



Does Culture Strengthen or Break Organization? Revisiting, Organizational Culture's Roles in Organizational Social Life

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Abstract

As a collection of individuals who work together to achieve organizational goals, the organization urgently needs glue which attaches all members. Existing studies find that organizational culture can be a means to provoke collectivism climate for influencing organizational performance. The study aims to examine the potential capacity of organizational rituals of arisan and picnic in evoking organizational social cohesion, from the perspective of organizational members. Furthermore, it aims to explore the other possible functions of organizational culture. The data are collected from co-reflection by using certain reflection guidance. The study finds that organizational arisan or picnic can potentially benefit members. It provides opportunities for members to share happy moments, face challenging activities together, forget their conflict and replace it with new happy experiences. However, this ritual does not always bring genuine happiness. It may keep silent storm of emotion as the ritual can exert social pressure, display dominant social status, reinforce power of giving which acquire needs to get back (return the kindness). The study also reveals the emergent co-rituals which are created or joined by in-group members. Co-exist rituals allow members to fit their individual-group dimensions with less social pressure, build stronger emotional bond and support. However, this too strong emotional tie may ignite inter-group conflict and high competition with other groups.

INTRODUCTION

Organization is a living entity. It is not only consisting of technical systems, collection of process or procedures mechanisms, but also social system, process and dynamic which enliven it. It is tangible, while at the same time is intangible. Organization has physical elements, artifacts, places which embody stories, values, and shared knowledge inside. However, it is not just a place for collecting working tools, documents, set of rules, ethics and managerial approaches, but it also has people who bring friendship, rites, rituals, myths and social interaction. People are the main assets in an organization. They bring about their energy, commitment, thinking, skills, uniqueness, personalities, preferences, and feelings into organizations. These people's diversities may signal organizational differences and uniqueness. It builds and projects certain organizational images and uniqueness. The same physical aspects of a certain organization can produce different outcomes from other organizations when it is run by different people. Thus, organizational members can grow organizational uniqueness. People also bring liveness to organization. Besides bringing about uniqueness, people in organization determine organizational performance. As stated in Rahmah et al. (2022), human resources play an essential role in an organization's success because it is dependent on the productive functioning of its members. Furthermore, Muhtadin et al. (2023) mention that the organizational success is determined by the active role of human resources, employees who highly committed to their obligations and the behaviours and attitudes of the employees.

This organizational life can also be brought by people in organization through day-to-day interaction and several social activities manifesting organizational culture. Organizational rituals, for instance, can be started by some or just a few people gathering and do activities together on regular basis, which gradually attract other more members to join and are being formalized. Joking, chatting, relaxing or having lunch together, for example, can potentially emerge spontaneous or unconscious organizational culture. All these activities bring about social life and dynamic in organization. Frequently, behind these activities, there are transferred organizational values which guide its members. As highlighted by Wulandari (2019, p. 3), from the cultural perspective, organization is a complex arenas of values and stories, rather than whole rational institution.

The study aims to explore the organizational culture of picnic and *arisan*. Many existing studies explored the potential positive impacts of organizational culture on organizational performance. However, there are still few organizational studies discussing organizational rituals emerging from members' daily gathering activities. Moreover, many discussions are heavily focused on viewing positive consequences of organizational culture and rarely investigating organizational culture's dark sides. To fill those empirical gaps, the study is addressed to investigate the strengths and caveats of organizational rituals of picnic and *arisan*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Social Dimension of Organization

Organization is a living thing. It has a hard body and soul inside which means organization can be both tangible and intangible. As mentioned by De Giosa (2010), organization has two main typologies, social and physical structures. Physical structures relate to the physical aspects, working place, while social structure relates to people, normative structure and people behavior including expected roles, norms, values and behavioral dimension which embody the actual behavior, interactions, recurrent activities in organizations (De Giosa, 2010).

Organizational sustainability relies not only on its physical management, but also social aspect management. Organization has its social dimension (van Marrewijk, 2004). People as one of the organizational social aspects is invaluable organizational assets (Fulmer & Ployhart, 2014; Gabčanová, 2011; IBM, 2010), is the key social capital in organization (Serrat, 2009; Sholekhah et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020; Veismoradi et al., 2012). To maintain its stability, organization needs to take into account their social sustainability, social dynamics and social process which benefits organizational development, such as openness, involvement, cooperation, inclusiveness and transparency (Benaim et al., 2008). To increase their performance, organizations need to also focus on their social dimensions by promoting credibility, respect, fairness, trust, connectedness and inclusiveness (van Marrewijk, 2004), strengthening commitment, broadening social relations and increasing organizational training (Ikram et al., 2020). Serrat (2009) also confirms that organizational social capital can support organizational performance by encouraging organizational members to strengthen their connection, share values, develop mutual understanding, collective behavior and trust each other which enables cooperation.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture can potentially provide unique nuances, create moods and boost organizational energy. Organizational culture plays a function of human heart (Weng & Chang, 2017, p. 368). Effective and healthy organizational culture may provide a productive climate for organizational performance. Numerous existing organizational studies highlight the vital functions of culture in organization. Organizational culture, leadership, work design and human resources policies are some key determinants of organizational performance (Chien, 2004, cited in Abu-Jarad et al., 2010, p. 29). Existing studies identify the relationship between organizational culture and organizational core values. As mentioned by Erhardt et al. (2016),

organizational culture has pervasive impacts on core values reinforcement. Understanding or learning core values is significant for staff for translating those values into higher quality of service and product (Erhardt et al., 2016, p. 39). Culture also guides members' attitude and behavior at individual and interpersonal level (Child & Warner, 2003, p. 3), determines corporate activities (Abu-Jarad et al., 2010, p. 27), influences organizational innovation and performance (Schuldt & Gomes, 2020), accelerates or hinders organizational change (Martin, 2013). Furthermore Child and Warner (2003, p. 3) argue that organizational culture influences various organizational aspects, from management to members' behavior, such as management practices, communication norms, managerial styles, meeting conduct, members' responsibility and conflict resolution modes. Healthy culture leads to members' satisfaction and well-beingness (Ozenc & Hagan, 2018).

