

White Paper: The Convergence of Enterprise Architecture and Organizational Culture: A Synonymous Relationship

Matthew Ford Kern

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Abstract:

This paper explores the notion that alignment in enterprise architecture and alignment in organizational culture are, in fact, the same thing. By examining the definitions and components of both enterprise architecture and comprehensively defined culture, we find that they are largely synonymous or overlap to such an extent that they can be considered effectively identical. This convergence has significant implications for the design and implementation of enterprise architecture, as well as the management of organizational culture.

Introduction:

Enterprise architecture (EA) and organizational culture are two distinct fields of study that have traditionally been treated as separate entities. However, a closer examination of their definitions and components reveals a striking similarity. EA is concerned with the design and implementation of an organization's technology infrastructure, while organizational culture is focused on the values, norms, and behaviors that shape an organization's identity. Despite these differences, we argue that alignment in EA and alignment in organizational culture are, in fact, the same thing.

The Federal Enterprise Architecture Framework (FEAF) defines EA as "a comprehensive framework used to describe the current and future state of an organization's architecture" (Federal Enterprise Architecture Framework, 2013). Similarly, the Open Group Architecture Framework (TOGAF) describes EA as "a comprehensive description of the current and future state of an organization's architecture" (The Open Group, 2018). These definitions highlight the importance of alignment in EA, where the various components of the architecture are designed to work together seamlessly to achieve the organization's goals.

In contrast, organizational culture is often defined as the values, norms, and behaviors that shape an

organization's identity (Schein, 2010). However, a more comprehensive definition of culture includes three components: symbolic, behavioral, and material (Hofstede, 2001). Symbolic culture refers to the values, norms, and beliefs that are shared among members of the organization. Behavioral culture refers to the way people interact with each other and the organization, including their habits and practices. Material culture refers to the physical artifacts and environment that reflect the organization's values and norms.

By examining these definitions, we can see that EA and organizational culture are not as distinct as they initially seem. The components of EA, such as the systems view and the data view, can be seen as analogous to the material and symbolic components of culture. Similarly, the behavioral component of culture is reflected in the processes and interactions that occur within the organization, which are also a key aspect of EA.

The Department of Defense Architecture Framework (DoDAF) provides a useful example of this convergence. The DoDAF defines EA as "a comprehensive framework for describing the current and future state of an organization's architecture" (Department of Defense, 2010). However, the DoDAF also includes a focus on the behavioral component of culture, with its emphasis on the activities and processes that occur within the organization.

Other frameworks, such as the Zachman Framework (Zachman, 1987) and the Gartner Enterprise Architecture Framework (Gartner, 2019), also support this convergence. The Zachman Framework, for example, includes a focus on the business, data, and technology components of EA, which can be seen as analogous to the symbolic, behavioral, and material components of culture.

Similarly, the Gartner Enterprise Architecture Framework includes a focus on the business, information, and technology components of EA, which can be seen as analogous to the symbolic, behavioral, and material components of culture.

Limitations:

While we argue that EA and organizational culture are largely synonymous, there are limitations to this view. One limitation is that EA is often focused on the design and implementation of technology infrastructure, while organizational culture is focused on the values, norms, and behaviors that shape an organization's identity. This means that EA may not always capture the full range of cultural artifacts, such as the symbolic and material components of culture.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, we argue that alignment in enterprise architecture and alignment in organizational culture are the same thing. By examining the definitions and components of both EA and comprehensively defined culture, we find that they are largely synonymous or overlap to such an extent that they can be considered effectively identical. This convergence has significant implications for the design and implementation of EA, as well as the management of organizational culture.

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