

From Artefacts to Assumptions: How Artificial Intelligence Influences Organisational Culture

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Abstract: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into contemporary organisations is one of the most consequential sociotechnical transformations of the modern era. Whilst the operational and economic impacts of AI have attracted considerable scholarly attention, the cultural implications of this transformation remain comparatively underexplored. This paper addresses that gap by examining, in depth, how AI influences organisational culture at each of the three levels identified in Edgar Schein's foundational framework: artefacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. Drawing primarily on four recent empirical and theoretical contributions, namely English and Kenny's (2025a) work on AI and emotional intelligence, their (2025b) study on cobots and cultural rewriting, English and Kenny's (2026) theoretical framework for AI-mediated distributed cognition in multicultural firms, and Kenny and English's (2025) investigation of cultural intelligence and CEO authenticity, the paper develops a multi-layered argument about AI's capacity to both reinforce and destabilise organisational culture. The Netflix culture model, with its emphasis on talent density, freedom and responsibility, and the keeper test, is employed as an illustrative case study throughout. The paper argues that AI is not a culturally neutral technological instrument; rather, it is an active sociotechnical agent that reshapes artefacts, challenges espoused values, and ultimately penetrates the deepest layer of organisational life, the basic underlying assumptions that govern how people think, relate, and make meaning at work. The paper concludes with practical implications for emotionally and culturally intelligent leadership and calls for a governance approach to AI integration that treats cultural change as a first-order strategic concern.

Keywords: Organisational culture, Artificial Intelligence, Schein's cultural model, emotional intelligence, cultural intelligence, cobots, distributed cognition, Netflix culture, algorithmic management, leadership.

I. Introduction

The contemporary organisation operates at the confluence of two powerful, intersecting forces: the exponential growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the deepening complexity of cultural life within firms. AI-driven systems, ranging from algorithmic performance management and predictive analytics to collaborative robots (cobots) and large language models, are no longer futuristic projections but present-day realities, reshaping knowledge work, decision-making, and interpersonal interaction (English & Kenny, 2026). Yet despite the proliferation of research on AI's operational and economic consequences, the cultural dimension of this transformation has received comparatively little scholarly attention.

This omission is significant. Organisational culture, the shared values, beliefs, norms, and artefacts that coalesce to shape collective behaviour and identity within firms, is not a passive backdrop against which technological change unfolds. Rather, it is an active and dynamic force that both shapes and is shaped by the technologies an organisation adopts (Schein, 2010). When an organisation deploys an AI system, it does not simply acquire a new tool; it introduces a new actor into its social and symbolic life, one that carries embedded assumptions about efficiency, objectivity, authority, and the nature of human work. These embedded assumptions interact, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes disruptively, with those already held by the organisation's members.

The theoretical lens adopted in this paper is Edgar Schein's (2010) tripartite model of organisational culture, which distinguishes three levels of cultural depth: artefacts (visible structures and processes), espoused values (stated beliefs and strategies), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs that truly drive behaviour). This framework is particularly well-suited to analysing AI's cultural impact because it directs attention not only to the visible changes AI introduces (new dashboards, new workflows, new performance metrics) but also to the deeper, often invisible, shifts in values and assumptions that these visible changes both reflect and produce.

The paper also draws extensively on the Netflix culture model as a practical case study. Netflix's celebrated cultural philosophy, articulated through its commitment to talent density, the principle of freedom and responsibility, and the evaluative mechanism of the keeper test, provides a rich and instructive example of a high-performance

culture that is both amenable to and challenged by AI integration (Hastings and Meyer, 2020). Netflix's culture is not merely a corporate curiosity; it represents a broader archetype of the data-driven, meritocratic, high-autonomy organisation that many firms aspire to emulate in the digital age.

Four recent scholarly contributions are integrated throughout the analysis. English and Kenny (2025a) examine the relationship between AI and emotional intelligence (EI) in the workplace, with particular attention to its consequences for leadership and organisational culture. English and Kenny (2025b) investigate how workplace AI rewrites culture for better and worse, introducing the concept of AI as a sociotechnical agent that reconfigures identity, social dynamics, and power relations. English and Kenny (2026) develop a theoretical framework for AI-mediated distributed cognition in multicultural firms, introducing the concepts of Culturally Situated Cognitive Offloading (CSCO) and Organisational Cultural Intelligence (OCQ). Finally, Kenny and English (2025) explore cultural intelligence and the resource-based view, arguing that CEO authenticity is a critical strategic resource for navigating AI-induced cultural change in SMEs.

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 sets out the theoretical framework, elaborating on Schein's three-level model and its relevance to AI integration. Sections 3, 4, and 5 examine AI's influence at each of the three cultural levels in turn. Section 6 applies these insights to the Netflix case study. Section 7 examines the role of emotionally intelligent leadership in mediating AI's cultural impact. Section 8 addresses the particular complexities of AI-mediated distributed cognition in multicultural organisations. Section 9 synthesises the findings and draws out practical implications. Section 10 concludes.

II. Theoretical Framework: Schein's Three Levels of Organisational Culture

Organisational culture is one of the most studied yet most contested concepts in management theory. Definitions abound, but a broad consensus holds that culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, norms, and artefacts that shape collective behaviour within organisations (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2001). What distinguishes Schein's contribution is not merely a definition but a structural model that reveals the depth and complexity of culture. By distinguishing three levels of cultural depth, Schein provides a framework that is simultaneously descriptive and diagnostic, capable of explaining not only what an organisation's culture looks like, but why it is so resistant to change, and where the levers of transformation actually lie.

2.1 Level 1: Artefacts

The first and most immediately visible level of Schein's model comprises artefacts, the observable manifestations of culture that any newcomer to an organisation would notice on their first day. Artefacts include the physical environment (office layout, dress code, signage), the behavioural environment (rituals, ceremonies, stories, language), and the symbolic environment (logos, slogans, published values statements). In the context of AI, artefacts now also include the technological systems themselves: the AI-powered dashboards that populate meeting rooms, the algorithmic performance management systems that generate weekly reports, the chatbots that handle employee queries, and the cobots that share the shop floor with human workers.

Critically, Schein (2010) notes that artefacts are easy to observe but difficult to interpret. A visitor to a technology firm might observe open-plan offices, casual dress, and AI-powered collaboration tools, and infer a culture of innovation and informality. But these surface observations may conceal deep tensions between the espoused value of autonomy and the enacted reality of algorithmic surveillance, for instance. The interpretive challenge posed by artefacts is central to understanding how AI reshapes culture: AI systems are highly visible artefacts, but their cultural significance depends on the values and assumptions that underlie their deployment.