Organizations tend to have different organizational cultures. This means culture marks organizational uniqueness which potentially can be soft tool for organization to create their competitive advantage. This uniqueness and differences of organizational culture may derive from members who create activities together purposefully or spontaneously. As stated by Wulandari (2019, p. 8), organizational culture is socially formed through organization members' interaction. As organizational culture is potentially formed by through members' social interaction, organizational culture may represent members' solidarity and sociability of organization (Martin, 2012, p. 1). The other perspective on how organization emerges highlights the roles and power of leaders and managers to create, facilitate, promote even destroy undesired culture (Bushman et al., 2011; Lunenburg, 2011).

As the heart of organization, culture contains organizational core values, which are manifested into various practices (Rudiati, 2023). As mentioned by Wulandari (2019, p. 7), organizational cultures varies and can be manifested into complex and different practices. Organizational members' complex and dynamic interaction may lead to the dynamic, changes and flux of organizational culture. This is congruent with communication perspective in understanding organizational culture. It views culture as performance which is improving, contextual, episodic and interactional (Wulandari, 2019, p. 8). Organizational culture tends to be episodic as it is distinctive occasion in organizational life (Wulandari, 2019, p. 8). The dynamic of organizational culture is also due to the absence of fixed clear picture and there can be multiple interpretations (Wulandari, 2019, p. 9). Organizational culture tends to be complex and non-unitary as it contains web of sub-cultures, rather than single culture (Wulandari, 2019, p. 8). Furthermore, organizational culture is characterized as mirroring values, producing artifacts, leading behavior, changing over time for adapting self to environmental dynamic, manifesting in many sub-cultures, is formed and maintained through members' communication process (Wulandari, 2019, p. 18). This communication perspective tends to view culture as emergent, fragmented values, stories and artifacts which represent what the organization is, rather than culture as the managed thing (Wulandari, 2019). However, other studies argue that development of organizational culture is not only determined by social interaction at members' level, but also intervened by upper management and organizational leaders. As argued by Bushardt et al. (2011, p. 5), organizational culture can be supported or weakened by management. Furthermore Bushardt et al. (2011, p. 10) emphasize that the primary task of organization is to manage culture, rather than individuals. As organizational culture tends to manifest in various practices and develop spontaneously, it may need management intervention to control its development. As mentioned by Erhardt et al. (2016), organization needs to struggle to find which organizational cultural practices fits certain values. Leaders have power and influence to change or to create certain organizational culture (Lunenburg, 2011). Certain management process can also be created to destroy or create certain culture which align with organizational goals (Bushman et al., 2011, p. 10).

Organizational Ritual

Organizational values, past stories, changes, or myths usually can be smoothly transferred or communicated through social ritual, where members gather in spontaneous social interaction. As one form of organizational culture, rituals seem to promise organizational benefits through social life. Rite or ritual is understood as organizational artifact which is manifested in patterned organizational activity which brings more meanings than its actual aim (Martin, 2012, p. 2). They are the emerging patterns of repeated behavior and supported by organizational members who participate or join the events (Bushman et al., 2011, p. 5).

Some existing studies explore the benefits of developing organizational rituals. Rituals can be a learning media to introduce and socialize values to new members, reinforce existing members' behavior, minimize hand-on management overload for imparting core values and a tool for recruiting and increasing members' retention, which save energy and time for staff re-placement (Erhardt et al., 2016, p. 40). Rituals include group social action in which group identity and values are embedded and demonstrated in certain manner and particular events (Islam & Zyphur, 2009, p. 116). Rituals tend to be local, situated, involve actual actions and particular performance sites (Islam, 2015, p. 2). Rituals involve public organizational practices, formalized events emotional sharing, gathering and transfer or communication of collective social meanings (Islam, 2015). Hobson et al. (2018) mention that organizational rituals fulfils three functions of controls: emotion, goal and social regulatory.

This means that rituals can influence organization in several different ways. Rituals can support organizational outcomes by assisting organization to achieve competitive advantage (Deakin, 2015), reaching organizational goals, such as through work song (Weng & Chang, 2017), and enhancing creativity (Ozenc & Hagan, 2018). Organizational ritual can also be an effective means to sharpen organizational uniqueness and mark differences (Plester, 2015). Organizational ritual are keys to understand institutional order and maintenance, including organizational norms and values (Islam, 2015). Inherently, Koschmann and McDonald (2015, p. 247) mention that rituals are powerful culture which represents full force of organizational norms, values and power relations.

