, 2022).

Overall, the comparison suggests that retention success derives more from the coherence of culture with current and measurable practices than from the praise of good intentions. Organizations that integrate culture into daily processes through concrete programs of training, wellness, and ongoing communication observe significantly lower staff turnover rates. This fact confirms Denison's recommendations: a stable, employee-centered culture aligned with the company's mission reduces internal dissonance and stimulates loyalty (Sreeramana & Saldanha, 2024).

Analyzing the four Denison dimensions reveals distinct emphases across the three organizations. Salesforce excels in involvement through its Ohana culture and strong community-building mechanisms, which support high employee engagement and retention (Hyder, 2022). SAP demonstrates a balanced orientation toward consistency and adaptability, reflected in its health-

centered culture and the highest retention rate among the cases (Purcell, 2019), while Infosys places greater emphasis on mission through professional development and long-term organizational stability, albeit with a comparatively lower perception score (Sreeramana & Saldanha , 2024). These strategic orientations and their retention outcomes are comparatively synthesized in Table no. 4.

However, each cultural configuration also involves risks: Salesforce’s inclusive and close-knit culture may generate excessive expectations for personalized support; in the case of Infosys, the emphasis on training may lead to professional burnout among young employees. SAP, by extensively investing in wellbeing, must ensure that internal evaluations accurately reflect employees’ real perceptions (e.g., BHCI).

Table no. 4 synthesizes the comparative findings, integrating retention rates, employee perception data, and cultural strengths across the three organizations.

Table no. 4. Comparative Summary: Cultural Dimensions and Retention Outcomes

ASPECT	SALESFORCE (USA)	SAP (GERMANY)	INFOSYS (INDIA)
DOMINANT CULTURAL DIMENSION	Involvement (Ohana culture)	Consistency & Adaptability (Well-being focus)	Mission (Professional development)
RETENTION RATE	87%	96.7%	86%
EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION (OVERALL)	4.4/5	4.2/5	3.9/5
KEY STRENGTH	Community belonging, flexibility	Health-centric culture, BHCI metrics	Technical skills development
POTENTIAL RISK	High expectations for closeness	Over-reliance on survey metrics	Burnout from intensive programs

Source: own contribution based on data from Tables 2 and 3

The synthesis reveals that while SAP achieves the highest retention rate (96.7%) through well-being focus, Salesforce generates superior employee engagement (4.4/5) via its Ohana culture, and Infosys faces work-life balance challenges despite strong technical development programs.

Overall, the study confirms the validity of the Denison model in analyzing organizational culture and highlights that retention is not determined by a single cultural dimension, but by the coherence and integration of all four elements. Organizations that manage to transform culture from a symbolic element into a set of measurable and internalized practices in daily organizational life achieve superior results in retaining talent.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the impact of organizational culture factors on talent retention through a comparative analysis of three successful international organizations: Salesforce, SAP, and Infosys. Based on the proposed conceptual model, we identified four essential dimensions (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission) that, when coherently integrated into organizational culture, significantly contribute to retaining valuable employees. The application of the Denison model, correlated with validated secondary data and proxy data from employee feedback platforms, allowed for the identification of relevant cultural dimensions and the evaluation of their impact on employee loyalty.

Each company's cultural strategy impacts retention distinctively: Infosys through professional development (Sreeramana & Saldanha , 2024), Salesforce through Ohana community culture (Hays, 2023), and SAP through holistic well-being programs (Purcell, 2019).

The conclusions highlight that:

- A clearly defined and well-communicated organizational culture is a strategic factor in staff retention, especially in knowledge-based organizations.
- Success does not come from imitating a cultural model, but from internal coherence and adaptation to context. Each company analyzes and values the four Denison dimensions differently, depending on national culture, leadership style, and business model. SAP focuses on consistency and well-being, Salesforce on involvement and flexibility, and Infosys on stability and professional development.
- Employee perception must be continuously monitored to adjust the culture.

For organizational leaders aiming to improve talent retention, the study suggests:

- Clarifying and communicating organizational values in a way that resonates with employees;
- Creating inclusive and flexible work environments that stimulate involvement;
- Constant investment in employee development and real opportunities for internal growth;
- Balancing tradition with innovation through adaptable and transparent leadership.

The contribution of this study lies in the application of a recognized theoretical framework (the Denison model) in a comparative intercultural approach, highlighting the concrete way in which cultural strategies influence employee loyalty. The results are relevant both for researchers and for human resources practitioners interested in building organizational cultures that support long-term retention.

Talent retention is not a side effect of success, but a strategic construction supported by a strong, coherent, and adaptable organizational culture. Organizations that treat culture as a strategic asset retain valuable employees and strengthen their competitive position, transforming organizational culture into a strategic engine for competitiveness and employee loyalty.

6. METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

Although this study provides a rigorous analysis of organizational culture and its impact on talent retention, several limitations must be acknowledged and considered when interpreting the results.