2.2 Level 2: Espoused Values

The second level of Schein's model comprises espoused values, the explicitly stated principles, strategies, and philosophies that an organisation claims to uphold. These are the values articulated in mission statements, leadership communications, HR policies, and corporate codes of conduct. Espoused values serve an important legitimising function: they tell employees, customers, and other stakeholders what the organisation stands for and what it aspires to be.

However, Schein (2010) draws a crucial distinction between espoused values and enacted values, the values that actually govern behaviour in practice. This gap between what organisations say and what they do is one of the most fertile sources of cultural tension, and AI integration frequently widens it. An organisation might espouse a commitment to employee well-being and trust, whilst simultaneously deploying AI systems that monitor keystrokes, track location, and generate algorithmic performance scores. The resulting incongruence between espoused and enacted values is not merely a public relations problem; it is a cultural wound that erodes trust, undermines engagement, and ultimately destabilises the organisation's identity.

2.3 Level 3: Basic Underlying Assumptions

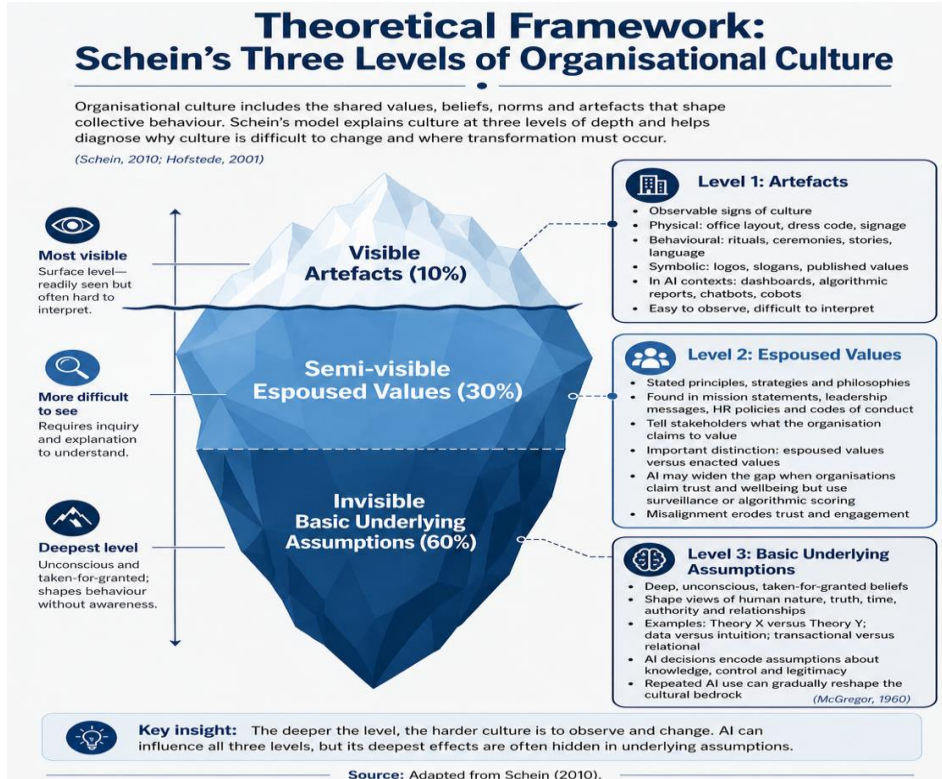
The third and deepest level of Schein's model comprises basic underlying assumptions, the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs about human nature, reality, time, space, and human relationships that form the invisible bedrock of organisational culture. These assumptions are rarely articulated, precisely because they are so deeply held that they are experienced not as beliefs, but as facts. They are the cultural equivalent of the water in which the fish swims: invisible, pervasive, and foundational.

Basic underlying assumptions include beliefs such as: “People are fundamentally motivated by self-interest and need to be controlled” (Theory X) versus “People are intrinsically motivated and capable of self-direction” (Theory Y) (McGregor, 1960); “Truth is discovered through rational analysis and data” versus “Truth is revealed through experience and intuition”; “Relationships are primarily transactional” versus “Relationships are primarily relational”. These assumptions are not merely philosophical abstractions; they have direct and profound consequences for how organisations are structured, how decisions are made, and how people are treated.

AI integration has the potential to challenge, reinforce, or subtly reshape these deepest assumptions in ways that are often invisible to the organisations experiencing them. When an organisation delegates a decision to an algorithm, it is not merely automating a process; it is enacting an assumption about the nature of knowledge and the legitimacy of authority. When it uses AI to monitor employee behaviour, it is enacting an assumption about human nature and the relationship between freedom and control. These enactments, repeated daily across thousands of interactions, gradually reshape the cultural bedrock.

This three-level structure is particularly useful because it prevents organisational culture from being treated as a flat or purely symbolic phenomenon (Figure 1). Instead, Schein’s model invites analysis to move progressively from what can be seen, to what is formally claimed, and finally to what is silently assumed. In the context of AI integration, this layered approach is especially important, since AI technologies often enter organisations first as visible artefacts, are justified through espoused values such as efficiency, innovation, or competitiveness, and then gradually begin to expose or reshape deeper assumptions about trust, control, human judgement, and authority. The following Figure 1 summarises Schein’s three levels of organisational culture and illustrates how each layer operates at a different depth of visibility, interpretation, and cultural influence.

Figure 1 – Schein’s 3 Levels of Organisational Culture



2.4 The Anxiety Model: Learning Anxiety and Survival Anxiety

Schein's framework also includes an important dynamic dimension: the anxiety model of cultural change. Schein (2010) argues that cultural change is driven by the tension between two forms of anxiety. *Survival anxiety* is the anxiety generated by the recognition that the organisation must change to survive, the fear that failure to adapt will have serious consequences. *Learning anxiety* is the anxiety generated by the prospect of change itself, the fear that learning new ways of thinking and behaving will involve loss of competence, status, or identity.

Cultural change occurs, Schein argues, when survival anxiety exceeds learning anxiety. The implication for AI integration is significant: organisations that introduce AI without adequately managing learning anxiety, creating psychological safety, providing adequate training, and communicating a compelling vision are likely to encounter cultural resistance that no amount of technological sophistication can overcome. This insight is directly relevant to the arguments developed in subsequent sections, particularly regarding the role of emotionally intelligent leadership in mediating AI's cultural impact. The following Table 1 summarises Schein's three cultural levels and their relevance to AI integration:

Cultural Level	Description	Examples in AI Context	Key Challenge
Artefacts	Visible structures, processes, and behaviours.	AI dashboards, cobots, algorithmic management systems, chatbots.	Easy to observe but difficult to interpret; surface changes may mask deeper tensions.
Espoused Values	Stated beliefs, strategies, and philosophies.	Commitments to innovation, transparency, employee wellbeing, data-driven decision-making.	Gap between espoused and enacted values; AI may widen this gap through surveillance and control.
Basic Underlying Assumptions	Unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs.	Assumptions about human nature, the nature of truth, the legitimacy of algorithmic authority.	Deepest and most resistant to change; AI may challenge or reinforce these assumptions invisibly.