Organizational rituals also play various social roles. Not all organizational functions can be better operated by using structural-formal ways. Instead, social rites can be alternatives to sustain and support organizational social functions. As mentioned by Plester (2015), rituals can strengthen social relationship and collective enactment. Furthermore, Plester (2015, p. 17) describes how food sharing culture, as one of organizational practices, can present pleasurable activities, unite people, share emotion through joking, laughing, appreciation and serve cultural-based food. Rituals can increase cohesion and evoke resilience, strengthen ties or social bond, identity, bring excitement and bring people together (Ozenc & Hagan, 2018).

Organizational rituals also may help organizations to create their organizational climate. As mentioned by Martin (2013), rituals and sagas can help organizations to create strong conditions or climate which enables organizational changes. Similarly, Islam and Zyphur (2009, pp. 124–125) argue that rituals may function for promoting change, ensuring stability, facilitating organization transition, such as status, roles in organization and strengthening social solidarity. For instance, company song can be used as learning tool and instruments for shaping organizational culture (Islam & Zyphur, 2009, pp. 124–125). Rituals can meet social functions in organizations. Rituals influence social status by establishing relative social position and creating new social positions (Plester, 2015, p. 452), strengthening social solidarity (Islam & Zyphur, 2009, pp. 124–125), boosting social engagement (Erhardt et al., 2016, p. 40).

Some studies argue that the emergence and development of organizational rituals needs to be structurally managed. Food rituals, for instance, can be managed and controlled by organization which deliberately creates culture to reinforce certain values, such as caring, inclusive and generosity values (Plester, 2015), through top-down process (Ozenc & Hagan, 2018). Organization management needs to monitor their organizational culture as unfit culture can inhibit organizational productivity. As mentioned by Islam and Zyphur (2009, p. 124), ritual events can emerge from group of members as well as created by management. Even though organizational rituals are likely to promise many potential benefits, Erhardt et al. (2016, p. 40)

advise the organization managerial boards needs to fit the congruency between organizational rituals and positive performance and leave rituals which would likely to cause opposing impacts. Erhardt et al. (2016, p. 40) believe that rituals can boost social engagement, but it needs carefully created as it may create pressures for engaging, rather than spontaneous, constructive and voluntary involvement causing turnover. However, Plester (2015) believes that the institutionalization of certain culture (such as food culture) can also infuse the behavior of patronizing, reflect controlling and patriarchal values. The rituals can be created purposefully and organically when the organization environment is safe and well-structured (Ozenc & Hagan, 2018). Organizational culture also can be accepted differently by different organizational members (individuals). Members' organizational food culture, for instance, is influenced by individuals' perception of being cared when the served food is delicious, health, tasty or feeling of being threatened if the food is not fairly distributed (Plester, 2015, p. 17). Thus, organizational rituals can be perceived differently by individuals (Koschmann & McDonald, 2015, p. 232) and may have latent meanings and deviant effects which align with members' individual goals and intents (Koschmann & McDonald, 2015, p. 230).

Some previous studies identify functions of organizational rituals during difficult times of organization. As stated by Islam (2015), rituals can help organization to manage uncertainty, unify identity, maintain, transform and firm institutions. Similarly, Islam et al. (2006) confirm that rites can be useful for renewing organizations after crisis, stabilizing situation, resolving conflict and restoring social unity. In a broader perspective, organizational rituals help organizations to handle anxiety, give meaning, symbolize and strengthen social order, transfer values, strengthen group solidarity, identify in-and out-group, indicate commitment, manage work structure, direct and promote valuable events (Smith & Stewart, 2011, cited in Weng & Chang, 2017, p. 377).

METHODS

The study aims to explore the dynamics of organizational rituals of *arisan* and workplace picnic, particularly questioning its social functions in strengthening social cohesiveness. To reach the objective, qualitative research methods are adopted. As mentioned by Creswell (2013), qualitative inquiry tends to be used to explore problem, rather than confirming the validity of the pre-determined variables, though the stories or revelation of the participants. The examined organizational ritual of is the researchers' workplace or organizational picnic or *arisan*. *Arisan* is a type of group social interaction in which members of the group regularly meet and collect certain agreed amount of money which are given to one particular member who gets the slot (Pratama, 2018). *Arisan* also can be part of community ritual tradition (such as *tayub* in *arisan tayub*) (Amaliya, 2017).

The researchers' workplace regularly runs organizational *arisan* three-monthly and picnic yearly (particularly before pandemic Covid-19). These events involve all members (lecturers, administration staff and cleaning staff). During the events, members do various activities, such as shared entertaining activities (karaoke, eating together, sport, outbound), individual free time (including shopping, enjoying favorite local food, doing certain sports, walking around hotel, enjoying natural scene around hotel or sharing stories). *Arisan* exists at various levels: community, certain types of groups (such as based on professions, living areas or friendship) or at organizational levels. *Arisan* shows togetherness which becomes the culture across different institutions, including social, family, government and religion institutions (Tangkudung & Senduk, 2016).

