

That's A Wrap! The Organizational Culture And Characteristics Of Successful Film Crews

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“THAT’S A WRAP!”
THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
AND CHARACTERISTICS
OF SUCCESSFUL FILM CREWS

by

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B.A. Rutgers University, 1979

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to determine through survey research what characteristics film production crews possess that makes them so successful as an organization. The factors of age, gender, years of professional experience and education level were tested for their significance on how the respondents view their culture. Hofstede's six dimensions of organizational culture survey questions were rewritten to be applicable to the freelance film crew sample. The presentation of findings focuses on the resultant organizational profile of a film production crew, the workplace values of this group and the influence that the education level of the participants had on responses. The data presented here are valuable for organizational culture scholars, management scholars and those interested in applying the successful techniques of the film production crew to other business organizations.

Keywords: film crew, organizational culture, Edgar Schein, Geert Hofstede

Dedicated to Patrick

He kept me going...

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to those who made it possible for me to complete this project

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since Louis Le Prince made the first film with his friends and family clowning around in their garden in France, in the spring of 1888, the creation of a film has been a team effort. Just seven years later, the Lumiere brothers presented the first commercial exhibition of a projected motion picture to a paying public in the world's first movie theater in Paris. By 1910, the first Hollywood studio was opened for the sole purpose of producing commercial movies (Higgins, 2005). In less than a generation, the creation of moving images developed from the odd hobby of a few inventors to the world's favorite form of storytelling and launched a hugely successful industry that continues to thrive globally today, more than 120 years later.

The films themselves have changed greatly and innovation is integral to the industry's continued success as popular entertainment. What has changed very little is the way film crews function while employed on the production. D.W. Griffith, American film director in the early 1900s, could step onto a set today and know exactly what was going on. The hierarchy, set protocols and the vocabulary itself are very much the same as they were at the very beginnings of the art form. The crew is divided into two parts, management and labor, much like any team endeavor. This hierarchy has remained constant through the years. Even the studio system did not change the on set structure of the crew, it only altered the way the crews were put together, i.e. staff year round employment versus freelance employment. The organizational make-up remained the same (Davenport, 2006).

The nature of a career as a film crew member has also remained constant. There has always been a very robust freelance workforce in the film industry. Freelance in this sense is defined as a worker who is not employed full time by one entity, but rather goes from one short

term job to another, seeking his/her own employment each time. During the heyday of the studio system the “majors” (Warner Brothers, Paramount, Universal, et al.) did indeed keep crews on staff and working all year round. But the first crews in film history were freelance and they existed concurrently with the studios during the rise and fall of the studio system. The studio system collapsed in the late 1960s, but the freelance structure remained strong and is the industry standard today (Bohn, Stromgren, & Johnson, 1978). Film crews come together for one project, execute it at the top of their game and then reconfigure into completely new line-ups for the next project. “...four people who’ve never worked together can meet each other at nine o’clock in the morning and by ten o’clock they know what they’re all doing” (Relph as cited in Davenport, 2006, p.254). The crew members are specialists in their skill sets. They need no training for each individual job. They know what the job descriptions are and they know where their responsibilities begin and end for them individually, as a department and as a film crew. They work in challenging and often physically harsh conditions, attempting to create a unique and compelling form of artistic expression, while under financial constraints and tightly constructed schedules with little or no margin for error. This study arises from the author’s personal experience from 1980 to 2000 as a freelance live action line producer and production manager. Work experience led the author to investigate the theoretical underpinnings of organizational culture and conduct research that could shed light on the film crew organizational structure. What makes film crews so efficient? How are they able to come together in different iterations time and again, always with a different script, different set of problems, a different artistic vision and a tight schedule, yet manage to create such items of universal wonderment? What is the profile of a film crew organizational culture?

Like the military, on a film crew all members know their jobs, where the boundaries are and who the boss is, always under absurd time constraints and while solving logistical problems under adverse physical conditions. Unlike the military, they are working on an artistic project that demands constant creative as well as financial problem solving. The ability of film crews to succeed so consistently under this tension is the seed of this research query. Scholarly work is scarce on the organizational culture description or profile of this type of group. This study seeks to define the film crew organizational culture as a way to determine the traits of the organization common to all levels of the film crew unit. As a unique form of project-based and boundaryless enterprise, the career of the film crew member has been the predominant focus of much of the research. Little evidence exists of research into the workings of the film crew organization itself, once the crew member has secured the hard-won gig. There is room to define the culture of the film crew organization, and to study how it functions. There are also important connections between the way film crews have always worked and the way many workers are being forced to adapt to freelance careers as a result of the current economic turndown and layoffs. Many who assumed they would be employed by a permanent organization and enjoy benefits and job security now find themselves competing for short-term freelance work just as film crews have been doing since the beginning of the industry. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned from this group of successful project-based workers that can be applied to other fields.

A brief overview of the relevant theoretical approaches is provided herein, followed by an explanation of the methodology. The results, discussion, validity issues and suggestions for further research conclude the paper.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

While a film crew career may appear unique to those viewing it from the outside, it can still be described using two traditional definitions: Film productions are project-based and film crew members participate in what's termed a "boundaryless career". Research has focused on seeing the film-crew job through these lenses (Jones, 1996).

The Project-Based Enterprise

As a project-based enterprise, the film crew fits the model to a T. "Project-based enterprises (companies formed to pursue a specific project outcome) and project-based careers (careers habitually moving from one project to another) are most typically found in knowledge-intensive professional service firms in fields such as law, management consulting and architecture" (DeFillippi & Arthur, 2002, p. 189). The project-based enterprise of filmmaking is similar to practices in architecture. Film scripts are often referred to as the "blueprint" for the project, and the sequence of production and building are very similar in that they both hire the best for a specific project and disband as soon as the project is completed (Epstein, 2002, p.1). Jones and DeFillippi (1996) describe filmmaking as a knowledge intensive process. Its crew members move from one project to another, several times a year and always for a different organization. A film production company is set up for just that one project and is disbanded when the film is released. The industry standard for filmmaking crews is to be thrown together with new colleagues on every film. There may be a few crew members who go from one project to the next with a few of the same members, but the majority of crews are combinations of professionals who have never worked with anyone on the crew before the

current job. While the crew at large is made up of members who are new to each other, the departmental structure keeps some of the crew members together as a team. Department heads (i.e. director of photography, production designer, assistant directors) may be different on every film, but the members who work for these department heads are often a unit that the department head strives to keep together from show to show. It serves the department supervisor and the film production overall to have cohesive units who know how to work together with each other on the small scale, even if the combination of departments as a whole consists of teams working together for the first time (Jones & DeFillippi, 1996). “Everyone comes with a team...because the job is too big for any one person” (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1998, p. 133). Fundamentally, the crew is a unique combination of talent – it does not have the benefits (or drawbacks) of having worked together on multiple projects consistently and with the knowledge that its members will be working together as long as they have a job, the expectations at a traditional enterprise. Yet the departments and the production benefit from the prior team experience of the units, as they fit into the larger crew made up of first time partners.

Typically, a producer procures a script through various means and finds the financing to turn the script into a film. The producer then hires a crew of freelance workers to execute the production. These crew members are selected for each project based on several variables – skill level, availability, salary range, affiliations with others on the crew and nature of past experience. The prioritizing of these variables changes with each film production. On a well-funded production, getting the best filmmakers available is the priority. On a smaller scale budget, the most affordable crew would be primary. Often, the director will have some

assistants and department heads that he or she likes to work with on every production. The producer will often have favorites that have proven reliable and creative on past projects. The genre of the film can determine which department heads to consider. For example, when making a Western, it's always a good idea to use a production designer who has worked on a Western at some point in his or her career. That way the production benefits from those tricks learned on previous "horse operas". The budget will also dictate the experience level of the crew sought. If it's a very low budget project, then the producer has to look at inexperienced, non-union crew members, as they will be cheaper than seasoned and union professionals (Benedetti, 2002).

The Boundaryless Career

The "boundaryless career" is defined by Jones and DeFillippi (1996) as "...job mobility across multiple employers, personal responsibility for directing one's own career development, and the development of social networks to shape and sustain that career" (p. 307). Arthur and Rousseau (1996) refine the definition of the boundaryless career by outlining its six features:

1. The career moves across the boundaries of separate employers.
2. The career draws validation--and marketability--from outside the present employer.
3. External networks sustain the career.
4. Traditional organizational career boundaries, notably those involving hierarchical reporting and advancement principles, are broken.