First, the absence of primary data limits the ability to capture deeper internal dynamics. Secondly, the use of platforms such as Glassdoor introduces potential self-selection bias, as reviews are not statistically representative.

Another limitation lies in the small number of cases analyzed ($n = 3$), which prevents the generalization of conclusions to all organizations in the technology sector or other industries. Additionally, the selection of companies focused on high-performing organizations, which introduces a potential success bias and omits cases with dysfunctional cultural practices or high turnover rates.

Nevertheless, using these platforms as a standardized empirical proxy offers a useful and replicable perspective on employee perceptions, and triangulation with documentary data strengthens the robustness of the conclusions.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

To deepen the understanding of the relationship between culture and retention, we propose:

- Conducting longitudinal studies to examine the long-term cultural impact;
- Extending the research using mixed methods (qualitative + quantitative), including surveys and interviews;
- Investigating the impact of digitalization of organizational culture on motivation and retention in a post-pandemic context;
- Studying cultural perception at the generational level (Millennials vs. Gen Z);
- Analyzing generational differences in the perception of organizational culture.

REFERENCES

1. Allen, D., Bryant, P., & Vardaman, J. (2010). Retaining Talent: Replacing Misconceptions With Evidence-Based Strategies. *Researchgate*, 48-64.
2. Bansal, S. (2025, April 17). *Infosys Q4FY25: Attrition rate rises to 14.1%*. Preluat de pe Financial Express: <https://www.financialexpress.com/business/industry/infosys-q4fy25-attrition-rate-rises-to-14-1-from-126-yoy/3812879/>
3. Cercel, M. O. (2012). ANALIZA COMPARATIVĂ A MODELELOR HUMAN SYNERGISTICS ȘI DENISON DE EVALUARE A CULTURII ORGANIZAȚIONALE. *Management Intercultural*, XIV(2/2012), 16-22.
4. Chen, Q. (2024). Critical Analysis of Motivation and Organizational Culture at Google: Balancing Innovation with Employee Autonomy. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 283-286.
5. Gabreski, T. (2013). Values, company culture and strategy: CSR reporting at Southwest Airlines. *Journal of European Management & Public Affairs Studies*, 17-22.
6. Geraghty, T. (2023, February 3). *Edgar Schein's Three Layers of Organisational Culture*. Preluat de pe Psychsafety: <https://psychsafety.com/psychological-safety-edgar-scheins-three-layers-of-organisational-culture/>
7. Gillespie, M. A., Denison, D. R., Haaland, S., Smerek, R., & Neale, W. S. (2008). Linking organizational culture and customer satisfaction: Results from two companies in different industries. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 1-21.
8. Hays, C. (2023, October 25). *How Salesforce Reduced Turnover by Focusing on Engagement: A Real-World Case Study*. Preluat de pe LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-salesforce-reduced-turnover-focusing-engagement-real-world-hays-xdf1e/>
9. Hofstede, G. (2025). *The 6-D model of national culture*. Preluat de pe Geerthofstede: <https://geerthofstede.com/culture-geert-hofstede-gert-jan-hofstede/6d-model-of-national-culture/>
10. Hyder, B. (2022, September 15). *How Salesforce Builds Meaningful Employee Experiences — Without Return-to-Office Mandates*. Preluat de pe Salesforce: <https://www.salesforce.com/news/stories/how-salesforce-builds-meaningful-employee-experiences/>
11. Infosys. (2025). *Employee Wellness*. Preluat de pe Infosys: <https://www.infosys.com/about/esg/social/employee-wellbeing/health-assessment.html>
12. Nickerson, C. (2023, October 24). *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory & Examples*. Preluat de pe SimplyPsychology: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/hofstedes-cultural-dimensions-theory.html>
13. Purcell, J. (2019, 10 28). *Case Study: SAP Shows How Employee Well-being Boosts The Bottom Line*. Preluat de pe Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimpurcell/2019/10/28/case-study-sap-shows-how-employee-wellbeing-boosts-the-bottom-line/>
14. Salesforce. (2024, September 30). *Salesforce*. Preluat de pe Comparably: <https://www.comparably.com/companies/salesforce>
15. SAP. (2024). *Social Data*. Preluat de pe SAP: <https://www.sap.com/integrated-reports/2024/en/datahub/social-data/talent-development.html>
16. Silva, I., Dias, A. L., & Pereira, L. F. (2023). Determinants of employee intention to stay: a generational multigroup analysis. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
17. Sreeramana, A., & Saldanha, D. (2024, October). Infosys: A Pioneer in HR Innovation. *Researchgate*, 1, 131-182.
18. Trisca, L. (2025, February 26). *How Zappos Onboards New Hires Weirdly (but Effectively): Detailed Breakdown & Tips*. Preluat de pe Deel: <https://www.deel.com/blog/employee-onboarding-at-zappos/>

19. Zippia. (2023, July 21). *SALESFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS AND STATISTICS*. Preuat de pe Zippia The Career Expert: <https://www.zippia.com/salesforce-careers-10060/demographics/>