By observing our workplace organizational rituals, the authors can be natural observers, who understand the context in a real natural situation and reflect the lived experiences. As mentioned by Creswell (2013), qualitative inquiry emphasizes natural setting as the inquiry sites and researchers as the key informants. This is also consistent with some studies which argue that the most appropriate way to capture complex, fragmented, unique and changing state of cultural group is through qualitative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, cited in Wulandari, 2019, p. 18), organizational rituals body of knowledge strongly relies on

qualitative studies and is majorly drawn from case studies (Islam & Zyphur, 2009, p. 116). The natural observant role of the authors allows them to examine the everyday context of the observed phenomenon. As mentioned by Martin (2012, p. 1), culture studies may need the researchers to capture day-to-day life at work. The data are collected by using a co-reflection guide. This guide contains three main questions which lead the researchers as informants to remember their *arisan* or picnic moment and retell their feeling and perception by following the guide. The collected data are analyzed by using inductive-thematic analysis. Several procedures are performed to analyze the data: gathering the data, reading, finding emerging patterns, classifying, describing, interpreting, and presenting or displaying the result of analysis. The following table presents emerging patterns drawn from the co-reflection guide. The table shows the classification of the collected data. Three primary themes emerged from the data collected: ritual functions (T1), ritual emotion (T2), complaints, inconveniences, and acceptance (T2), and co-rituals (T3). Furthermore, the data classifications or themes are divided into several subcategories or sub-themes, including social organizational, personal-psychological-economical, spiritual functions, acceptance and potential harm. The data are analyzed from the co-reflection of several researchers as informants 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 1. Data Classification

Co-Reflection Guide	Classifications	Data Categories
Do you find any benefits from participating?	Ritual functions (T1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social organizational function (T1C1)-I/R2, I/R3 • Personal-psychological-economical function (T1C2)-I/R3, I/R1 • Spiritual function (T1C3)-I/R4
How do you find any drawbacks (flaws)?	Ritual emotion (T2) complaints, inconveniences, acceptance (T2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance (T2C1)-I/R2, I/R3 • Potential harm (T2C2)-I/R2, I/R1, I/R4
Do you find any other organizational rituals which you prefer?	Co-rituals (T3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time outside (T3C1)-I/R1 • Spontaneous gathering at workplace area (T3C2)-I/R2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nongkrong</i> (T3C3)-I/R3 • Lunch in office (inner circle friends) (T3C4)- I/R4

T=Theme; C=Category; I/R=Informant/Researcher

Source: Authors (2024)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data are classified into three themes. The first theme is the ritual functions which show ritual roles and benefits. The second theme is ritual emotion which indicates how the ritual is welcomed or rejected as it may evoke inconveniences or potential hazards. The third aspect is some co-rituals which may work supplementary with *arisan* and picnic rituals.

Organizational picnic and *arisan* functions

The data show several functions of organizational *arisan* and picnic. The following table (Table 2) represents the details. Several data extracts that reflect the organisational culture as a way to relax and socialising are displayed in the table. This is revealed by I/RI 1, I/RI2 and I/RI3.

Table 2. The Ritual functions

No	Data Extract	Meaning
1	“I think it is useful for increasing our sense of togetherness and sense of being one family, if it is run proportionally. Moreover, it can help me relax and escape from workplace routine.”	Social function of togetherness as one big family and personal function of self-refreshing/T1C1-I/R1 & T1C2-I/R1
2	“I think through <i>Arisan</i> or picnic we can spend our time together as colleagues. This sense of togetherness is essential for cooperation, collaboration and unity of team and organization.”	Social unity at team and organizational levels/T1C1-I/R2
3	“It’s very important for growing and strengthening family sense, increasing <i>silaturahmi</i> and improving economic condition.”	Social- <i>silaturahmi</i> and economic purpose/T1C2-I/R3
4	“I notice that some friends use <i>arisan</i> as a media for celebrating their success and announces it to the public. They bring local food for <i>syukuran</i> , all members are welcomed and invited to join. We also pray together for their (the celebrating person and his/her family) and for our own success.”	Spiritual-getting social support from other members pray/I1-C2-I/R3

T=Theme; C=Category; I/R=Informant/Researcher

Source: Authors (2024)

The data show that organizational rituals of picnic or *arisan* have multiple functions. The study identifies three main functions. The first function is personal roles. Several informants reveal that *arisan* or going picnic together can be beneficial for their individuals, such as relieving stress or refreshing self by providing chances for relaxing from daily work routine (T1C2-I/R1), maintaining *silaturahmi* and getting more friends for work networking which may increase chances to get side jobs and doing academic work together (T1C2-I/R3). The other economic benefit is learning to save money regularly and getting soft credits or loans (Anggraeni, 2014). *Arisan* also has educative and development functions, particularly when *arisan* members share and collect some money for communal purposes (Fitriana, 2019).

The second function is social function. Several informants agree that picnics and *arisan* can strengthen social bond at various levels: inter-individuals, teams, and organization (T1C1-I1, T1C1-I2). The organizational picnic and *arisan* capacity to grow sense of family may create collective or shared emotion which encourages helping, encouraging, caring, and empathizing with each other as what a big family should be. This one big family identity also implies long-term relationships, parent-children’s relationships and sharing moments in family life. This sense of unity is meaningful for not only sensing and caring for other members in personal context (social life), but also in organizational performance or outcomes (organizational mechanical context). *Arisan* can be effective media for *silaturahmi*, increasing social bond and solidarity (Pratama, 2018), establishing friendship and group identity (Abdullah, 2016), strengthening solidarity, righteousness, togetherness and mutuality (Halim, 2020).

The following figure (Figure 1, one of the cultural artefacts, some food served at organizational *arisan* symbolizing collective happiness and gratefulness) displays one of some elements or artefacts in organizational *arisan*. The food indicates *tasyakuran* or *syukuran*.