5. The individual rejects existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons.
6. The interpretation of the career actor may perceive a boundaryless future regardless of structural constraints. (p. 6)

Jones and DeFillippi (1996) create what they call a topographical map of important dimensions of the boundaryless career. They utilize Rudyard Kipling's parable from his *Just So Stories* (1912) of the six honest men (What, Why, When, How, Where, Who) as the overlay in their examination of the film industry, "...characterized by scholars as an exemplar of the boundaryless network organization of network community" (Jones & DiFillippi, 1996, p. 90). The challenges to the freelance film crew worker are numerous. Freelance film crew workers must deal with uncertainty, strive to remain employed and adapt to bouts of activity and inactivity. They must produce quality work quickly. They must balance career and family while maintaining a passion for their métier. They must create their own career path and foster the relationships that will determine future employment. They must guard against getting typecast in a dead end role and they must know how to identify and exploit opportunities within those relationships (Jones & DiFillippi, 1996, p. 91). The film crew member's choice of job meets all the criteria for the boundaryless career.

Another aspect of the boundaryless career is the "lottery ticket" method of entry. "There are a number of professions in which workers are paid, in part, with a figurative lottery ticket. The worker accepts a lower-paying job in exchange for a slim but real chance of a large, future payday" (Davidson, 2012). Davidson goes on to describe the Hollywood employment system as an excellent example of "meritocratic capitalism". Those who dream of becoming a

successful producer or director can enter the film business at the bottom and work their way up. The “occupational centrifuge” will separate out those who have the drive and skills to succeed from those who do not and will have to fall back on secondary career options. The studio mailroom is a well-known example of this in practice.

Warner Brothers pays its mailroom clerks \$25,000 to \$30,000, a little more than an apprentice plumber.) While far from perfect, this strategy has done a pretty decent job of pushing those with real promise to the top. Barry Diller and David Geffen each started his career in the William Morris mailroom (Davidson, 2012).

The challenges of the unstable nature of project-based employment, the boundaryless career are important to keep in mind when analyzing the motivations for why so many are attracted to the film business and in defining their organizational culture.

The field is rife with debate over the definition of organizational culture and the most appropriate methods of assessing it. “There are as many meanings of ‘culture’ as people using the term” (Ajiferuke & Boddewyn, 1970, p. 154). Deal and Kennedy (1982) elegantly stated the definition of organizational culture as “the way we do things around here” (p. 60). Phillips (1984) refined the definition to emphasize that the culture is specific to that one group stating that organizational culture “is a set of assumptions held by a group of people. The set is distinctive to the group. The assumptions serve as guides to acceptable perceptions, thought, feeling, and behavior, are local among members, are learned and are passed on to each new member of the group” (Phillips, 1984, p.6). Hofstede (2005) brings another dimension to the definition. He defines organizational culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (p. 5). Hofstede

notes that there is no consensus about the definition of organizational culture but that most scholars would agree on his list of characteristics. Organizational culture is:

1. Holistic
2. Historically determined
3. Related to anthropological concepts
4. Socially constructed
5. Soft
6. Difficult to change

“All of these characteristics of organizations have been separately recognized in the literature in the previous decades; what is new about organizational culture was their integration into one construct” (Hofstede, 1990, p. 286). It is Hofstede’s insight into organizational culture being a combination of previously researched concepts that makes it relevant and useful for this paper. After careful examination of the prevailing organizational culture theories, Hofstede distills them into a comprehensive and sophisticated singular theory. He points out the flaws of the previous research in limiting itself to only qualitative, participant observation data collection (too subjective) or only survey questionnaires (too focused on employee satisfaction). Hofstede (1998) cites Wilkins and Ouchi and their observation that “...the use of survey methodology is seen by many current scholars of culture as being too much the product of the social scientist's rather than the participant's point of view and therefore inappropriate as a method for measuring culture” (p. 236). “Culture is a characteristic of the organization, not of individuals, but it is manifested in and measured from the verbal and/or nonverbal behaviour of individuals — aggregated to the level of their organizational unit”

(Hofstede, 1998, p. 479). In addition to advocating for surveys as a valuable tool for assessing organizational culture, Hofstede also emphasizes that research should focus on the level of organizational units and not of individuals (Hofstede, 1998). This perspective is particularly appropriate for developing a profile of the unit of the film crew and it allows for integration of both survey and open question methodology.

Edgar Schein's seminal work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, initiated an interest in deconstructing the "way we do things" and in studying how groups create and maintain their cultures. According to Schein (1990), culture can now be defined as a pattern of basic assumptions:

1. Invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration
2. That has worked well enough to be considered valid
3. That is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems

Schein's (1990) organizational culture theory chooses to determine and define a group's culture through use of three cognitive levels of organizational culture: (a) observable artifacts, (b) values, and (c) basic underlying assumptions.

In Schein's (1990) model, artifacts are those things that can be observed by an outsider; the facilities, offices, furnishings, awards and recognition, how members dress, how members interact with each other and with outsiders, company slogans, mission statements and other operational creeds. According to Schein (1990) and later, Denison (2000), behaviors are

included in the artifacts category. This would include rituals, myths, stories, and the history of an organization.

Espoused values include basic beliefs and assumptions and are often deeply ingrained within the organization's culture. Interviewing the organization's membership and using questionnaires to gather attitudes about organizational membership can define organizational behavior at this level.

The final level in Schein's (1990) model is assumptions. These elements are unseen and sometimes even too taboo to discuss inside the organization. Schein argues that the assumptions are the heart of an organization's culture and the researcher cannot define the culture by only observing the artifacts and values. Schein's model is best presented as hiding more than it reveals to indicate the tacit and hidden nature of assumptions – they exist beneath and are hidden from the artifacts and values (see Figure 1). “Once one understands the underlying taken-for-granted assumptions, one can better understand how cultures can seem to be ambiguous or even self-contradictory” (Schein, 1990, p. 112). These beliefs hold the key to what the organization members consider important, what they hold as values of the organization and leads to the motivation of how things are done in that organization. The articulation of the hidden part of any organization as being key to understanding the group's method of operation is singular to Schein. As the film crew is an understudied sample, its assumptions and ways of seeing the world have yet to be discovered academically. So much of the film crew world is hidden. With no permanent home base in which the work can take place, and beset by goals that change on a daily basis it makes it very difficult to identify and articulate the organizational culture of the film crew. It is a constantly moving target.

Denison and Mishra (1995) took Schein’s (1990) three-part theory and developed a model that drilled down even more deeply into the assumptions level. As a way to quantify the dimensions that make up the profile of an organization’s culture, Denison and Mishra put forth four broadly defined cultural traits identified through qualitative research. Each trait has three corresponding indexes, or value dimensions:

Table 1. Traits and Value Dimensions

Trait	Value Dimensions
Involvement	Empowerment Team orientation Capability development
Consistency	Core values Agreement Coordination and integration
Adaptability	Creating change Customer focus Organizational learning
Mission	Strategic direction and intent Goals and objectives Vision

Beliefs and assumptions are at the heart of Denison’s model (2000), aligning with Schein in the centrality of assumptions to understanding an organization’s culture. Denison’s four traits or dimensions provide a starting place for identifying how film crews can work so effectively despite the challenges of being project-based and of the boundaryless career

category. Studies using Denison's model propose that organizations that display a higher overall culture score, show higher levels of performance (Sarros, Gray, Densten & Cooper, 2005; Eige, 2002; Yilmaz, & Ergun, 2008). Denison (2000) also notes that the four culture traits are often contradictory and present paradoxes in organizations. "Effective organizations are those that are able to resolve these contradictions without relying on simple tradeoffs" (Fey & Denison, 2003, p. 688).

Hofstede also puts values at the core of his model for studying organizational cultures as seen in Figure 1.