Table 1: Schein's Three Levels of Organisational Culture and Their Relevance to AI Integration (adapted from Schein, 2010)

III. AI as a Cultural Artefact and Catalyst (Level 1)

At the most visible level of organisational culture, AI manifests as a new and increasingly pervasive category of artefacts. English and Kenny (2025b) develop this insight through the concept of AI as a *sociotechnical agent*, an entity that is not merely a passive tool but an active participant in the social life of the organisation. Their work on cobots (collaborative robots) is particularly instructive in this regard. Cobots are physical artefacts that share the workspace with human employees, performing tasks that range from assembly and logistics to quality inspection and customer service. Their presence is not culturally neutral: they alter the physical environment, change the rhythm and nature of work, and introduce new questions about identity, status, and the meaning of human labour.

3.1 The Reconfiguration of Physical and Digital Space

The introduction of AI systems reconfigures both the physical and digital environments in which work takes place. At the physical level, the deployment of cobots and robotic process automation (RPA) systems transforms the spatial organisation of work, creating new zones of human-machine interaction and altering established patterns of movement, communication, and collaboration. At the digital level, AI-powered platforms, from enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems augmented with machine learning to AI-driven communication tools and performance management dashboards, reshape the organisation's informational landscape, determining what data is collected, how it is presented, and who has access to it.

English & Kenny (2025b) identify five cultural themes that emerge from the introduction of AI artefacts into the workplace: identity transformation, social reconfiguration, power shifts, temporal restructuring, and the emergence of new rituals. Each of these themes reflects a dimension of cultural change that operates at the level of visible artefacts but has deeper implications for values and assumptions. Identity transformation occurs as employees renegotiate their sense of professional self in relation to AI systems capable of performing tasks previously considered uniquely human. Social reconfiguration occurs as the introduction of AI alters team dynamics, communication patterns, and the social networks through which knowledge and influence flow. Power shifts occur

as AI systems redistribute decision-making authorities, sometimes empowering frontline workers with data-driven insights, and sometimes concentrating power in the hands of those who design and control the algorithms.

3.2 Algorithmic Management as a Cultural Artefact

One of the most significant AI artefacts in contemporary organisations is the algorithmic management system, a technology that uses data analytics and machine learning to monitor, evaluate, and direct employees' work. Algorithmic management systems are now widespread in sectors ranging from logistics and retail to financial services and healthcare, and their cultural implications are profound. At the artefactual level, algorithmic management systems introduce new visible structures into organisational life: performance dashboards, automated feedback mechanisms, AI-generated task assignments, and algorithmic scheduling. These structures are not culturally neutral; they embody specific assumptions about the nature of work, the relationship between management and employees, and the appropriate basis for performance evaluation. As English & Kenny (2025b) observe, algorithmic management systems can be experienced by employees as a form of surveillance that is simultaneously more pervasive and less personalised than traditional management, creating a cultural climate of what they term "panoptic efficiency", the sense of being constantly watched by an invisible, impersonal gaze.

This cultural climate has direct implications for psychological safety that is essential to high-performance cultures. In the Netflix model, psychological safety is a precondition for the candid communication and radical transparency that underpin talent density and the keeper test (Hastings & Meyer, 2020). When AI artefacts create a surveillance culture, they undermine the psychological safety that enables candid communication, creating a paradox at the heart of the high-performance, AI-enabled organisation.

3.3 AI Artefacts and the Ritualisation of Data

A further dimension of AI's impact at the artefactual level concerns the ritualisation of data, the emergence of new cultural practices centred on the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data generated by AI systems. In many organisations, the weekly review of AI-generated performance metrics has become a cultural ritual as significant as the traditional performance appraisal, carrying its own symbolic weight and social dynamics. These data rituals shape organisational behaviour in ways that extend well beyond their ostensible purpose of performance management: they communicate what the organisation values, who has power, and what counts as legitimate knowledge.

English & Kenny (2025a) observe that the ritualisation of data can have both positive and negative cultural consequences. On the positive side, data rituals can promote transparency, accountability, and a shared commitment to evidence-based decision-making, values that align with Netflix's culture of radical candour and high performance. On the negative side, data rituals can foster a culture of metric fixation, in which the richness and complexity of human performance are reduced to quantifiable indicators, and employees learn to manage their metrics rather than their actual performance. This phenomenon, sometimes described as Goodhart's Law ("when a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure"), poses a significant cultural risk in the deployment of AI artefacts.

IV. The Impact of AI on Espoused and Enacted Values (Level 2)

The second level of Schein's framework, espoused values, is the arena in which the cultural politics of AI integration is most explicitly contested. Organisations that introduce AI systems typically do so with a set of stated rationales: improving efficiency, enhancing decision quality, freeing employees from routine tasks, and enabling data-driven innovation. These rationales constitute a set of espoused values about AI, values that are communicated to employees, customers, and other stakeholders through leadership communications, HR policies, and corporate strategy documents.

4.1 The Gap Between Espoused and Enacted Values

From a Scheinian perspective, the critical question is whether these espoused values are reflected in the enacted values that govern the organisation's behaviour. English & Kenny (2025a) argue that the gap between espoused and enacted values is one of the most significant cultural risks of AI integration. An organisation might espouse a commitment to employee empowerment and autonomy whilst simultaneously deploying AI systems that monitor employee behaviour in granular detail, generate algorithmic performance scores that override managerial judgement, and automate decisions that were previously made through human deliberation and relationships. The resulting incongruence is not merely a matter of hypocrisy; it is a cultural signal that tells employees what the organisation actually values, as opposed to what it claims to value.

This gap is particularly acute with respect to the value of trust. Trust is a foundational cultural value in most organisations, and it is especially central to the high-performance cultures exemplified by Netflix. Netflix's culture of freedom and responsibility is premised on a deep assumption of mutual trust: the organisation trusts its employees to exercise their freedom responsibly, and employees trust the organisation to honour its commitment to their

autonomy. When AI systems are introduced in ways that suggest the organisation does not, in fact, trust its employees, that it needs to monitor their every keystroke, track their location, and algorithmically evaluate their performance, this trust is undermined, and with it the cultural foundation of the freedom and responsibility principle.