Figure 1. Example of Cultural Artefacts (some food served at organizational *arisan* symbolizing collective happiness and gratefulness)

Source: Authors (2024)

The other function is spiritual function. Some organizational members use organizational *arisan* as a media for *tasyakuran* or celebrating their success and gratitude to God for His mercy or bless. Certain events can be inserted to this culture and through rituals, organizations celebrate its culture in a unique way (Wulandari, 2019). Through this *arisan* and *tasyakuran*, the celebrating individual gets social support from all members pray which evokes feeling of being spiritually safe. Furthermore, the celebrating individuals may feel like they are getting social care. Food giving behavior also may bring a sense of self-worthiness by giving food to others. However, this celebration may emit the negative consequences of power of giving (showing domination, economic status and social debt which implies duty to return or reciprocate). *Arisan* and picnics may help members to get to know each other, build relationships and feel safer. Psychological safety tends to increase members' commitment and engagement (Vance, 2006). However, the bonding function of *arisan* can be transformed into status showing and success symbol (Haryono, 2017), displaying one's economic or social status, and a means to control other members (Abdullah, 2016).

Ritual Emotion

The study also indicates how the participants accept culture of *arisan* and organizational picnic. Some of them detect potential harm which may potentially ruin social bond. The following table (Table 3, emotion evoked by rituals) presents how the participants feel about the culture. The ritual emotion is represented by several data extracts in the table that were taken from the co-reflections of I/R1, I/R2, I/R3, and I/R4.

Table 3. Emotion evoked by Rituals.

No	Data Extract	Meaning
1	“Sometimes the event is too monotonous and the schedule mismatches with other activities. It is a little bit irritating to me when it is not well coordinated, or it is conducted unprofessionally. If it is run professionally, it will be fun and all of us can enjoy happily.”	Feel unhappy since the event is monotonous and less coordinated/T2C2-I/R1
2	“I don’t have any principal disagreement with the event. If there are some issues, it is just about the picnic/ <i>arisan</i> place, time and cost, but I think it can be solved through dialog.”	Accept the event, follow the event and detect potential technical issues/ T2C1-I/R2
3	“I feel very happy, there are a lot of food, I can meet many people, I can talk to them, we can get closer.”	Feel very happy (getting many foods and friends), totally support the event/ T2C1-I/R3
4	“I am not really happy with this culture, especially when it becomes an obligatory activity. When I feel all the members, or at least the dominant members, force me to come. It feels like I don’t have any choice and individual freedom to choose. I must, I must come.... if I don’t come it seems that I don’t have any friends at workplace and that’s make me worry.”	Feeling the social pressure to come, suffering potential social rejection or isolation/ T2C2-I/R4

T=Theme; C=Category; I/R=Informant/Researcher

Source: Authors (2024)

The study demonstrates that the informants have different feelings about the culture of *arisan* and picnics. Some informants accept the events. Informant/researcher 3 (I/R3) accepts the event very happily as it is fun activity where I/R3 can get lot delicious food, share, and talk to many people in organization. I/R3 is a new member. As mentioned by Rokach (2020), food is not just representing eating symbol, but also symbol of togetherness which includes values of togetherness, social support and care underneath. As a new member, I/R3 may find that *arisan* and picnic can help her to know other members deeper and socialize beyond routine workplace activities. Members find happiness and feel positive things when the culture is congruent with themselves, their self-values and needs (Martin, 2013). Similarly, I/R2 welcome the culture, although some potential technical issues may arise (such as disagreement on time, place, and cost of cultural events). However, I/R2 believes that these issues can be solved together through group or organizational dialog. This indicates that these issues can be potentially positive or destructive tools. Positively, it can strengthen teamwork as the members are facing consensus problems which challenge their collective problem solving. Negatively, the unresolved, hidden or felt conflict disrupts organization. Consensus failure or continuing disagreement around technical issues of the culture may cause disintegration. Lack of integration among members leads to organizational failure (Pathiranage et al., 2020). The data also indicates that the organizational culture of *arisan* and picnics leads the members to be able to adapt their position and social roles to the present situation. A team leader or coordinator, for instance, can be just an ordinary member during *arisan* and picnic. Thus, the members need to adjust their individual dimensions and specific group roles into collectivity and other group roles. As stated by Durkheim (cited in Islam & Zyphur, 2009, p. 8), rituals are not only expressing consensus, but also bridging individual transition from one social to other social role.

Although organizational *arisan* and picnics may promise fun and social bonds, some other informants (I/R1, I/R4) feel unhappy with the two main rationales. The first reason is technical inconvenience, such as time, place, monotonous activities, or unprofessional coordination (T2C2-I/R1). This unhappiness may imply social domination of the event coordinator who has power or influence to design the event and decide how it

will be run. This unhappiness also may indicate passive involvement of I/R1, and potential withdraw from the event, which may evoke a feeling of social exclusion. Successful culture needs social consensus and collective consciousness which imply the interdependency of individuals, events and objects (Lincoln & Guillot, 2004).

The second reason relates to the emotional issue. Organizational *arisan* or picnic together may evoke a feeling of social pressure (as revealed in T2C2-I/R4). The culture may subtly press members to join. Unparticipating or absenteeism may evoke social risks as non-participating members can be labelled as not conforming members and may suffer from social exclusion. Having no friends at the workplace can be uncomfortable. As mentioned by Rokach (2020), belonging is social need in which failure to fulfil belonging need leads to feeling of social isolation and loneliness. Moreover, this can influence members' social well-being and work performance, particularly when group work or collaborative work is needed. This means that ritual can be a tool for pressing. As mentioned by Hobson et al. (2018, p. 24), rituals can be used for controlling. Culture may restrain individuals' freedom to choose by espousing social pressures, constraint individual externally and force people to conform, instead of voluntarily (Lincoln & Guillot, 2004).

