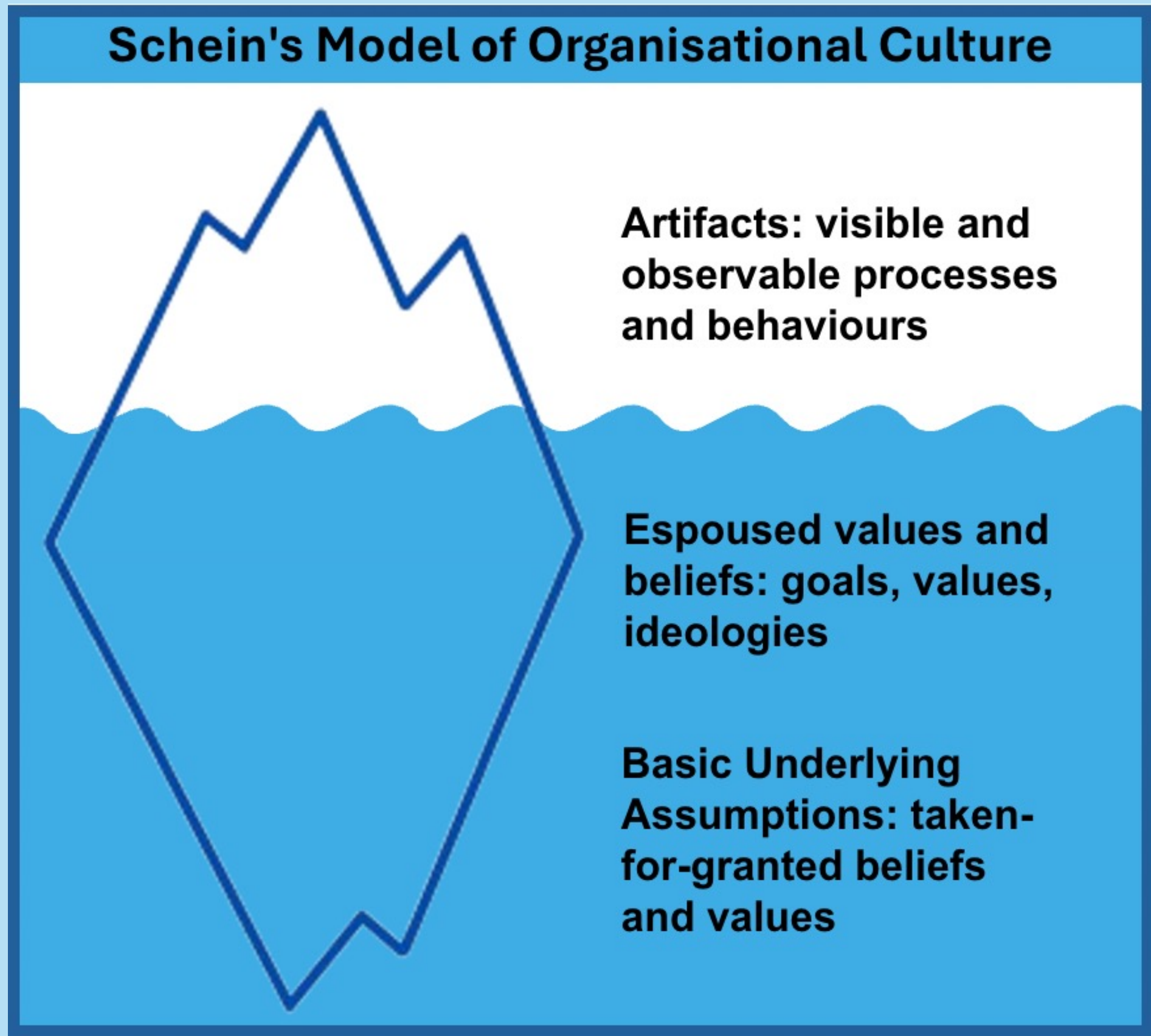


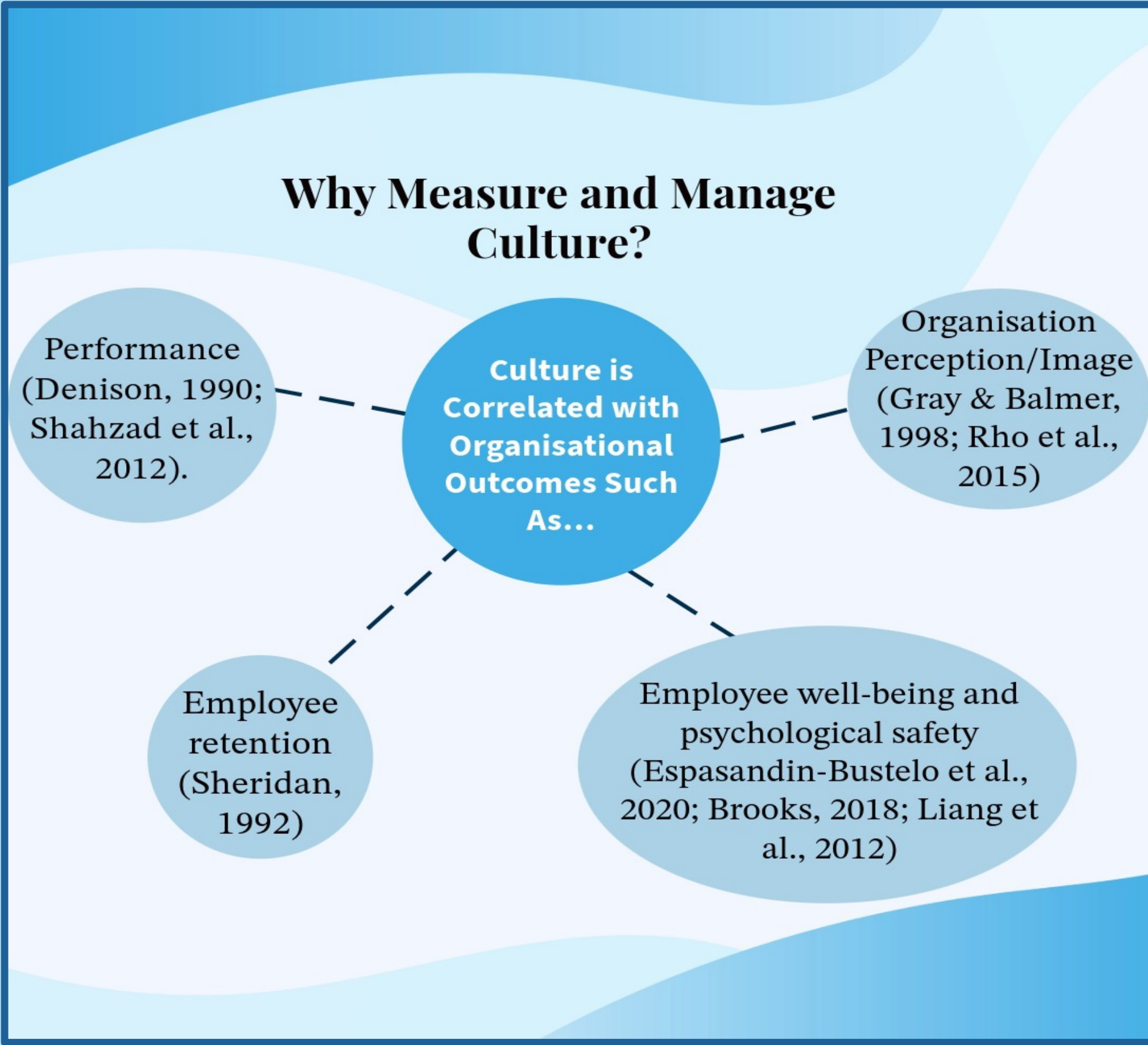
Introduction

What is organisational culture?
"The culture of a group can now be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." (Schein & Schein, 2010)

Developed as a model that argues organisational culture is layered, Schein and Schein (2010) identified three levels of culture:



In terms of measuring culture, this means we can observe and report indicators of culture. Such key indicators can include innovation and risk-taking, outcome orientation, people orientation, aggressiveness, stability and control (Guttermann, 2024).



How is organisational culture measured?
While a lot of organisations rely on annual or bi-annual employee surveys to gain insights into their culture, these do not reflect the on-going dynamics and changes of culture over time. Limitations to self-reporting includes reliability due to social desirability biases (Paulhus, 1984), high time- and resource consumption, and the lack of real-time insights (Schaeffer & Presser, 2003).

How could organisations measure culture better?
A culture dashboard powered by artificial intelligence (AI), would enable organisations to understand holistic developments and shifts within their culture through real-time data-driven insights. Such a system may expose workplace issues that could be missed in conventional systems (Malik et al., 2023).

Our Approach

To effectively track the evolution of organisational culture, assess the impact of interventions, and anticipate future trends, organisations must harness real-time data using their existing digital footprint. This data-driven approach enables holistic, continuous, scalable monitoring of workplace behaviours and interactions, regardless of where employees are located (office, hybrid or homeworking) or in which country the team works from (UK or worldwide). According to