4.2 Data-Driven Empathy and the Reconfiguration of Emotional Labour

English & Kenny (2025a) introduce the concept of *data-driven empathy*, the use of AI tools to analyse employee sentiment, communication patterns, and behavioural data in order to inform leadership responses to employee needs and concerns. This concept represents a fascinating and ambivalent development in the relationship between AI and organisational culture. On one hand, data-driven empathy offers the prospect of a more responsive and personalised leadership approach, one that is informed by real-time data about employee well-being rather than relying solely on the leader's own perceptions and intuitions. On the other hand, it raises profound questions about the nature of empathy itself: can empathy that is mediated by algorithmic analysis be genuinely empathetic, or does it represent a form of emotional surveillance that instrumentalises the very human qualities it purports to support? The cultural implications of data-driven empathy are significant. If employees perceive that their leaders' expressions of concern and support stem from AI analysis rather than genuine human feeling, the authenticity of the leadership relationship is compromised. Kenny & English (2025) argue that CEO authenticity is a critical strategic resource in the AI era precisely because it is a quality AI cannot replicate. Authentic leadership, characterised by self-awareness, transparency, ethical behaviour, and balanced processing of information, provides a cultural counterweight to the impersonality and opacity of algorithmic management and is essential for maintaining the trust and psychological safety that high-performance cultures require.

4.3 The Espoused Value of Innovation and the Risk of Algorithmic Conservatism

A further dimension of AI's impact on espoused values concerns the relationship between AI and innovation. Many organisations espouse a commitment to innovation as a core cultural value and deploy AI systems to enhance their capacity for innovation. The logic is intuitive: AI can process vast amounts of data, identify patterns that human analysts would miss, and generate insights that inform new products, services, and business models. In the Netflix model, data-driven innovation is central to the culture: the organisation's use of recommendation algorithms, content analytics, and A/B testing reflects a deep commitment to evidence-based creativity.

However, English & Kenny (2025b) identify a significant risk they term algorithmic conservatism, the tendency of AI systems trained on historical data to recommend options similar to what has worked in the past, thereby reinforcing existing patterns rather than enabling genuine innovation. This risk is particularly acute in organisations where AI systems are given significant decision-making authority and where the cultural norm is to defer to algorithmic recommendations rather than challenge them. The cultural consequence is a subtle but significant shift in the espoused value of innovation: from commitment to genuine novelty and creative risk-taking to a commitment to data-validated optimisation, a form of innovation that is, paradoxically, deeply conservative. The following table compares the espoused values of a high-performance culture with the potential enacted values introduced by AI systems:

Espoused Value	Cultural Aspiration	Potential AI-Enacted Countervalue	Cultural Risk
Trust	Mutual confidence between organisation and employees	Surveillance through algorithmic monitoring	Erosion of psychological safety and authentic engagement
Autonomy	Freedom to make decisions and exercise judgement	Algorithmic prescription and automated decision-making	Reduction of discretionary authority and intrinsic motivation
Innovation	Creative risk-taking and genuine novelty	Algorithmic conservatism and data-validated optimisation	Narrowing of the innovation space to historically validated options
Transparency	Open communication and honest feedback	Opacity of algorithmic decision-making ("black box" AI)	Loss of explainability and accountability in key decisions
Meritocracy	Reward based on genuine contribution and capability	Metric fixation and gaming of quantifiable performance indicators	Reduction of complex human performance to simplistic scores

Table 2: Espoused Values and AI-Enacted Countervalues in High-Performance Organisations

V. AI and Basic Underlying Assumptions (Level 3)

The deepest and most consequential dimension of AI's cultural impact concerns its effect on basic underlying assumptions, the unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs that form the invisible bedrock of organisational life. This is the level at which AI's cultural influence is most profound and hardest to perceive precisely, because the assumptions it challenges or reinforces are rarely articulated or examined. It is also the level at which the most significant and lasting cultural change occurs.

5.1 Assumptions About Human Nature: Theory X, Theory Y, and the Algorithmic Gaze

One of the most fundamental dimensions of basic underlying assumptions concerns beliefs about human nature, specifically whether people are fundamentally motivated by self-interest and require external control (Theory X) or are intrinsically motivated and capable of self-direction (Theory Y) (McGregor, 1960). These assumptions have direct and profound consequences for how organisations are structured, how employees are managed, and which cultural norms are considered appropriate.

AI integration does not merely reflect existing assumptions about human nature; it actively enacts them. An organisation that deploys AI systems primarily for surveillance and control, monitoring employee behaviour, tracking performance in real time, and generating algorithmic assessments that override managerial judgement, is enacting a Theory X assumption about human nature, regardless of what it says in its mission statement. Conversely, an organisation that deploys AI primarily to augment human capability, providing employees with data-driven insights, automating routine tasks to free up time for creative work, and using AI to personalise learning and development is enacting a Theory Y assumption.

English & Kenny (2025b) argue that the cultural consequences of these enacted assumptions are significant and self-reinforcing. When employees experience AI systems as surveillance mechanisms, they tend to behave in ways that confirm Theory X assumptions: they become more risk-averse, less creative, and more focused on managing their metrics than on genuine performance. This behavioural response then provides apparent justification for further surveillance, creating a cultural feedback loop that progressively deepens Theory X assumptions, and makes Theory Y leadership increasingly difficult to sustain.

5.2 Assumptions About Truth and Knowledge: The Rise of Algorithmic Authority

A second fundamental dimension of basic underlying assumptions concerns beliefs about the nature of truth and the legitimate sources of knowledge. In most organisations, these assumptions reflect a complex mixture of empiricism (truth is discovered through data and analysis), rationalism (truth is discovered through logical reasoning), and intuition (truth is revealed through experience and tacit knowledge). The relative weight given to these different epistemological orientations varies significantly across cultures, industries, and organisations, and has profound consequences for how decisions are made and whose knowledge is valued.

AI integration tends to privilege empirical and quantitative knowledge over intuitive and experiential knowledge, and to shift the legitimate source of authority from human expertise to algorithmic analysis. English & Kenny (2026) describe this shift as algorithmic authority: the tendency to defer to AI recommendations not because they have been critically evaluated and found superior, but simply because they are generated by an algorithm and therefore assumed to be objective and reliable. This phenomenon, which relates to the broader concept of automation bias, represents a significant and often invisible shift in the organisation's underlying assumptions. The cultural consequences of algorithmic authority are far-reaching. When employees and managers habitually defer to AI recommendations without critical evaluation, the organisation's capacity for independent judgement is gradually eroded. English & Kenny (2026) describe this as cognitive deskilling, the progressive atrophy of human cognitive capabilities as they are delegated to AI systems. In the context of Schein's framework, cognitive deskilling represents a change in the basic underlying assumptions about the nature of human expertise and the appropriate relationship between human and machine intelligence.