Co-Culture

The study also finds that organizational culture is complex and dynamic. Culture is living. It changes, evolves, and co-exists. The following table (Table 4, functions of co-culture) presents how informants enjoy other preferred rituals. Table 4 represents the functions of co-culture which are revealed by I/R1, I/R2, I/R3 and I/R4.

Table 4. Functions of co-culture

No	Data Extract	Meaning
1	"I love break time when I and some friends go outside for lunch. It's really important for restoring our stamina by eating different nutritious food, instead of same, boring food. Besides, I really enjoy the fresh surroundings. It relieves me from monotonous work. It also benefits culinary business, helps to improve community economical condition."	Daily lunch culture-going outside organization, enjoy surrounding while doing positive thing for helping community economy/(T3C1)-I/R1
2	"I prefer to have spontaneous time of being together with friends whom I know well. That's when I want social interaction, but I prefer to be just with myself if I want to be alone."	Spontaneous social togetherness, enjoying togetherness moment, while considering individuality/(T3C2)-I/R2
3	" <i>Nongkrong</i> ...it can make me get closer to my colleagues and this makes me easier to do my job."	Culture of <i>nongkrong</i> to know other colleagues, get mentor to teach how to do tasks/(T3C3)-I/R3
4	"I prefer to spend daily lunch with my inner circle friends, some peer who I comfortable with. We talk about hard or serious issues, such as task, work plan, work evaluation, or light topic or chit chat... favorite things, new hobbies, funny experiences. I prefer to have lunch in my office, it's more private and I feel like I have a sense of ownership, rather than in the department's common room. There are too many people there."	Culture of lunch, sharing with only inner circle friends at office (small size), rather than at common room with any friends who come/ (T3C4)-I/R4

T=Theme; C=Category; I/R=Informant/Researcher

Source: Authors (2024)

The data show that different informants have different preferred rituals to join or create. There are other social rituals which accommodate members' need to interact. Break time, for instance, can be a tool for not only resting from working activities for a while, but also time to joining various group activities based on members' individual interest or preference. Lunchtime can be ritual time for strengthening social bonds. This non-*arisan* or non-picnic culture seems to co-exist with *arisan* and picnic ritual. However, different from *arisan* and picnic, these co-rituals tend to be flexible and are joined by smaller group size. Thus, they tend to emit less social pressure and are more voluntary based. Voluntarily, through this sub-culture or co-exist culture, members have more freedom to decide.

These co-rituals exist in many different formats, such as having lunch outside the office together (T3C1)-I/R1. By doing this, I/R1 feels happy since he can benefit himself (by refreshing his mind, relieving self from routine boredom) and other people (by being able to buy food from small-and-medium sized community enterprises). Thus, this ritual has self and social functions. This goal orientation is equivalent with I1's work roles (addressing and improving community capacity or potency) as I/R1 is a member in campus community empowerment division (study center). The other form is joining or creating spontaneous social interaction in the office (as preferred by I/R2 and is revealed in T3C2-I/R2). It shows that I/R2 does not need a special moment. Anytime he and his in-group need to talk, they come together. The phenomenon of in-groupness in sub-culture or co-exist culture confirms that organizational culture can emerge from the organizational bottom, which reflects the need of members who have similar interests and thinking. As mentioned by Ellinas et al. (2017), organizational culture emerges from the belief aggregation of organizational agents.

The other form is through *nongkrong* culture (as preferred and revealed by I/R3 in T3C3-I/R3. To do this, she joins any small groups who chat or gather in the office, canteen, or common room, rather than having or forming certain specific in-group friends. This is congruent with I/R3's position as the new member who is still actively learning and socializing with all members to acquire technical knowledge, norms, know each other and seek for fit role model. The fourth form is eating rituals in a small room at office (as preferred by I/R4 and is expressed in (T3C4)-I/4. She prefers to eat and spend her daily lunch together with her in-group at the office discussing tasks issues, delegation, progress or just chatting. Culture which emerges from bottom, is usually used for addressing common, situational issues (Fischer, 2008). Frequently, the same co-existing ritual members tend to have similar voice, perspective, or attitude towards organizational situation as culture provides direction for members to follow. Organizational culture controls members by decreasing uncertainty and equivocality (O'Neill et al., 2001).

The various forms of co-exist culture indicate members' active effort to manage their group culture. This culture tends to provide members with more space to own the culture. Culture may give chances for members to adapt, modify and create situation for new adaptation (Fischer, 2008).

The study shows that one big culture may not be sufficient to build organizational social cohesion. It needs to be supported by other sub-cultures or the co-existing culture to build the cultural compound. The data indicate that the sub-culture or co-exist culture tends to be flexible, emerges spontaneously (with less or no top-down managerial intervention), exert less social pressure and involve inner circle of friends or in-group. Because of the less presence of social pressure and involvement in-groups, members tend to happily join these different rituals. Moreover, intra-group friends can be more preferred friends to face outside threats. Group co-exist culture can be a tool for accumulate collective action for facing threats. As mentioned by Cárdenas & Mantilla (2015), collective action emerges stronger when the intra-group needs to solve threats and challenges which surpass individual competence to manage.