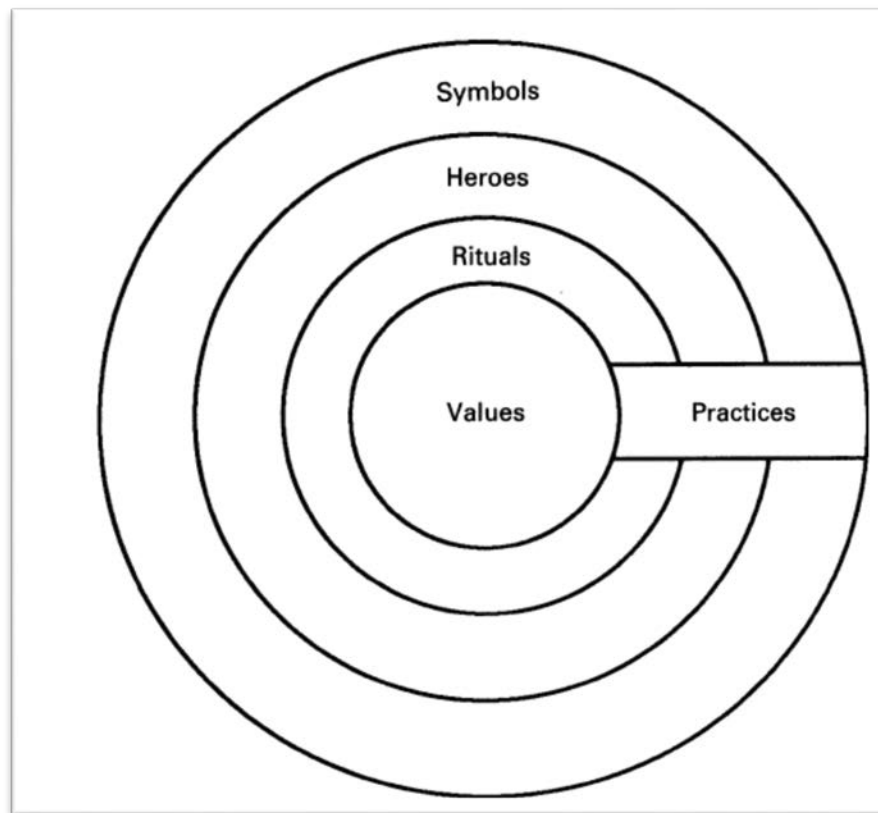


Figure 1. Hofstede's *onion diagram*: Manifestations of culture. (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Hofstede (1990) cites Deal and Kennedy (1982) for the four terms (symbols, heroes, values, rituals) because they are mutually exclusive and comprehensive. Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that have meaning within a culture. Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imagined, who possess highly prize features and who serve as models of desired behavior by the organization. Rituals consist of those collective activities that are “technically superfluous but are socially essential within a culture” (Hofstede, 1990, p. 291). Hofstede goes on to reconceive these terms as shown in Figure 2. Values remain as the core manifestation of the organizational culture, but the practices integrate symbols, heroes and rituals. “Symbols, heroes, and rituals can be subsumed under the term ‘practices’, because they are visible to an observer although their cultural meaning lies in the way they are perceived by insiders” (Hofstede, 1990, p. 291). Hofstede argues that values describe what the respondent feels should be, as opposed to practices, which are what the respondent feels already exists in the organization. Hofstede goes on to posit that values in an organization are a reflection of the founders values but not necessarily the employees. The works must follow the practices of the organization to keep their job, but this does not mean they share the values instituted by management. Hofstede (1990) points out that we enter the workplace as adults, with our values already set. They are not a feature that is implanted by the organization. In addition, Hofstede states that practices are specific to actual situations, while values are abstract preferences. Hofstede’s research led to his emphasis on studying perceived practices as the path to defining an organizational culture, while an analysis of values is appropriate for comparisons of culture at an international level. His work led to the creation of six distinct dimensions by which to categorize and measure the practices aspect of the Hofstede model. These six dimensions are

particularly appropriate for studying the film crew organizational culture – see author’s notes in italics.

Hofstede’s Six Dimensions of Practice

Process oriented versus results oriented

This dimension concerns the differences between how things are done and the outcome. In a process-oriented organization, employees avoid risk and plod through each day, one the same as the next. In a results-based group, the members are comfortable in unfamiliar situations and put in the maximum effort every day, with each day bringing unexpected challenges. *The latter is an excellent description of the film crew work process. The crew is challenged on a daily basis with factors such as weather, location logistics and large numbers of people to manage, just to name a few. In her experience, the author has overheard many a crew member commenting on how they love the work precisely because it is challenging and offers something different every day.*

Employee oriented versus job oriented

This dimension compares the group’s concern for people and the concern for getting the job done. In an employee-oriented culture, the welfare of the employee is a priority to the organization; the employees feel their personal problems are factored into their work and committees make the important decisions. In the job-oriented group, the task at hand is the priority. The organization is interested solely in what the employee can do and important decisions are made by a select few. Family and personal problems are considered inappropriate for the workplace. *This is true of film crews. They are hired to work; the producer hires them based on their abilities and how efficiently they can perform. Their personal lives are*

irrelevant and not to be brought into the workplace. This may be in part due to the project-based nature of film production. While employed, crew members are expected to perform regardless of their personal situation. "If you can't make it in, send a sub" is standard practice and a tightly held value in the film crew culture.

Parochial versus professional

This dimension compares groups whose employees gain their identity primarily from the organization with those whose people identify with their job. *In the world of the film crew member, promotion and career advancement is derived from crew members' successful job performance and not because of the organization's concern with their crew members' personal lives. The organization ceases to exist after the film has been completed, so an attachment to the organization is not available beyond the short term.*

Open system versus closed system

An open system is open to both newcomers and outsiders. It is easy to join and new members can quickly get up to speed. In a closed system, the group and its members are exclusive and secretive. Only very special people fit in. *The film crew is an open system in that anyone can attempt to become part of the organization. This usually requires connections with existing members. Access is difficult but democratic and egalitarian. If one puts in the time in developing contacts, they will get a chance to work on the crew. It is available to anyone who understands the process and puts in the time. Once access is gained through a personal connection, initiates are treated fairly and welcomed into the fold. All that is required is that the initiate demonstrates the necessary work ethic to be worthy of training by the*

insiders. Everyone gets a chance to join this group, but few succeed at sustaining their “membership”. With this set of criteria, the film crew should be defined as an open system.

Loose control versus tight control

Members of loose control groups believe that cost is not an issue, punctuality is not important and jokes at the group’s expense are commonplace. In a tight control group, the environment is very cost-conscious, staying on schedule is paramount and no one jokes about the group. *Although jokes about management are common on a film set, they are firmly grounded in the tight control type of group. Every decision regarding production of the film revolves around money, and time is money. If production slips off schedule, a lot of money is wasted. It is priority number one to the film crew to plan a realistic schedule and execute it.*

Normative versus pragmatic

A normative group is driven by an ideology while a pragmatic group is market driven. The normative unit follows protocol rather than focusing on results and ethics are held to a high standard. In a pragmatic organization, results are most important. *The film crew is pragmatic in all its approaches. Staying on target, achieving the goals established during a careful prep are what drives the group. Adherence to a mode of operation that may not suit the situation at hand is quickly discarded for something that works, often at the expense of a more ethical or democratic choice of action.*

Hofstede’s strides in identifying these dimensions and testing his assumptions through years of research studies at the Institute for Research on Intercultural Cooperation remain important breakthroughs in cultural profiling.

Embracing Hofstede's definition of organizational culture and implementing his model of six dimensions of practices as the scale for study leaves the task of operationalizing the process. "If one accepts the idea that 'culture is one of those terms that defy a single all-purpose definition'" (Ajiferuke & Boddewyn, 1970, p. 154), "then the choice of methods should be guided by one's particular interest in a given study" (Sackmann, 1991, p. 296). Sackmann makes a comprehensive report on the dissension in the field regarding not only the definition of organizational culture but also the prevailing wisdom on how best to operationalize and quantify it. What should be included, what should be excluded and does one methodology serve all types of organization? Time and resource constraints often determine the choice of instrument, but there are also frequent theoretical differences that guide the choice.

The data collection methods are diverse and include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Questionnaires, structured interviews, documentary analysis, group discussions and in-depth interviews are common, both singly and in numerous combinations (Sackmann, 1991). The type of instrument most fitting for this study is of the dimensional approach, which describes a culture by its position on a number of continuous variables, using a Likert scale for indicating level of agreement with predefined statements (Likert, 1932; Fletcher & Jones, 1992). O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) developed the Organizational Cultural Profile (OCP) along these lines. According to Cooper, Densten, Gray and Sarros (2005), the OCP "...represents one of the major measures of organizational culture in use today" and cite the work of Agle and Caldwell (1999), Howard (1998), Judge and Cable (1997). The OCP contains 54 value statements that are to be sorted by the participants (Q-sort approach) (Block, 1978) and reflect the following seven factors: (1) innovation; (2) stability; (3) people orientation; (4)

outcome orientation; (5) easygoing; (6) detail orientation; (7) team orientation. In O'Reilly et al. (1991) study the respondents were asked to sort the 54 values into a row of nine categories, placing at the one end of the row those items they considered to be the most characteristic aspects of the culture, and at the other hand those items that they believed to be the least characteristic.

Another profiling instrument is the Organizational Culture Inventory (OCI) (Cooke & Lafferty, 1983). The OCI is a 96-item survey that measures 12 behavioral "styles" that identify the shared beliefs, values, and expectations that guide the way organization members interact with one another and approach their work (Human Synergistics, 2011). Cooke and Rousseau (1988) note that "there are innumerable ways to describe the content of a culture; the approach presented here emphasizes individual cognitions regarding appropriate ways of thinking and behaving within an organizational unit" (p. 250). Cooke and Rousseau note that their revised OCI model is not intended to be exhaustive, but to focus on a finite number of aspects of the organization theory they were studying. Denison's (2000) Organizational Culture Survey has been widely tested. This instrument includes 60 items, all of which are five-point Likert scales with anchors strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=5). These approaches confirm that this study is served best by examining the existent theories and instruments of measuring organizational culture and creating the best tool for the job, designed specifically for that organization. For a comprehensive comparison of instruments available for measuring organizational culture, see *The Quantitative Measurement of Organizational Culture in Health Care: A Review of the Available Instruments* (Scott, Mannion, Davies, & Marshall, 2005).