5.3 Assumptions About Human Relationships: Trust, Identity, and the Social Fabric of Work

A third fundamental dimension of basic underlying assumptions concerns beliefs about human relationships, specifically, the nature of trust, the basis of social identity, and the meaning of work as a social activity. These assumptions are deeply embedded in organisational culture and are central to the psychological well-being of employees. They are also, as English & Kenny (2025b) demonstrate, profoundly affected by the integration of AI.

The introduction of AI into the social fabric of work challenges basic assumptions about trust in several ways. First, it introduces a new category of actor, the AI system, whose trustworthiness cannot be evaluated through the normal social mechanisms of relationship, reputation and reciprocity. Trusting an AI system requires a different kind of trust, what English & Kenny (2025a) describe as calibrated trust, which is based on an understanding of the system's capabilities and limitations, and is continuously updated in response to experience. Developing this

calibrated trust requires both technical literacy and cultural openness, and it is a capability that many organisations have not yet systematically cultivated.

Second, AI integration challenges basic assumptions about professional identity, the sense of who one is as a worker, and what one's contribution to the organisation means. When AI systems can perform tasks once considered the exclusive domain of skilled professionals, from legal research and medical diagnosis, to financial analysis and creative writing, the identity of those professionals is threatened. English & Kenny (2025b) document this identity threat in their study of cobots, noting that employees who work alongside cobots often experience role ambiguity and identity disruption that technical training alone does not adequately address. Addressing this identity threat requires a cultural response, a renegotiation of the assumptions about what it means to be a skilled professional in an AI-enabled organisation.

VI. The Netflix Culture Model in the Age of AI

The Netflix culture model, as articulated by Reed Hastings and Erin Meyer in *No Rules Rules* (2020), is one of the most influential and widely discussed examples of deliberate culture design in the contemporary business world. Its three core principles, talent density, freedom, and responsibility, and the keeper test, provide a rich and instructive framework for examining how a high-performance culture interacts with AI integration.

6.1 Talent Density and AI-Augmented Talent Management

The concept of talent density, the deliberate cultivation of exceptionally high-performing teams through rigorous hiring, generous compensation, and the willingness to part with adequate performers in favour of excellent ones, is central to Netflix's culture. Hastings and Meyer (2020) argue that talent density is the foundation of all other cultural principles: only extraordinarily capable and trustworthy employees can be granted extraordinary freedom and responsibility.

AI has the potential to both augment and undermine talent density. On the augmentation side, AI-powered talent analytics can provide organisations with richer, more objective data about candidate capabilities, employee performance, and development potential, enabling more informed and less biased talent decisions. Machine learning algorithms trained on historical performance data can identify patterns that predict future success, and natural language processing tools can analyse the content and tone of employee communications to identify emerging talent and potential flight risks.

However, English & Kenny (2025b) caution that AI-powered talent management systems carry significant risks of algorithmic bias, the tendency of machine-learning algorithms trained on historical data to perpetuate and amplify the biases embedded in that data. If an organisation's historical hiring and promotion decisions have been influenced by gender, racial, or other biases, an AI system trained on that data will learn to replicate those biases, potentially undermining the diversity and inclusion essential to genuine talent density. Moreover, reducing complex human qualities, such as creativity, adaptability, cultural fit, and emotional intelligence, to quantifiable metrics risks producing a narrow and distorted picture of talent that privileges easily measurable attributes over those that are most valuable.

6.2 Freedom and Responsibility in the Age of Algorithmic Management

The principle of freedom and responsibility is perhaps the most distinctive and challenging aspect of the Netflix culture. It rests on a fundamental assumption of mutual trust: the organisation trusts its employees to exercise their freedom responsibly, and employees trust the organisation to honour its commitment to their autonomy. As argued in Section 5, this assumption is a basic underlying feature of the Netflix culture, one that is deeply held, rarely articulated, and foundational to everything else.

The introduction of algorithmic management systems into a freedom-and-responsibility culture creates profound cultural tension. Algorithmic management systems are, by their nature, systems of control: they monitor behaviour, evaluate performance, and generate recommendations or directives that constrain employee discretion. Even when these systems are designed with the best intentions, to provide employees with useful data, to ensure fairness and consistency in performance evaluation, and to identify development needs, their cultural effect is to communicate a message of surveillance and control that is fundamentally at odds with the freedom-and-responsibility principle.

English & Kenny (2025a) argue that resolving this tension requires what they describe as *culturally intelligent AI governance*, an approach to AI deployment that is explicitly designed to preserve and reinforce the organisation's core cultural values, rather than simply optimising for efficiency and performance metrics. In the Netflix context, this would mean designing AI systems that augment employee autonomy rather than constrain it, providing data and insights that inform employee decisions rather than replace them, and ensuring that algorithmic performance evaluations are transparent, explainable, and subject to human override.

6.3 The Keeper Test and AI-Supported Talent Decisions

The keeper test, the practice of asking managers whether they would fight to keep an employee if that employee were to resign, is a cultural ritual that embodies Netflix's commitment to talent density and high performance. It is a mechanism for ensuring that the organisation continuously renews its talent base, and for communicating to employees that their continued employment is contingent on their continued exceptional performance.

AI can support the keeper test by providing managers with richer, more objective data about employee performance, contribution, and potential. AI-powered performance analytics can identify patterns in employee behaviour that predict future performance, while natural language processing tools can analyse employee communications to assess engagement, motivation, and cultural fit. These data-driven insights can inform the keeper test, making it more rigorous and less susceptible to the biases and blind spots of individual managers. However, English & Kenny (2025a) argue that the keeper test is fundamentally a human judgement, and that over-reliance on AI data risks reducing it to a mechanical process that misses the very qualities it is designed to assess. The keeper test is not simply a performance evaluation; it is an expression of the manager's personal commitment to the employee and their belief in the employee's potential. This relational and emotional dimension of the keeper test cannot be captured by algorithmic analysis, and its loss would represent a significant cultural impoverishment. The following Table 3 summarises the interaction between the Netflix culture principles and AI integration:

Netflix Culture Principle	Core Assumption	AI Opportunity	AI Risk	Cultural Implication
Talent Density	Only exceptional performers belong in the organisation.	AI-powered talent analytics enable more rigorous and objective talent decisions.	Algorithmic bias may undermine diversity; metric fixation may miss complex human qualities.	Culture of excellence may become culture of measurable compliance.
Freedom and Responsibility	Employees can be trusted to exercise freedom responsibly.	AI augments employee capability and provides data-driven insights.	Algorithmic management may undermine autonomy and create surveillance culture.	Trust-based culture may shift towards control-based culture.
Keeper Test	Continued employment is contingent on continued exceptional performance.	AI data enriches performance evaluation and reduces managerial bias.	Over-reliance on AI may reduce keeper test to mechanical process, losing relational dimension.	Meritocratic culture may become metric-driven culture.