It is apparent that these co-cultures can evoke members' positive mood through the presence of their in-group, group identity and sense of belongingness (having friends and being friends of others). Appropriate culture can motivate employees (Odor, 2018). These co-existing cultures are also adapted to different individual needs and interests. The members also adapt it to their social roles, status or position and expected

formal organizational roles. The emergence of various sub-cultures may encourage some smaller groups (in-group peers) to grow, heighten the intra-group friendship and cooperation. However, a too strong intra-group bond may evoke conflict with other groups. Moderate levels of conflict can trigger creative thinking and creativity in decision making to achieve goals, but excessive intergroup conflict may hinder organizational performance (Tebitendwa, 2021).

Culture: Bonding or Breaking Organization?

The study shows that organizational *arisan* or picnics do not always promise heightened social bonding. Most existing studies believe that organizational culture of togetherness (which includes food culture, gathering culture) can effectively strengthen social cohesion among organizational members. However, the study finds that there are latent hazards underneath organizational ritual. Moreover, the finding of the study may fill the knowledge gap on co-culture which is still under observed. Besley and Persson (2018) encourage further studies which observe the gap of dynamic implication of the emergence of co-parties (co-culture).

The study indicates that organizational ritual of *arisan* or picnic can be informal, effective means for *silaturahmi*, evoking sense of being one big family, new member's socialization, aligning individuals to organization through identity symbols, celebrating happiness, empathizing, sharing, and refreshing. Through rituals of *arisan* or picnic, members identify themselves collectively, join fun activities together which also reflects physical and emotional bonds. The power of group bonds can positively increase organizational members' commitment and change readiness (Suwaryo et al., 2015), socialization for interconnecting individuals' goals to organization (Ibidunni & Agboola, 2013), creating frameworks and structures for organizational operations (Ibidunni & Agboola, 2013). Furthermore, the organization production level tends to be influenced by group processes through social means. Organization may benefits motivation, ideas and abilities from group or informal groups (Saim et al., 2015). However, these bright sides of organizational culture are shadowed by its dark sides. Thus, organizational culture determines organizational performance through the moderation of goal orientation, team coordination, change management and cultural strength (Saad & Abbas, 2018).

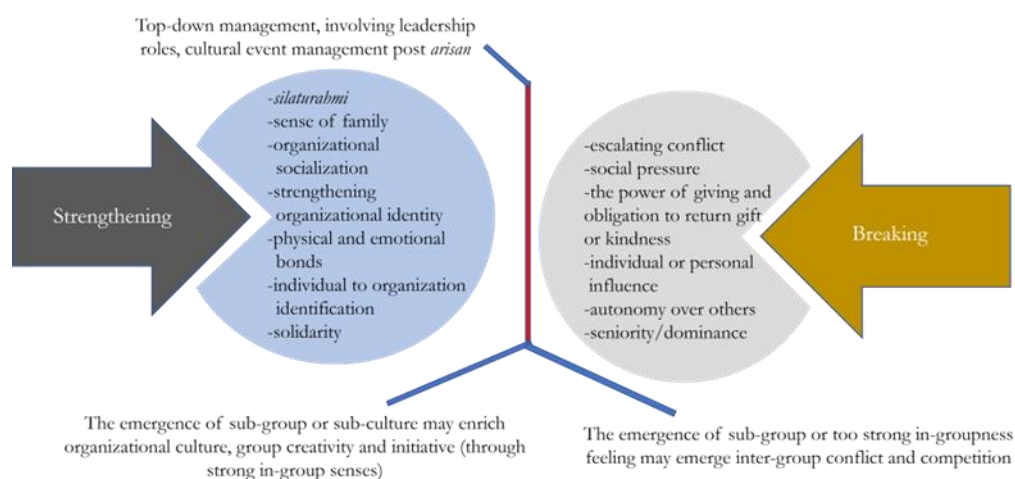


Figure 1. The Functions and Functional De-Escalation of Organizational Culture of Arisan and Picnic

Source: Authors (2024)

Figure 2 demonstrates the emergence and functioning of organisational culture. The leader can establish organisational culture from the top down, and culture can also develop naturally from the bottom up (from the members of the organisation). The study finds that the organisational culture of Picnic or *Arisan* is not always beneficial or helpful for the productivity and well-being of the organization. It can also impair an organization's social well-being, which can lead to decreased performance. Based on the study, a picnic's organisational culture can positively impact members' solidarity, *silaturahmi*, sense of belonging to a large family, organisational socialisation, organisational identity, and physical and emotional ties. Picnics' organisational culture can have negative effects on conflict, members' social pressure, other members' individual influence, the power of giving and the need to return the favour, seniority, dominance, and autonomy over others.

Members can innovate through culture, as evidenced by the bottom-up creation of organisational culture. They could form everyday habits that eventually become part of the culture of the team or even the organisation. The performance of an organisation may improve with a positive organisational culture. Innovation can contribute to better organisational performance, as stated by Rahmah et al. (2022). The leader has the power to shape culture from the top down by enforcing certain management practices, setting an example of particular behaviour, empowering people to develop creative cultures, and organising or arranging events. As argued by Edy et al. (2022), organizational productivity is affected by work motivation, work culture and leadership style. The work culture and leadership style can be used as a guide to control how members of an organisation think (Edy et al., 2022).