Since this study seeks to create a baseline profile of the organizational culture of a film crew, the choice was made to limit the dimensions to those that bring the practices of the group into focus and to leave an examination of the values of the same group for a future study. As Hofstede (2005) states, practices are a reflection of symbols, heroes and rituals and are the visible part of a culture. Values are invisible and as noted earlier, are not the result of the group as much as they are put forth by the company controllers and eventually embedded into the practices. After examining various instruments and theory models described above, it was determined that a questionnaire with a Likert scale and customized with the Hofstede practices dimensions specific to the project based nature of film production would be most suitable. There are several compelling reasons for using a questionnaire for data collection. Questionnaires are effective in mining large groups for low cost and in shorter time periods than a qualitative, ethnographic study. They also allow for controlled comparisons. “Because the format of a questionnaire is standardized, objectivity is usually high in regards to its administration, analysis, and interpretation” (Sackmann, 1991, p.6). Reiman and Oedewald (2002) find the questionnaire very useful. “Used correctly, questionnaires can provide sufficiently valid descriptive information about an organization and particularly about the views and attitudes of its staff. Questionnaires can also be used to clarify the various connections between variables and to explain statistically the differences found” (p.19). Hofstede (1990) states more anecdotally that “an approach that quantifies...makes a fuzzy field at least somewhat accessible” (p. 313). Sackmann (1991) notes that for an effective questionnaire, a priori knowledge of the cultural context is preferred. The author’s knowledge

of the film production culture provides an opportunity to develop a questionnaire customized for this study.

The review of the literature provides evidence that a film crew's organizational culture can be measured. The clarity of Hofstede's dimensions inspired a strong hypothesis that could be quantified through a survey revised specifically for freelancers who work in film production. The literature led to research questions about the possible differences with the hypothesis being connected to the demographics of the respondents.

H1: The organizational cultural profile of film crews will prove to be results-oriented, job-oriented, professional, an open system, tightly controlled and pragmatic.

RQ 1: Are age or gender significant factors in how respondents view their culture?

RQ 2: Are years of experience in the business a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?

RQ 3: Is education level a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The *LA 411*, published in Los Angeles, was contacted as a resource for a convenience sample of the film crew population. The *LA 411* is a subscription guide to freelance crew and production facilities and services. Individuals and companies that wish to be listed submit their information for publication and online access by the public. The publisher made available upon request the emails for their crew listings, totaling 2279 potential respondents in both Los Angeles and New York, New York.

The author reviewed the categories in the film crew email list provided by the *LA 411*. The desired respondents were defined as those freelance crew members who are required to be on set every day of production, excluding those who come and go as part of their job description. For example, the studio teacher hired to work with any minor child actors is only there on the days the children work and is not needed at all on sets without minors. The study sought to create a profile of the standard permanent crew necessary for any production who can speak to the baseline film crew organizational culture experience. Those jobs on film crews that are not required on set every day of production were eliminated, resulting in the survey email list totaling 2,075 members.

Table 2. Job Titles of Respondents

Set Medics	Hair and Make-up Artists
Art Directors	Production Managers
Production Designers	Production Coordinators
Camera Assistants	Prop Masters
Camera Operators	Script Supervisors
Directors of Photography	Set Decorators
Assistant Directors	Sound Mixers
Gaffers	Stunt Players
Electricians	Transportation Coordinators
Grips	Wardrobe Stylists

Hofstede’s (1990) model utilizing six dimensions in identifying organizational culture was reviewed. The questions Hofstede created for his initial study were revised to be applicable for the film crew sample. The 40-question pilot test of this survey was completed by 15 film crew members in Orlando, Florida and Los Angeles, California. Based on Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test, this initial survey was modified by deleting those questions that scored below .50 on reliability through SPSS software. Twenty questions remained in the final survey, using Hofstede’s six dimensions and including the following demographic questions: age, gender, years of professional experience and education. Lastly, through open-ended questions, the respondents were prompted to include their observations and experiences on how and why film crews work well together (see Appendix A for complete questionnaire).

The final survey was sent out via the Qualtrics survey program on December 17, 2011 and closed on January 6, 2012. The survey was completed by 308 respondents, a 15% response rate. After careful review of the Likert scale questions and responses the researcher determined

that recoding was needed on survey question 11. The data was analyzed through the SPSS software system. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability test provided a .70 result after removing four unreliable questions from the original set of 20 (removed questions 6,9,13,16).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Frequency tests were conducted to provide a profile of the demographics of the sample. Results indicated that the average respondent is a white male at least 51 years old or older. He has a bachelor's degree and at least 15 years of professional experience in the film business with an average annual income of \$100,000. He is married with one or more children.

Age

The age group 51 and over was the predominant response. 61% (n=188) ranked in this group, with 28% (n=85) in the 42 to 50 year age range. 10% (n=32) selected into the 31-40 year age range, with 2% (n=4) in the 20 to 30 year age range.

Gender

A total of 71.8% (n=221) of the respondents were male, 26.9% were female (n=86). One respondent identified as Other.

Years of Professional Experience in the Film Business

88% listed themselves with 15 or more years in the business (n=270). The remaining 9% were between 10 years and 15 years, with less than 4% making up the balance of respondents in the 2 years to 10 years range.

Education

Most of the respondents selected Bachelor's Degree as highest level of education reached (49.4%, n=152), "Some college" was second with 21% (n=64), followed by Masters degrees at 15% (n=46).

Table 3. Profile of Participants

Variable	Value	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	221	71.8	
	Female	86	26.9	
	Other	1	.3	
Age	20-30	4	1.3	
	31-40	32	10.4	
	41-50	85	27.6	
	51 and above	187	60.7	
Years in the profession	2-3 years	1	1	
	3-4 years	1	1	
	5-6 years	2	2	
	6-7 years	2	2	
	7-8 years	1	1	
	8-9 years	2	2	
	9-10 years	1	1	
	10-11 years	7	7	
	11-12 years	6	6	
	12-13 years	4	4	
	13-14 years	4	4	
	14-15 years	7	7	
	15 or more years	270	88	
	Education Level	12th grade, no diploma	1	.3
		High school graduate or GED	14	4.5
Some college		64	20.8	
Associates degree		22	7.1	
Bachelors degree		152	49.4	
Masters degree		46	14.9	
		1	.3	
	8	2.6		

CHAPTER 5: HYPOTHESES

Responses to Hofstede's six dimensions have been summarized in the form of six composite indices. Each dimension had two to four questions per dimension, numbered 1-20.

The five-point scale was as follows:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Dimension 1 – Process-Oriented versus Results-Oriented

Many of the respondents (76%) say that film crews are a results-oriented organization, with a mean of 11.86 out of a maximum score of 12. The results support the hypothesis that film crews are results-oriented.

Dimension 2 – Employee-Oriented versus Job-Oriented

Only 30% of respondents felt film crews are job-oriented. The mean was 10.53 out of a maximum score of 15. This suggests a lack of clear determination between these two dimension aspects.

Dimension 3 – Parochial versus Professional

55% defined the film crew as a professional organization, with a mean of 7.5 out of a possible maximum score of 10. This supports the hypothesis.

Dimension 4 – Open System versus Closed System

34% were in agreement with the statement that film crews are an open system, leaving 62% as neutral or in disagreement with the statement of film crews being an open system. The mean was 7.0 out of a possible maximum score of 10. Survey question 11 was reverse coded. Survey question 13 was dropped during the initial test due to the low Cronbach alpha score. The subsequent Cronbach alpha score on the remaining two questions was .223. Based on these results, it was determined that the questions for Dimension 4 – Open System versus Closed System were too flawed to be reliable and have been excluded from the survey results.

Dimension 5 – Loose Control versus Tight Control

63.6% defined film crews as a tightly controlled organization, with a mean of 12 out of a possible maximum score of 15. This supports the hypothesis of the film crew organization being a tightly controlled group.

Dimension 6 – Normative versus Pragmatic

64.3% were neutral, or disagreed when it came to defining a film crew as a pragmatic organization. Only 34.7% agreed, with a mean of 10.75 out of a maximum of 15. This would suggest that the hypothesis was incorrect in assuming that the film crew organization is a pragmatic group. The uncertainty of the results led to the conducting of post hoc tests on the individual questions to determine what set of cases are in disagreement or agreement with the hypothesis. Results from the post hoc Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) test showed that the age level of the respondents approached significance for the individual questions Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic), especially for Survey questions 18 and 19. The 20-30 and 31-40 year olds felt that a film crew is pragmatic and most like a military team,

while the 41 and older groups were significantly less supportive of this view. The mean score for the 20-30 year olds response to Survey question 18 ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .816$) was significantly different than the 31 and older group.