Table 3: Netflix Culture Principles and AI Integration, Opportunities, Risks, and Cultural Implications

VII. Emotionally Intelligent Leadership and AI Integration

The cultural impact of AI is not determined solely by the technology itself; it is shaped, mediated, and ultimately governed by the quality of leadership that oversees its integration. English & Kenny (2025a) argue that emotionally intelligent leadership is the critical variable that determines whether AI integration enhances or undermines organisational culture. This argument draws on Goleman's (1998) foundational framework of emotional intelligence (EI), which identifies five core competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill, and applies them to the specific challenges of AI-enabled leadership.

7.1 Self-Awareness and the Reflexive Leader

The first competency of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, is particularly important in the context of AI integration because it enables leaders to recognise and examine their own assumptions about AI, technology, and human nature. Leaders who lack self-awareness may deploy AI systems in ways that reflect their own unexamined biases, their assumptions about whether employees can be trusted, whether data is more reliable than intuition, whether efficiency is more important than relationship, without recognising that these are assumptions rather than facts.

English & Kenny (2025a) argue that self-aware leaders are better equipped to engage critically with AI systems, to recognise the cultural assumptions embedded in their design, and to make deliberate choices about how those systems are deployed in ways that align with the organisation's core values. In the Netflix context, a self-aware leader would recognise the tension between the freedom-and-responsibility principle and the surveillance implications of algorithmic management, and would make explicit choices about how to resolve that tension in ways that preserve the cultural foundation of the organisation.

7.2 Empathy and Human-Centred AI Deployment

The fourth competency of emotional intelligence, empathy, is perhaps the most directly relevant to the cultural challenges of AI integration. Empathy is the capacity to understand and share others' feelings, and it is essential for leaders navigating the emotional landscape of AI-induced change. Employees confronted with AI systems that monitor their behaviour, evaluate their performance, and potentially threaten their employment experience through a complex mix of anxiety, resentment, curiosity, and hope. Leaders who lack empathy may dismiss these emotional responses as irrational resistance to progress; leaders who possess empathy will recognise them as legitimate human responses to genuine cultural disruption, and design change processes that acknowledge and address them.

English & Kenny (2025a) link this argument to Schein's (2010) anxiety model of cultural change, arguing that empathetic leadership manages the relationship between survival and learning anxieties to create the psychological safety necessary for genuine cultural transformation. When employees feel psychologically safe, trusting that their leaders understand their concerns, that they will not be punished for expressing uncertainty or resistance, and that the organisation is genuinely committed to their well-being, they can engage with AI integration as a learning opportunity rather than a threat. This psychological safety is the cultural precondition for the genuine cultural change that AI integration requires.

7.3 Authentic Leadership and Cultural Integrity

Kenny & English (2025) develop the concept of authentic leadership as a critical resource for navigating AI-induced cultural change, particularly in SMEs. Authentic leaders are characterised by self-awareness, transparency, ethical behaviour, and balanced processing of information qualities that enable them to engage with AI integration in ways consistent with their values and the organisation's cultural identity. In the context of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, Kenny & English (2025) argue that CEO authenticity is a valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resource that provides a source of competitive advantage in the AI era. This argument has important implications for the cultural management of AI integration. If authentic leadership is a source of competitive advantage, then organisations that invest in developing authentic leaders, leaders who are self-aware, transparent, and genuinely committed to the organisation's cultural values, will be better positioned to navigate the cultural challenges of AI integration than those that do not. Conversely, organisations that deploy AI in ways that undermine authentic leadership, by replacing human judgement with algorithmic authority, by creating a surveillance culture that inhibits honest communication, or by generating a gap between espoused and enacted values, will erode one of their most important cultural assets.

7.4 The Emotionally Intelligent Leader as Cultural Steward

Drawing together the insights from English & Kenny (2025a) and Kenny & English (2025), it is possible to articulate a vision of the emotionally intelligent leader as a *cultural steward* in the AI era, a leader whose primary responsibility is not merely to manage the technical deployment of AI systems, but to protect and cultivate the cultural values and assumptions that give the organisation its identity and competitive advantage. The cultural steward role involves several specific practices. First, it involves *cultural diagnosis*, the on-going assessment of how AI integration is affecting the organisation's culture at all three of Schein's levels, with particular attention to the often-invisible shifts in basic underlying assumptions. Second, it involves *cultural communication*, the articulation of a compelling and authentic narrative about the organisation's AI journey that connects technological change to cultural values and provides employees with a sense of meaning and direction. Third, it involves *cultural protection*, the deliberate design of AI governance mechanisms that prevent the erosion of core cultural values, including the establishment of clear boundaries around algorithmic authority and the preservation of spaces for human judgement, relationship, and creativity.

VIII. AI-Mediated Distributed Cognition and Multicultural Complexity

The cultural implications of AI integration are not uniform across all organisational contexts. They are shaped, in important ways, by the cultural diversity of the organisations in which AI is deployed. English and Kenny (2026) develop this insight through their theoretical framework for AI-mediated distributed cognition in

multicultural firms, introducing two key concepts: Culturally Situated Cognitive Offloading (CSCO) and Organisational Cultural Intelligence (OCQ).

8.1 Culturally Situated Cognitive Offloading

The concept of cognitive offloading, the delegation of cognitive tasks to external technological aids, is well established in the cognitive science literature (Risko & Gilbert, 2016). English & Kenny (2026) extend this concept to the organisational level, arguing that the proliferation of AI systems in contemporary organisations represents a form of collective cognitive offloading in which organisations delegate significant portions of their cognitive labour to algorithmic systems. This delegation reconfigures the organisation's *Organisational Cognitive Architecture* (OCA), the structured distribution of cognitive labour between humans and AI systems.