Schein and Schein's (2010) organisational culture model, observable culture (artifacts) such as behaviours, communication patterns, and workplace interactions, serves as a reflection of underlying values and assumptions. By analysing these artifacts at scale, organisations can evaluate whether employee behaviours align with the company's stated values, such as those of NatWest. Advancements in AI, data mining, and machine learning have revolutionised the study of workplace dynamics. These technologies enable real-time, cost-effective, and objective assessments of behavioural patterns and cultural shifts (Gelbard et al., 2018). AI-driven approaches have already been applied in various contexts, from analysing employee emotions through facial expression recognition (Subhashini & Niveditha, 2015) to assessing sentiment in online employee reviews (Moniz & de Jong, 2014). The following core techniques can be used to get detailed insights into behaviours:

Tool/Technique	Metadata Analysis	Text-Mining & Topic Modelling	Natural Language Processing (NLP)	Network Analysis	Machine Learning (Predictive & Pattern Detection)
Function	Examining non-content data to identify behavioural trends	Extracting key themes, patterns, and relationships from text	Understanding and analysing text data for sentiment, meaning, and structure	Mapping relationships, collaboration, and communication flow	Identifying trends, biases, and future outcomes
Potential Data Source	Email timestamps, frequency of messages, sender-recipient relationships, meeting participation logs	Written communication, reports, feedback, exit interviews	Emails, chat logs, meeting transcripts, employee surveys	Email metadata, chat interactions, organisational structure	Promotion records, employee retention data, HR systems

Culture Dashboard: How can such technologies be applied at NatWest? What cultural insights can be obtained?