Organizational *arisan* or picnic can potentially cause internal conflict and failure of self to organizational identification. Social pressure which is felt by members who feel uncomfortable and lose their freedom to decide tends to stimulate self or felt conflict, the hidden conflict. Peer pressure may help members to reduce their cognitive dissonance on what they believe (Ellinas et al., 2017). However, too strong social pressure may evoke negative feelings which affect working motivation and performance. Incapacity to respect members' certain emotion may lead to more intense emotion (Smollan & Sayers, 2009). Thus, it needs both individual emotional control management and social tolerance to reduce or eliminate the emotional, individual, and organizational impacts.

The study also shows that the effectiveness and functions of organizational culture of *arisan* or picnic needs to be supplemented with co-rituals or co-culture. As mentioned by Ellinas et al. (2017), organizational culture is in continuous flux. The study demonstrates that these co-rituals tend to be more adaptive and accommodative as they emerge informally from the bottom, are created, and developed by intra-group (in-group) members. These emergent co-rituals or co-cultures also encourage members' creativity and initiative to create or join cultures to satisfy their social needs and fit their individual-social life. The emergence of different types of culture can accommodate differences in employees' skills, values or geographical dispersion (O'Neill et al., 2001). Moreover, the co-exist rituals encourages more heterogeneous culture and evolve democratic climate of organization (Besley & Persson, 2018).

The study indicates that co-existing rituals are not always beneficial to organization. In certain situations, it endangers organizational social solidarity. Members who create and join in smaller, intra-group, informal rituals have chances to satisfy their needs of belongingness, autonomy to choose which group and to decide. These may rejoice individually and create strong group feeling. In this situation, the co-ritual members are not only building physical culture, but also emotional culture. As noted by Barsade and O'Neill (2016), the emotional culture concerns with how the group shares affective assumptions artifacts, norms and values which govern emotion which people should acquire and express at workplace. Intra-group interaction may allow members to feel cared for and liked. When the members feel compassionate love, they can feel more satisfied, committed and show more personal accountability for better performance (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016).

The study also finds that this co-existence or co-culture tends to be shadowed by the dark side. Too strong identification with intra-group friends and less tolerance, interaction and mutual understanding can ignite group favoritism and emerge inter-group conflict. Too strong bond in group may evoke competition between group, leads to rivalry, conflict and sabotage (Goette et al., 2016). It is also advised that how intergroup conflict is managed determines organizational performance and effectiveness (Eunice et al., 2015; John-Eke & Akintokunbo, 2020). Thus, sub-culture of strengthening intra-group or in-group social bond can increase intra-group cooperation, but it can also increase inter-group conflict and competitiveness, if it is not well managed. Organizational culture frequently addresses the cognitive culture, the collective assumptions, norms, artifacts and values on how employees should behave and think at work, but neglect or undermine the emotional culture (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016). Thus, it is suggested to the leaders to address and be more concern to employees' emotion, such as joy, love, fear (Barsade & O'Neill, 2016).

The importance of organisational leaders in managing the culture of the company is also indicated by the study. The leaders have the authority and responsibilities to intentionally establish particular cultures in order to boost organisational performance. They can also manage the emergence of a subculture that develops spontaneously or accidentally from an organization's everyday activities. Through shared feelings and perspectives, everyday rhythms of organisational life, collective activities, and regular rituals, organisational culture can be a tool for improving organisational performance of human resources. It is within the power of organisational leaders to guide and establish a supportive organisational culture. To successfully accomplish organisational goals, leaders have the ability to affect employees' performance (Muhtadin et al., 2023). Establishing a positive organisational culture and environment is essential to the success of organisational human resources. It is critical to meet members' needs for a healthy culture. This is due to the fact that the organization's primary asset is its people capital (Muhtadin et al., 2023). Furthermore, the use of human resources, as well as the attitudes and behaviours of employees, affect the achievement of the organization's successful goals (Muhtadin et al., 2023), employees' motivation, leadership style and work culture (Edy et al., 2022).

Despite the significant roles of leaders in managing organizational culture, the analysis of the study is limited to members' perception and experiences. It does not address leadership roles. Thus, it needs to be supported and completed with further studies on leadership roles in managing the dark sides of organizational rituals.

CONCLUSION

An organizational picnic or *arisan* seems to promise a strong organizational bond. It can be an effective event for members to get to know each other, emotionally tied by sharing happiness, joyful and challenging activities. For new members, it can be a way to internalize organizational norms and values, align themselves to the organization and identify fit mentors who can be their role models, integrate and introduce themselves to the group. However, not all members are happy and welcome the ritual openly as it emerges the feeling of socially forced to come, is a means to show social, economic or seniority dominance. This implies that culture can be exploited to strengthen personal or individual influence over a group or organization. Thus, it is significant to reveal members' real emotion underneath. The study also highlights the roles or functions of co-rituals or co-culture. Organizational *arisan* or picnic is likely insufficient to accommodate all members' interest and need. Thus, members may spontaneously create or join less formal intra-group culture (co-rituals or co-culture). Through this co-ritual, in-group members gather, interact, share, and develop collective emotion. Positively, this can strengthen intra-group bond. Negatively, too strong intra-group culture may ignite inter-group conflict. The study is still restricted in terms of only exploring members' perspective. It needs further exploration and analysis of rituals' dark sides management, how it can be managed to avoid detrimental organizational conflict by informal organizational figures and formal organizational leaders

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