The critical insight of English & Kenny's (2026) framework is that this cognitive offloading is not culturally neutral. They introduce the concept of *Culturally Situated Cognitive Offloading* (CSCO) to capture the phenomenon that the process of offloading is not universal but is culturally structured, interpreted, and enacted. The selection of AI tools, the interpretation of their outputs, the motivation to use them, and the enactment of their recommendations are all moderated by the organisation's collective cultural intelligence and its members' cultural values.

This insight has profound implications for the cultural analysis of AI integration. It suggests that the same AI system can have very different cultural consequences across organisational contexts, depending on the cultural values and assumptions of those who use it. An AI-powered performance management system deployed in an organisation with a high-trust, Theory Y culture may be experienced as an empowering tool that provides employees with useful data and frees them from administrative burdens; the same system deployed in an organisation with a low-trust, Theory X culture may be experienced as an instrument of surveillance and control that confirms and deepens employees' sense of being monitored and distrusted.

8.2 Organisational Cultural Intelligence as a Dynamic Capability

English & Kenny (2026) propose Organisational Cultural Intelligence (OCQ) as the key moderating variable that determines whether cognitive offloading results in beneficial cognitive augmentation or maladaptive cognitive dependence. Drawing on the dynamic capabilities' framework (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997), they conceptualise OCQ as a firm-level capability, "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments", applied specifically to the domain of cultural intelligence.

OCQ encompasses three dimensions that parallel the individual-level dimensions of Cultural Intelligence (CQ) identified by Earley & Ang (2003): metacognitive OCQ (the organisation's capacity to reflect critically on its own cultural assumptions and the cultural assumptions embedded in its AI systems), motivational OCQ (the organisation's collective drive to engage with cultural diversity and to develop culturally sensitive AI governance practices), and behavioural OCQ (the organisation's capacity to adapt its AI deployment practices to different cultural contexts).

The practical implications of this framework are significant. Organisations with high OCQ are better positioned to deploy AI in ways that are culturally sensitive and strategically effective, to achieve what English & Kenny (2026) describe as *balanced cognitive augmentation*, in which AI tools enhance and extend human cognitive capabilities without eroding the cultural diversity and human judgement that are essential to organisational resilience and innovation. Organisations with low OCQ, by contrast, are at risk of *maladaptive cognitive dependence*, a state in which *uncritical delegation of cognition to AI systems leads to strategic homogeneity, cognitive deskilling, and an increased risk of culturally inflected algorithmic errors*.

8.3 Pathologies of AI-Mediated Distributed Cognition

English & Kenny (2026) identify several specific pathologies that can emerge when AI-mediated distributed cognition is not adequately governed by OCQ. These pathologies are relevant to the cultural analysis of AI integration because they represent specific ways in which AI can damage organisational culture at the level of basic underlying assumptions.

Cultural algorithmic myopia refers to the tendency of AI systems to reflect and reinforce the cultural assumptions of the dominant group within the organisation, whilst systematically ignoring or marginalising the perspectives of minority cultural groups. This pathology is particularly acute in multinational organisations where AI systems are designed by culturally homogeneous teams and deployed in culturally heterogeneous contexts. The cultural consequence is a form of algorithmic ethnocentrism that undermines the diversity of perspectives that are essential to creative problem-solving and organisational resilience.

Blind algorithmic authority refers to the tendency to accept AI recommendations uncritically, without subjecting them to the kind of cultural scrutiny that would reveal their embedded assumptions. This pathology is related to the automation bias discussed in Section 5, but it has a specific cultural dimension: it involves the failure to recognise

that AI outputs are not culturally neutral but reflect the values and assumptions of the data on which the system was trained and the people who designed it.

Cognitive deskilling refers to the progressive atrophy of human cognitive capabilities as they are delegated to AI systems. In the context of multicultural organisations, cognitive deskilling has a distinct cultural dimension: it entails the erosion of cultural knowledge and intercultural competence that are essential for navigating complex multicultural environments. When organisations delegate intercultural communication, cross-cultural negotiation, and multicultural team management to AI systems, they risk losing the human capabilities that are most valuable in a globalised world.

The following table summarises the pathologies of AI-mediated distributed cognition and their cultural consequences:

Pathology	Description	Cultural Consequence	Mitigation Strategy
Cultural Algorithmic Myopia	AI reflects and reinforces dominant cultural assumptions, marginalising minority perspectives.	Erosion of cultural diversity; algorithmic ethnocentrism.	Inclusive AI design; diverse training data; multicultural AI governance teams.
Blind Algorithmic Authority	Uncritical acceptance of AI recommendations without cultural scrutiny.	Loss of independent judgement; erosion of critical thinking culture.	Development of metacognitive OCQ; training in AI literacy and critical evaluation.
Cognitive Deskilling	Progressive atrophy of human cognitive capabilities delegated to AI.	Loss of human expertise and intercultural competence.	Deliberate preservation of human cognitive practices; balanced cognitive augmentation.
Automation Complacency	Reduced vigilance and monitoring due to over-reliance on AI.	Systemic failure of oversight; unchecked propagation of errors.	Clear governance protocols; human oversight requirements; regular algorithmic audits.

Table 4: Pathologies of AI-Mediated Distributed Cognition and Their Cultural Consequences (adapted from English & Kenny, 2026)

IX. Discussion and Practical Implications

The analysis developed in the preceding sections reveals a complex and multi-layered picture of AI's cultural impact. AI is not a culturally neutral technological instrument; it is an active sociotechnical agent that reshapes artefacts, challenges espoused values, and penetrates the deepest layer of organisational life, the basic underlying assumptions that govern how people think, relate, and make meaning at work. This conclusion has significant implications for how organisations approach AI integration, and for the role of leadership in managing this process.

9.1 Towards a Cultural Framework for AI Governance

The most fundamental practical implication of this analysis is that AI governance must be understood as cultural governance, not merely a technical or ethical matter, but a matter of organisational identity and cultural stewardship. Current approaches to AI governance tend to focus primarily on technical issues (algorithmic accuracy, data quality, system reliability) and ethical issues (fairness, transparency, accountability, privacy). These are important concerns, but they are insufficient. A governance framework that attends only to technical and ethical dimensions, without attending to the cultural dimensions of AI deployment, will fail to address the most profound and lasting consequences of AI integration.

A cultural framework for AI governance would attend to all three levels of Schein's model. At the artefactual level, it would ensure that AI systems are designed and deployed in ways that reinforce rather than undermine the organisation's cultural values, and that they produce artefacts (dashboards, workflows, communication tools) that embody the organisation's commitment to transparency, autonomy, and human dignity. At the level of espoused values, it would ensure that the organisation's stated commitments to AI and its claims about the purpose and benefits of AI deployment are reflected in the enacted realities of how AI systems function and how their outputs are used. At the level of basic underlying assumptions, it would create mechanisms to surface

and examine the assumptions embedded in AI systems, and to ensure that these assumptions are consistent with the organisation’s cultural identity.