Table 4.
LSD Post-Hoc Age Survey Question 18 Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic)

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
	20-30 years	4.00	.816
Q18	31-40	3.44	.878
Film crew members are pragmatic and flexible - they do what's best for the shoot as opposed to following protocol.	41-50	3.48	.868
	51 and over	3.55	.837
	Total	3.52	.848

For survey question 19, the 20-40 year olds responses ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .816$) and the 31-40 year olds ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .672$) were also significantly different.

Table 5.
LSD Post-Hoc Age Survey Question 19 Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic)

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
	20-30 years	4.00	.816
Q19	31-40	4.25	.672
The crew is most like a military team, with narrowly defined job descriptions and built-in autonomy.	41-50	3.72	.921
	51 and over	3.53	.917
	Total	3.67	.918

However, these same age groups did not significantly differ in their response for survey question 20.

Table 6.
LSD Post-Hoc Age Survey Question 20 Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic)

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
Q20 Production places a high value on results rather than procedures. It's more important that the goal is achieved than how we get there.	20-30 years	3.25	.957
	31-40	3.44	1.105
	41-50	3.65	1.043
	51 and over	3.57	.904
	Total	3.57	.964

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ 1: Are age or gender significant factors in how respondents view their culture?

Oneway ANOVA tests and a T Test were performed to compare the effects of age, gender, years of professional experience and education level on the responses.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of age on the responses to all the dimensions. There was not a significant effect of age at the $p < .05$ level on any of the dimensions except for Dimension 5, which approached significance in an LSD test of the individual questions.

Table 7
ANOVA Test for Age Significance Dimension 5 – Loose Control versus Tight Control

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.571	3	6.524	2.092	.101
Within Groups	948.105	304	3.119		
Total	967.675	307			

The T Test for gender did indicate some significance between gender and the responses for Dimensions 1,4 and 6. In Dimension 1 (Process-Oriented versus Results-Oriented), the response from women approached significance with 12.3% responding in agreement, in contrast to 11.7 of the men.

Table 8
T-Test for Gender Significance Dimension 1 – Process-Oriented versus Results-Oriented
The film crew is a results-oriented organization

	Mean	SD
Male	11.7	1.8
Female	12.3	1.9

In Dimension 4 (Open System versus Closed System), the response from women approached significance with 7.2% responding in agreement, in contrast to 6.9% of the men.

Table 9
T-Test for Gender Significance Dimension 4 - Open System versus Closed System
The film crew is an open system.

	Mean	SD
Male	6.9	1.3
Female	7.2	1.2

In Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic), it was reversed, with men approaching significance at 10.9% and women at 10.4%.

Table 10
T-Test for Gender Significance Dimension 6 – Normative versus Pragmatic.
The film crew is pragmatic

	Mean	SD
Male	10.9	1.7
Female	10.4	1.9

RQ 2: Are years of professional experience a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?

There was not a significant effect of years of professional experience on any of the Dimensions at the $p < .05$ level.

RQ 3: Is education level a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?

There is an effect that approaches significance of the respondents' education level on results for Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control) at the $p < .05$ level [$F(5, 300) = 2.197, p = .05$].

Table 11
Dimension 5 - Loose Control versus Tight Control

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.855	5	6.771	2.197	.055
Within Groups	924.593	300	3.082		
Total	958.448	305			

There was also a significant effect of education level on the results for Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic) at the $p < .05$ level [$F(5, 300) = 3.597, p = .00$].

Table 12
ANOVA Education Level for Dimension 6 - Normative versus Pragmatic

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	58.560	5	11.712	3.597	.004
Within Groups	976.881	300	3.256		
Total	1035.441	305			

Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test were used on the individual questions in Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control) and Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic) to determine where significant effect of education level resided for those results.

To conduct this test, it was necessary to drop any results with just one case. The one case selecting “No education” and the one case selecting “Doctoral level” were filtered out for the LSD post hoc test.

The results of the post hoc test for Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control) indicated that the mean score for survey question 15 ($M = 4.63$, $SD = .594$) was significantly different than survey question 14 ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.014$) and survey question 17 ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.042$). These numbers suggest that while the less formally educated respondents feel that being punctual and sticking to the schedule is a high priority, they do not feel that the crew is military in nature or that being militaristic is necessary to accomplish its goals.

Table 13
 LSD Post Hoc Test Education Level for Dimension 5 (Loose versus Tight Control)

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
Q14 Production management counts every penny - saving money is of paramount importance on a film set.	High school graduate or GED	3.86	1.167
	Some college	3.91	.830
	Associates degree	3.73	1.032
	Bachelors degree	3.71	1.021
	Masters degree	3.61	1.043
	Other	2.88	1.458
	Total	3.72	1.014
Q15 Being punctual and keeping to the schedule is a high priority when working as a film crew member.	High school graduate or GED	4.64	.633
	Some college	4.75	.535
	Associates degree	4.73	.456
	Bachelors degree	4.56	.584
	Masters degree	4.72	.455
	Other	4.13	1.458
	Total	4.63	.594
Q17 The military nature of the hierarchy of a film crew is necessary for it to accomplish its goals.	High school graduate or GED	4.07	.917
	Some college	3.58	.851
	Associates degree	3.68	1.086
	Bachelors degree	3.64	1.051
	Masters degree	3.39	1.183
	Other	3.38	1.408
	Total	3.61	1.042

For Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic) the results of the post hoc indicated that the mean score for survey question 19 ($M = 3.66$, $SD = .917$) approached significance in its difference with survey question 18 ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .834$) and survey question 20 ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .963$) regarding the influence of education on the responses.

Table 14
 LSD Post-Hoc Test Education Level for Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic)

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
Q18 Film crew members are pragmatic and flexible - they do what's best for the shoot as opposed to following protocol	High school graduate or GED	3.71	.914
	Some college	3.78	.701
	Associates degree	3.50	.964
	Bachelors degree	3.49	.797
	Masters degree	3.52	.809
	Other	2.38	1.188
	Total	3.52	.848

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
Q19 The crew is most like a military team, with narrowly defined job descriptions and built-in autonomy.	High school graduate or GED	3.93	.616
	Some college	3.70	.790
	Associates degree	3.59	1.054
	Bachelors degree	3.66	.913
	Masters degree	3.61	.977
	Other	3.25	1.581
	Total	3.67	.918

Variable	Value	Mean	SD
Q20 Production places a high value on results rather than procedures. It's more important that the goal is achieved than	High school graduate or GED	4.07	.997
	Some college	3.53	.942

how we get there.	Associates degree	3.77	1.020
	Bachelors degree	3.55	.927
	Masters degree	3.63	.974
	Other	2.88	1.246
	Total	3.57	.964

These data would suggest that the less formally educated respondents feel that the film crew has narrowly defined job descriptions and built-in autonomy.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Prior research demonstrates that organizational culture can be measured and such theory-based measurement can reveal practical information about how and why professionals succeed.

Hofstede's model of six dimensions served this study as a guide for the examination of the creative culture in which film crews are brought together to serve on one particular project through to its completion. However, Hofstede's model is only the measuring stick. The hypotheses were arrived at based on the literature review and the author's personal experience in the field of film production. The results of this study indicated that of the six dimensions used, three of the hypotheses were supported (they are indeed results-oriented, tightly controlled and pragmatic).

Film crews desire the test of a constantly changing work environment and the challenges of each new day on a set. Unlike a process-oriented culture, the film crew chases risk and embraces the unknown. "They share a love of the work itself, the day to day activity, and the challenges. This is what they have in common," noted one respondent. "Film crews love a challenge and pride themselves on meeting those challenges with success," stated another. One respondent noted the characteristics of the film crew, stating, "...team work, humor, creativity and willingness to work long, arduous hours in all conditions for the common good: i.e. great work equals a good movie". For Dimension 1 (Process-Oriented versus Results-Oriented), a process-oriented organization is described as being made up of employees who avoid risks and make a limited effort. The film crew is just the opposite and this study aligns with the author's anecdotal experiences. "We all have a job to do and when at work we

all do our jobs. Having a good time doing our jobs is part of the deal. Work hard but have fun doing it,” stated one respondent. Another noted, “Film crews work well together when they are flexible and adaptable. Film making constantly involves change on the set to what might have been previously planned.” The test results for this dimension support the hypothesis that film crews are a results-oriented organization.

The data for Dimension 2 (Employee-Oriented versus Job Oriented) shows both conditions to be true – film crews are employee-oriented and job-oriented. Respondents felt that both conditions can be true simultaneously, often enough to prevent the data from indicating just one or the other. “Film crews only work together in an efficient manner when there are department heads who care about their crews and make sure they are taken care of. Food, water, and a pat on the back goes [*sic*] a long way. Plus a paycheck of course,” stated one respondent. Schein pointed out that cultures can seem to be ambiguous or even self-contradictory, and that study of the underlying values would help clarify some of that confusion. It may be that a well-managed film production is able to give both the employees and the task at hand equal emphasis, hence the equivocality of the response for Dimension 2 (Employee-Oriented versus Job Oriented). One of the challenges of the study was realizing that film crew members can hold two or more opposing ideas about themselves and the world in their head the same time.