Communication

Research indicates that positive workplace interactions, drive a thriving organisational culture, fostering trust, respect, employee engagement, well-being, and performance (Cunha et al., 2020).

Possible AI Insights: Is leadership approachable in digital communication? Do junior employees message senior leaders? Are meetings inclusive, or do the same people dominate discussions?

Predictive

Retention & Employee Experience

Analytical tools can be used to pinpoint workers who are at risk of resigning because of cultural misalignment and appropriate action can be taken (Taghavi et al., 2024).

Possible AI Insights: What are the key drivers of employee turnover? Do employees leave due to lack of growth, compensation, or cultural misalignment?

Predictive

Recognition & Reward Systems

If recognition systems consider knowledge sharing, ethical leadership and teamwork, it creates a culture that reflects the company's values (Nazir et al., 2016). Promotion trends and reward systems can help uncover the influence of an organisation's cultural strategy (Gelfand et al., 2017).

Possible AI Insights: Who receives promotions, and what patterns emerge? Do rewards align with company-stated values (e.g., curiosity, ambition)?

Feedback Loops & Learnings

Feedback loops help organisations navigate their dynamic nature and could help detect cultural shifts, enabling managers to recognise and influence evolving workplace norms (Akbar et al., 2017).

Possible AI Insights: Are employees comfortable expressing concerns openly? Does internal feedback align with external employer reputation (e.g., Glassdoor reviews)?

Continuous Employee Feedback

AI can analyse, incorporate and reveal complex, employee-involved methods for cultural assessment. Schein and Schein's (2010) model highlights the hidden underlying values and assumptions that can be difficult to observe, yet these are important to understand and incorporate into the culture dashboard.

How? Using a digital mixed-method 'card sort', every week employees are given time to order digital cards based on specific culture related question. For example, "What core values have the departments you have worked with demonstrated this week?". Cards would be pre-written but editable, to allow for broader more subjective responses (dscout, n.d.). AI would then collate the anonymous feedback and create current themes and insights from the data. An automated response (created and sent by the system) would be sent to employees with low response rates, asking them to reach out to their manager for well-being reasons.

Why? This approach uses real-time feedback to inform proactive, actionable goals, with low-levels of resource. Also, with careful questioning, psychological safety (Brooks, 2018) and other taken-for-granted (or hidden) assumptions and beliefs could be uncovered to drive and shape culture strategies.

Strengths

- Objective, data-backed insights offer a more accurate view of organisational culture by reducing bias from subjective surveys (Nazir et al., 2016).
- Uncovering hidden cultural barriers through analysis can improve employee performance and engagement (Amadi et al., 2021).
- System analysis facilitates targeted actions to reinforce principles like inclusion, curiosity, and resilience within the organisational culture (Ramakrishna et al., 2024).
- Monitoring email metadata is a more accepted data collection method compared to methods like facial recognition (TUC, 2018).
- NatWest's cultural insights can be analysed both holistically and by geographical cultures.

Considerations and Risks

- Comprehensive HR analytics systems are not universally accessible (Taghavi et al., 2024).
- Effective system analysis depends on access to HR data and leadership support (Ali & Anwar, 2021).
- Transparent and effective data collection is necessary to prevent employees from perceiving it as intrusive, which could affect their participation (Taghavi et al., 2024).
- While AI is beneficial, human oversight and privacy safeguards are crucial to prevent misinterpretation (Shields et al., 2021).
- Transparency in AI tracking is essential to build employee trust and encourage genuine participation (Liang et al., 2012).
- Limited employee engagement necessitates strong buy-in and support from leadership and management for successful implementation.
- Adherence to GDPR and data protection laws, including obtaining consent and minimising intrusion, is required (CIPD, 2024).
- NatWest's data policies may need to be revised to align with changes in data usage and consider country-specific regulations (CIPD, 2024).
- The success of change initiatives is closely tied to their implementation and depends on key factors such as trust, fairness, and communication (Peus et al., 2009). In NatWest case, a pilot study could be useful in a first attempt to assess employee reactions towards the new proposed measures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed technology-driven approach, leveraging AI analysis of key employee data, offers NatWest a powerful tool for real-time cultural understanding. Success hinges on prioritising employee trust through transparent data handling, ethical AI application focused on anonymity and efficiency, strict adherence to data protection regulations, and a comprehensive change-management strategy. By addressing these considerations, NatWest can effectively harness the dashboard to drive positive cultural change and empower leaders with actionable insights.

References

Full references for mentioned research can be found by scanning the QR code below:



Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to our Pro Coach Angel, Amanda Potter, for her guidance and support.