Many respondents described the film crew as being a family in nature. One respondent wrote:

Aside from the military aspects of how a crew is organized there is often a feeling of a tight knit family when it comes to crews. I feel like production has

my back and I have theirs, we look out for each other. If for some reason I do have a personal problem, production is sensitive to my needs and in turn I am sensitive to theirs. We work together to accomplish our work. The goal is always to make your day and everyone usually works together to achieve that goal.

In addition to identifying the organization as a family, respondents also referred to the film crew as a team, again noting that reducing the divide between getting the job done and feeling that the worker's needs are acknowledged by production management are the conditions that make for a productive and successful organization. "Film crews are paid well and a job well done leads you to the next job, so everyone does their best. As one of the crew you have a sense of being on the same "team" with everyone else, in a way you don't in most other jobs."

Potential practical application of this finding is worth noting by organizations that seek to improve dysfunction. Considering the high success rate for film crews in meeting difficult goals under almost always less than ideal circumstances, any organization would benefit by striking a similar balance in its organizational culture and should consider the behavior of supporting the individual employee's well-being as necessary to achieve the organization's goals. Noted one respondent:

I have always enjoyed how at say 6am [sic] on the first day of a shoot, people are meeting each other for the first time and within a few hours are getting great things done but most importantly there is a passion for cooperation and overcoming obstacles and enhancing opportunities. Well-fed and well-paid creative people do amazing things!

For Dimension 3 (Parochial versus Professional), the respondents showed ambivalence in answering decisively whether film crew members derive their identity from the organization at work (parochial) and keeping their personal behavior separate (professional). It may be that the film crew members experience has been that both can be true at the same time on the same film set as results showed for the previous dimension. The Dimension 3 (Parochial versus Professional) hypothesis asserts that film crews are a highly professional organization and "...consider their private lives their own business" (Hofstede, 1998). In contrast to the hypothesis that film crews are exclusively professional, film crews often cited personalities as being of equal importance with technical skill and experience. "Personality is just as important if not more so than technical skill in making a film set work efficiently," states one respondent. Another respondent points out "crew members must have cooperative and pleasant personalities that are unflinching in the face of adversity, and the skills to professionally perform their expected role, as well as be capable of predicting the needs of cooperating with other departments." Comments like this one would indicate that the film crew organization defines itself as professional, and therefore greater awareness of the personalities of the co-workers and their private lives brings at least some of the parochial criteria into the profile of Dimension 3 (Parochial versus Professional). As organizational science theorists have noted (Fey & Denison, 2003; Hatch, 1993; Schein, 1990) it is the ability of an effective organization to resolve contradictions in characteristics that make them successful. The film crew embraces the duality of being both somewhat parochial and yet professional as well as being both employee-oriented and job-oriented in Dimension 2. The film crew is "...simultaneously achieving internal integration and external adaptation" (Fey & Denison, 2003). This may be

the key to understanding the enduring success of this group. It is this ability to work within multiple sets of contradictory characteristics to the benefit of the organization that explains why the film crew organization continues to be an efficient organization in the long term.

It was difficult to ask the right questions and get conclusive results for the Dimension 4 (Open versus Closed System) aspect of the film crew organization. While the hypothesis assumes that film crews are open to newcomers and outsiders, the results made clear that certain criteria are required of those who want to succeed in this organization. “Where most personalities can fit into film production, certain personalities do better than *[sic]* others - those that are driven to succeed, good at networking, can work in a group as well as craft or artistic and or precise and punctual,” stated one respondent. Another stated, “People are hired based 80% personality, 20% is based on your technical skills...it's not who YOU know it's who knows YOU.” The results suggest that anyone may try his or her hand at working on a film crew, but succeeding and being hired again is particular to the individual. Everyone gets a chance, only a few will win. “There is a survivor mentality on a film set as well as a perverse pride in the masochistic nature of our working environments and the length of our days,” states one respondent. “Each project is do or die. There isn't the complacency that exists in other work cultures. If you do a poor job, you will not be hired for the next project. Also because there isn't an HR Dept. *[sic]* the turn over rate is very high. You perform, or you are replaced,” said another respondent, who added, “If you want to get hired again you tow *[sic]* the line”. These qualitative responses further illustrate the complex nature of this dimension as it applies to film crew organizations. The data indicate differing yet not mutually exclusive responses that call

for further research. For these reasons, it was determined that Dimension 4 (Open System versus Closed System) should be excluded from the final results.

For Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control), the respondents felt that the film crew is a tightly controlled organization. This accurately reflects the film crew's strong emphasis on scheduling and preparation, in addition to demanding that the crew adhere to these guidelines. Cost controls, insured in large part by sticking to a strict timeline on a daily and overall project level, is at the heart of film production strategy.

It is highly dependent on the efficiency of EACH department as dictated by the department head's hires; it is the most cohesive junior officers' teams, which carry out their superior's orders most efficiently. And as in the military, camaraderie and communication go hand in hand. Also, with tech improving communication throughout, so much more is expected in much less time, which amps up the stress on each department head to make the proper decisions on hiring and sometimes, firing.

This comment reflects the film crew members' acceptance of a hierarchy that manages from the top down. It is not a democracy and the crew accepts this as the only way to accomplish their extreme goals. One respondent noted:

Film crews work well together because the set wouldn't function if we didn't. Every person on set has some responsibility for the success of the production, and some individuals have greater responsibility than others. It is built into the culture of the film crew that each individual is expected to carry his/her own weight on set and have a good relationship with authority.

For Dimension 5 it was also noted that the younger respondents felt more strongly that a film crew was conscious of every penny, put a strong emphasis on punctuality and was military in its hierarchy. A possible explanation might be that the older film crew members no longer find the strict rules and regulations military in nature the same way a younger person might chafe during their initial exposure to the rigidity of the organization.

For Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic), Hofstede defines a normative organization as one where following organizational procedures is more important than the results. By comparison, a pragmatic organization favors results over procedures. As suggested by the data and the author's personal experience, films crews are nothing if not pragmatic in their emphasis on "making the day" and accomplishing the goals in the time allotted. At the same time, the set is rigidly hierarchical and has a fixed protocol that is never questioned. Like Dimension 2 (Employee-Oriented versus Job Oriented), the data point to both conditions being true simultaneously in this organization. Results are of supreme importance but protocol must be followed in order to achieve those results. "Unionized positions with specific job descriptions keep everyone organized and focused on specific tasks - people only do their job, and therefore become very skilled at that job," said one respondent. The older age group lower mean number would help explain the drop in the overall agreement with Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic).

In testing RQ1: (Are age or gender significant factors in how respondents view their culture?), results showed that there was no effect of age on the dimension responses. The rather narrow age range of the respondents may explain this. As a source for potential respondents, the LA 411 Production Guide would by definition list the more successful members of the film

production community. It requires three references for each applicant and the fees begin at \$200 per application. Younger members of the business are still building their resumes and networks and are more likely to be loath to hand over that kind of money to be listed. As a result, 88.3% of the 308 respondents were 41 years old or older, with 60.7% of that number 51 years or older. Autonomy in the responses is possibly attributable to this older age range, which includes the more experienced and seasoned veterans of show business.

The T Test for gender did indicate some significance between gender and the responses. Women felt more strongly than men that the film crew is indeed a results-oriented organization, pursuing risk and feeling comfortable even in unfamiliar surroundings. Men more strongly agreed that the film crew is a pragmatic organization. It may be that women are accustomed to embracing risk and being comfortable in an unfamiliar setting as a female in a male environment. Film crews are notoriously male-dominated. A study conducted by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film showed that while women comprised 25% of production managers working on the top 250 films of 2009 eighty five percent of the films had no female production managers (Lauzen, 2009). The numbers were a little more encouraging for production supervisors, with women comprising 44% of production supervisors, yet 72% of films had no female production supervisors. In the more technically focused careers on film sets, only 5% of the sound mixers were women, 1% of the gaffers and 1% of the grips were women. Only 4% of all the cinematographers were women, the same percentage for 2011 as it was in 2008 (Lauzen, 2011). It is possible that women feel that the very act of taking a job on a film set is one of risk, and they more fully appreciate the embracing the hazards of the film crew career. Women may also feel challenged on a daily basis to prove themselves “worthy”

of acceptance in this traditionally male environment. It remains something women may be more keenly aware of than men in this work environment.

There was no indication in the results of any influence on any of the responses based on years in the profession (RQ2: Are years of experience in the business a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?). This can possibly be attributed to the narrow age range of the sample. The majority of the respondents fell into the 41 years and older group. The film crew member career is not one that someone falls into late in life. The conditions are too difficult, the years of apprenticeship experience required to succeed make it a field that one must enter fairly early in their professional life. In these results, the consistency of the age of the sample could imply that they have the same narrow range of years in the field. Further study of a wider age sample may lead to data indicating impact on the results based on professional tenure.

For RQ3: (Is education level a significant factor in how respondents view their culture?), the data showed the most significant influence on the responses by education level. The film crew career can be described as vocational in nature. No formal education is required to gain entry, crew members are trained on the job and years in the field are what count for one's credentials, as opposed to formal academic markers such as degrees and tenure, for example. It remains an industry that has more in common with the apprenticeship style of passing on skills and information. The data indicate that the response set for Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control) and Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic) showed significant difference in the way the "Other" group ($n = 8$, $p = 2.6\%$) answered the questions. The "Other" group were those cases that self-defined as possessing something other (self-taught, home-schooled, less

than high school) than the remaining response choices (high school/no diploma through doctoral degree). Post hoc comparisons using the LSD test indicated that the cases defining themselves as “Other” in their education level had the most radically different response to the questions in Dimension 5 (Loose Control versus Tight Control) and Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic). Considering the prevalence of film crew members “inheriting “ the job – many are third and fourth generation members of the industry – the explanation may be that there was no need for more than a high school education if the plan was to go into the business with a parent or relative who would train them. This lends credence to the observation that getting into a career in the film business as a film crew member is most like an apprenticeship in nature, based on acceptance by group who will train the individual, as opposed to academic or formalized training. It’s all on the job.

In an effort to gather more information as to the way this “Other” group had responded, an examination of the three separate questions making up Dimension 6 (Normative versus Pragmatic) was done. To the first statement, “Production management counts every penny - saving money is of paramount importance on a film set,” the “Other” respondents disagreed with this statement by a margin of 0.73 or more in the mean. For the second statement, “Being punctual and keeping to the schedule is a high priority when working as a film crew member,” this group disagreed by a margin of 0.43 or more in the mean. For the third statement, “The military nature of the hierarchy of a film crew is necessary for it to accomplish its goals,” this group disagreed by 0.20 or more in the mean. It is hard to know why this group with the lowest education level would have such a different opinion of the organizational culture of a film crew. It would seem that the life of the set is the same for everyone regardless of educational

background, especially since one's education plays little or no role in the accessing of the job or the development of skills once in the organization. Clearly there should be further research into the factor of education level on the opinions of the film crew organization's definition of its work culture. Schein (1990) noted that the "lesson" of the story is not clear if one does not understand the underlying assumptions behind it (p. 112). Delving more deeply into the underlying assumptions that the less educated film crew member brings to the table would hopefully shed some light on this phenomenon.

The limitations for this study would include the narrow definition of the sample (all from the *LA 411*). This kept the age and salary ranges fairly narrow. The average respondent was a white male, 51 years old or older, 15 years or more of professional experience. Although this reads as a narrow sample, it is actually an accurate reflection of the power structure in Hollywood. A study conducted by the Los Angeles Time in February of 2102 determined that the membership of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the group that selects the Oscar winners, found that of its 5100 members, 94% are white, 77% are male and have a median age of 62 (Horn & Kaufmann, 2012). The sample for this study is narrow but sadly, it is representative of the industry. That being said, it would be interesting to see whether a more diverse sample would lead to different results. The outliers, women and the less traditionally educated in this case, would make for an interesting sample on their own. Their point of view of working in a male-dominated and diversely educated organization is bound to be revealing.

The intent of this study was to arrive at a general and broad profile of the film crew organizational culture, using Hofstede's instrument. The ambiguity of some of the response sets indicates that further refining of the instrument would be advised. Hofstede was

researching traditional, corporate-style organizations and the instrument he designed was specific for that group. Indeed, Hofstede has recently amended the instrument just since this study commenced. He has revised the six dimensions and added two new ones in an effort to create a more precise measuring tool (Hofstede, 2011). This work would have to be done for use of this instrument specifically for the film crew organization as well. The revised survey would have to be adapted for a boundaryless career in a project-based industry.

It would also be pertinent to conduct a qualitative research study. It may be a better approach for this artistic and expressive group and its tribal nature. A descriptive qualitative study combined with ethnography is just one of the ways a greater understanding could be developed about this group by applying qualitative techniques. As the reader can judge from this report, the respondents are lively and self-aware in their assessments in the open responses. Respondents in this study rankled at being forced into a multiple-choice answer because they felt that it did not capture the essence of who they are. Digging deeper with this type of methodology would be illuminating.

Another area for closer inspection would be dividing the sample into groups that reflect the hierarchy of the film crew itself. This study was intended as a broad cultural profile of all film crews as an autonomous unit. The next step would be to drill down to the next level. How do prop masters feel in comparison to key grips? Do make-up artists have a significantly different opinion about the military nature of a film crew as compared to the electricians? Other ways to subdivide the group is feature film production versus television narrative production, narrative versus commercial (advertising) production and so on. Managerial approaches for study could include research to determine whether there is a difference in how

management perceives the organization compared to how the crew sees it – is there a difference? Does the producer feel differently than the craft service person about the way the organization operates and what its core values are? There is also the long-range perspective warrants examination. A longitudinal study surveying college film students and tracking them as they go into the industry and succeed or choose another path would be an example of the way to not only define the organization and the typical member, but also track this group as the overall employment environment goes through substantial changes. Will the film crew model continue to weather these storms or will they have to change in an effort to stay viable? How does the film student’s perception of this organization change over time once they actually participate in it? There are many fascinating ways to create subgroups for study.

Despite these limitations, there is value in this broad profile and its approach. Hofstede’s theory survives and thrives. It is continually being revised and improved to reflect the dynamics of its subjects. These results also serve to shed light on an understudied group and one that has a strong legacy of survival and success for the more than one hundred years of its existence. The lessons to be learned from film crews are timely, especially in the current climate of a struggling economy and the revamping of the traditional workforce in an effort to maintain productivity during crisis. Many who once believed that they would have a secure job for life are now forced to learn the rules of the freelance, boundary-less career. Lessons learned from the film crew organization can be useful in this environment. A study such as this one also provides a baseline for an industry that is undergoing its own upheaval, separate from the world economy. The digital tsunami, like it or not, is underway. The organizational culture of the film crew may change to reflect such sweeping changes in the tools; indeed, the name

itself will have to change to reflect the new medium. Will digital production crews work the same way as film crews always have? Will its military nature recede as each crew member feels more empowered than ever in handling even the most technical jobs in a way that was not available on a film-based production? The question arises as to why does the film production organization remains so attractive despite the long hours, hard work and lottery system of advancement? Perhaps it is the better odds in this industry of gaining advancement once one has invested the time and effort. It has a potential payoff that other jobs do not. It may also be the nature of the work itself. It allows the participants to be geographically close to the creativity, if not actually determining the outcome. There is satisfaction enough in supporting the artists who toil on set creatively. Even the craft service provider can feel a sense of ownership, especially when the final product is something so universally popular in modern culture. This reality may make the labor more fun than most jobs and therefore worth the effort and the toleration of a hierarchal and militaristic organizational structure.

For now we have our profile of the film crew organization and its culture. It is results-oriented, both employee and job oriented, and tightly controlled. Its open system is pragmatic and professional. Film crew members love their jobs because they are so unpredictable and challenging. They love the demands of throwing a stunt man off an 80 story building or rigging a car with an interior 360-degree camera. In exchange, production sees to it that their teams are taken care of and attended to as valued employees. As the management team of the film crew, the production staff tightly controls all aspects of the process. Mountains of forms and protocols enable the team to know exactly where it is in its progress, in the overall project schedule, the weekly schedule, and right down to the minutes of the daily schedule. To make

all this happen effectively, the team must be pragmatic. The formal definition of pragmatic is something relating to matters of fact or practical affairs often to the exclusion of intellectual or artistic matters: practical as opposed to idealistic. Films crews are both pragmatic and idealistic. They seek practical solutions to artistic and intellectual problems. They have strict rules and break them all the time to accommodate their ever-changing work environments.

The organization is open to anyone who wishes to test his or her mettle, yet the industry itself is professional in the best sense of the word. One has to prove oneself under fire and over time. All the training in the world means nothing if you can't cut it as a "pro" on the set.

At the heart of the film crew, little has changed since its inception. D.W. Griffith is credited with first calling out the phrase, "Lights, camera, action!" on a Hollywood set in 1910. According to legend, Griffith was frustrated with multiple set problems – actors not hitting their marks, lights burning out, and the cameraman mistakenly putting previously exposed film in the camera. In an effort to organize the workflow, Griffith barked out those three little words and history was made. This same phrase is used on sets today, a testament to the enduring quality of the film crew's organizational culture (Imdb, "D.W. Griffith", n.d.). Griffith may not have predicted that the filmmaking hierarchy and procedures would survive as long as they have. But he would certainly feel at home with today's film crew members. Times may change but "the way we do things around here" does not.

APPENDIX A – SURVEY

Greetings! Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

You have been selected to participate based on based on your listing in one of several regional film crew directories as a crew member.

Your answers will assist greatly in helping to define the characteristics of films crews and identify the factors that make them efficient under challenging circumstances.

This survey is completely confidential. Participants were selected at random from random film production resource guides and there is no data connecting the responding individuals to their answers. The survey software is not capable of connecting the survey responses to the respondents.

There are 20 multiple choice survey questions and an optional statement at the end of the survey.

It should take about 5 minutes to complete. The survey closes Friday, January 6, 2012, so time is of the essence.

Thank you again for your assistance in our research - we couldn't do it without you!

Explanation of Research

Title of Project: The Organizational Culture of Film Crews: Identifying the Core Values that make for a Successful Crew

Principal Investigator: Lisa C. Cook

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Lisa Mills

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Whether you take part is up to you.

--The purpose of this research is to define the profile of the organizational culture of a feature film crew and identify the characteristics of this group that enable it to succeed. The data will also reveal the characteristics that the crew members themselves feel are most typical of the organization.

--The study participants will be asked to complete an online survey of 30 questions. The survey is anonymous. No personal data will be collected at any time.

--The time needed to complete the questionnaire should average 5 to 10 minutes.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, please contact Lisa Cook, Graduate Student, Interdisciplinary Studies, College of Arts and Humanities, University of Central Florida, (407) 823-2758 or by email at lisa.cook@ucf.edu

Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under

the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). This research has been reviewed and approved by the IRB.

For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact:
Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research &
Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by
telephone at (407) 823-2901.

In March 2012 the report will be available through a link that will be sent out to this same survey list.

Survey Instructions

Please select an item from the scale that fits your level of agreement with the statement.

Film crews are comfortable in unfamiliar situations.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Each day brings new challenges on a film set – no two days are alike.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Everyone works hard and puts in the maximum effort on a film crew.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Production is only interested solely in the quality of the work I do when I work on a film crew.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Production is not interested in my personal problems, just my performance.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

When I work on a film crew, I am told when I've done a good job.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Important decisions about the production management are made at the top – it's not a democratic process when it comes to decision-making.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Film crew members personal lives are not factored into explanations for poor performance. Production does not want to hear it – you are hired to work no matter what.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Job competence is the primary criterion in hiring film crew members.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

On the film crew, cooperation and trust between departments is standard.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The organization of a film crew is secretive and closed.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Only people with unique skills and personality will fit into the film crew culture.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

- It takes a while for a new crew member to fit in to the team.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neither Agree nor Disagree

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

Production management counts every penny – saving money is of paramount importance on a film set.

- Strongly Disagree

- Disagree

- Neither Agree nor Disagree

- Agree

- Strongly Agree

Being punctual and keeping to the schedule is a high priority when working as a film crew member.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Joking among the crew members on set about production management is rare.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The military nature of the hierarchy of a film crew is necessary for it to accomplish its goals.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Film crew members are pragmatic and flexible – they do what’s best for the shoot as opposed to following protocol.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The crew is most like a military team, with narrowly defined job descriptions and built-in autonomy.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Production places a high value on results rather than procedures. It's more important that the goal is achieved than how we get there.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Is there anything you would like to add regarding your observations and experiences on how and why film crews work well together?

AGE

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51 and over

GENDER

- Male
- Female
- Other

RACE

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Isander
- White

- Hispanic
- Multi-racial
- Other

MARITAL STATUS

- Now married
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated
- Never married
- Living with partner
- Other

CHILDREN

- I have no children
- I have children I live with
- I have children I do not live with
- I have stepchildren
- I have an adopted child or children

- Other

EDUCATION

- 12th grade, no diploma
- High school graduate or GED
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelors degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other

AVERAGE ANNUAL INCOME

- below \$20,000
- \$21,000 - 30,000
- \$31,000 - 40,000
- \$41,000 - 50,000
- \$51,000 - 60,000
- \$61,000 - 70,000

- \$71,000 - 80,000
- \$81,000 - 90,000
- \$91,000 - 100,000
- \$101, 000 and over

YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE FILM BUSINESS

- less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 2-3 years
- 3-4 years
- 4-5 years
- 5-6 years
- 6-7 years
- 7-8 years
- 8-9 years
- 9-10 years
- 10-11 years
- 11-12 years
- 12-13 years

- 13-14 years
- 14-15 years
- 15 or more years

Thank you for your participation!

Survey Powered By Qualtrics®

APPENDIX B – COVER EMAIL

Greetings!

I am working towards my Masters at the University of Central Florida. I also teach in the UCF Film department and am a 20 year veteran of the film business in Los Angeles (as a associate producer/line producer/production manager).

My Masters thesis is an investigation into the organizational culture of the film crew. Very little research has been done that can identify what makes a film crew efficient and the strategies that allow this specific organization to operate so effectively.

I am sending this to you based on your listing as a crew member in one of several regional film crew directories. I am asking for your participation in a 30-question multiple choice survey. All responses are completely private and anonymous. There is no data that can be traced back to you individually. It should only take 5 to 10 minutes of your time and your insights will be a tremendous help in building my database for analysis.

Thank you in advance for your generosity with your time - we all know how precious our free time is these days! Feel free to send me your questions. (lisa.cook@ucf.edu)

Regards

Lisa Cook

Follow this link to the Survey:

`${1://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}`

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

`${1://SurveyURL}`

APPENDIX C – HOFSTEDE’S SIX DIMENSIONS OF
PRACTICE

Hofstede, G. (1997). *Culture and organizations: Software of the mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dimension 1 - Process oriented versus results oriented

It opposes a concern with means to a concern with goals. The process oriented culture people perceive themselves as avoiding risks and making only a limited effort in their jobs—each day is pretty much the same. Results oriented people perceive themselves as comfortable in unfamiliar situations—each day brings in new challenge (Hofstede, 1997).

Film crews are comfortable in unfamiliar situations.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Each day brings new challenges on a film set – no two days are alike.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Everyone works hard and puts in the maximum effort on a film crew.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Dimension 2 - Employee oriented versus job oriented

It opposes a concern for people to a concern for completing the job. Employee oriented cultures people feel their personal problems are taken into account; the organization takes a responsibility for employee welfare. Job oriented cultures people experience a strong pressure to complete the job; they perceive the organization as only interested in the work the employees do (Hofstede, 1997).

Production is only interested solely in the quality of the work I do when I work on a film crew.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Production is not interested in my personal problems, just my performance.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

When I work on a film crew, I am told when I've done a good job.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Important decisions about the production management are made at the top – it's not a democratic process when it comes to decision-making.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Dimension 3 - Parochial versus professional

It opposes units whose employees derive their identity largely from the organization to units in which people identify with their type of job. Members of parochial culture feel the organization's norms cover their behavior on the job as well as their home. Members of professional cultures consider their private lives their own business (Hofstede, 1997).

Film crew members personal lives are not factored into explanations for poor performance. Production does not want to hear it – you are hired to work no matter what.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Job competence is the primary criterion in hiring film crew members.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

On the film crew, cooperation and trust between departments is standard.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Dimension 4 - Open system versus closed system

It opposes open systems to closed systems. In open systems, members consider both the organization and its people open to newcomers and outsiders; almost anyone would fit into the organization. In closed systems, the organization and its people are felt to be closed and secretive, even among insiders (Hofstede, 1997).

The organization of a film crew is secretive and closed.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Only people with unique skills and personality will fit into the film crew culture.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

It takes a while for a new crew member to fit in to the team.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Dimension 5 - Loose control versus tight control

It refers to the amount of internal structuring in the organization. In loose control units, people think that no one is concerned about costs, meeting times are only approximate, and jokes about the organization and job are frequent. People in tight control units describe their work environment as cost conscious, specific meeting times, jokes about the company or job are rare (Hofstede, 1997).

Production management counts every penny – saving money is of paramount importance on a film set.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Being punctual and keeping to the schedule is a high priority when working as a film crew member.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Joking among the crew members on set about production management is rare.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

The military nature of the hierarchy of a film crew is necessary for it to accomplish its goals.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Dimension 6 - Normative versus pragmatic

It deals with the notion of customer orientation. Pragmatic cultures are market driven; normative cultures people perceive their task toward outside world as the implementation of some sacred rules. To normative cultures people, following organizational procedures are more important than the results. To pragmatic units people, results and meeting customer needs is more important than following the procedures (Hofstede, 1997).

Film crew members are pragmatic and flexible – they do what’s best for the shoot as opposed to following protocol.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

The crew is most like a military team, with narrowly defined job descriptions and built-in autonomy.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

Production places a high value on results rather than procedures. It's more important that the goal is achieved than how we get there.

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

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