9.2 The Role of Cultural Intelligence in AI Governance

Kenny & English (2025) argue that cultural intelligence is a critical resource for AI governance, particularly in multicultural organisations. Their analysis of the resource-based view suggests that organisations that develop high levels of OCQ, the collective capacity to navigate cultural diversity in the context of AI integration, will achieve a form of competitive advantage that is difficult for competitors to imitate, precisely because it is embedded in the organisation’s culture and routines, rather than in any specific technology.

This argument has significant implications for organisational strategy. It suggests that investment in cultural intelligence, through leadership development, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and the deliberate cultivation of multicultural perspectives in AI design and governance, is not merely a social responsibility imperative, but a strategic necessity. Organisations that fail to develop OCQ will be vulnerable to the pathologies of AI-mediated distributed cognition identified by English & Kenny (2026): cultural algorithmic myopia, blind algorithmic authority, and cognitive deskilling. Organisations that develop high OCQ will be better placed to deploy AI in ways that are culturally sensitive, strategically effective, and genuinely augmentative of human capability.

9.3 Practical Recommendations for Leaders

Drawing on the analysis, several practical recommendations emerge for leaders navigating the cultural challenges of AI integration.

The first recommendation concerns *cultural diagnosis*. Before deploying AI systems, leaders should conduct a thorough cultural assessment that maps the organisation’s current culture across all three of Schein's levels, identifies the cultural values and assumptions most central to the organisation’s identity and competitive advantage, and assesses the potential cultural consequences of specific AI deployment decisions. This cultural diagnosis should be an on-going process, not a one-time exercise, as the cultural consequences of AI integration unfold over time and may not be immediately visible.

The second recommendation concerns participative AI design. The cultural consequences of AI systems are shaped, in significant part, by the design choices made during their development. Leaders should ensure that AI design processes are participative, involving diverse stakeholders, including frontline employees, cultural minorities, and external experts in organisational culture and ethics, and that cultural considerations are treated as first-order design constraints rather than afterthoughts.

The third recommendation concerns transparent communication. Leaders should communicate openly and honestly about the purpose, capabilities, and limitations of AI systems, as well as the cultural values that guide their deployment. This transparency is essential to maintaining the trust that underpins high-performance cultures. It is also essential for managing the learning anxiety that AI integration inevitably generates employees who understand why AI systems are being deployed, what they are designed to do, and what safeguards are in place to protect their interests are better placed to engage with AI as a learning opportunity, rather than a threat.

The fourth recommendation concerns *human-centred AI governance*. Leaders should establish clear governance mechanisms that preserve the primacy of human judgement in key decisions, ensure that AI recommendations are subject to critical evaluation rather than automatic acceptance, and create channels for employees to raise concerns about AI systems without fear of reprisal. These governance mechanisms should be explicitly designed to prevent the pathologies of AI-mediated distributed cognition, cultural algorithmic myopia, blind algorithmic authority, and cognitive deskilling, and to promote the balanced cognitive augmentation that is the hallmark of high-OCQ organisations. The following Table 5 provides a summary of practical recommendations for culturally intelligent AI governance:

Governance Domain	Recommendation	Rationale	Key Risk if Neglected
Cultural Diagnosis	Conduct ongoing cultural assessments at all three of Schein's levels before and during AI deployment.	Enables culturally informed AI governance; identifies potential cultural risks early.	Invisible cultural damage; misalignment between AI and organisational identity.
Participative AI Design	Involve diverse stakeholders in AI design, including cultural minorities and frontline employees.	Reduces algorithmic bias; ensures AI reflects diverse cultural perspectives.	Cultural algorithmic myopia; erosion of diversity and inclusion.
Transparent	Communicate openly	Maintains trust; manages	Erosion of trust; cultural

Communication	about AI purpose, capabilities, limitations, and cultural values guiding deployment.	learning anxiety; enables genuine cultural engagement.	resistance; widening gap between espoused and enacted values.
Human-Centred Governance	Preserve human judgement in key decisions; subject AI recommendations to critical evaluation.	Prevents automation bias and cognitive deskilling; maintains accountability.	Blind algorithmic authority; cognitive deskilling; loss of human expertise.
Leadership Development	Invest in emotionally and culturally intelligent leadership capable of cultural stewardship.	Ensures AI integration is guided by authentic, culturally sensitive leadership.	Loss of authentic leadership; cultural incoherence; erosion of psychological safety.

Table 5: Practical Recommendations for Culturally Intelligent AI Governance

X. Conclusion

This paper has argued that Artificial Intelligence is not merely a technological phenomenon but a cultural one, an active sociotechnical agent that reshapes organisational culture at all three of the levels identified in Schein's foundational framework. At the level of artefacts, AI introduces new visible structures and processes that alter the physical and digital work environment, create new cultural rituals centred on data, and reconfigure the social dynamics of the workplace. At the level of espoused values, AI creates tensions between stated commitments and enacted realities, challenges cultural values of trust, autonomy, and innovation, and demands a deliberate ongoing process of cultural realignment. At the level of basic underlying assumptions, AI challenges fundamental beliefs about human nature, the nature of truth and knowledge, and the meaning of human relationships, with consequences that are profound, pervasive, and often invisible.

The Netflix culture model has served as an instructive case study throughout this paper, illustrating both the opportunities and risks of AI integration in a high-performance culture. The principles of talent density, freedom and responsibility, and the keeper test are not merely organisational practices; they are expressions of deep cultural assumptions about human capability, trust, and the nature of excellence. AI has the potential to augment these principles by providing richer data for talent decisions, freeing employees from routine tasks to focus on creative work, and enabling more rigorous, less biased performance evaluations. But it also has the potential to undermine them, by introducing surveillance mechanisms that erode trust, by reducing complex human qualities to quantifiable metrics, and by creating a culture of algorithmic deference that diminishes the human judgment and authentic relationships that are at the heart of the Netflix model.

The four scholarly contributions integrated throughout this paper, English & Kenny (2025a) on AI and emotional intelligence, English & Kenny (2025b) on cobots and cultural rewriting, English & Kenny (2026) on AI-mediated distributed cognition, and Kenny & English (2025) on cultural intelligence and CEO authenticity, collectively illuminate the cultural complexity of AI integration and point towards a set of principles for culturally intelligent AI governance. These principles centre on the recognition that AI governance is cultural governance; that emotionally and culturally intelligent leadership is the critical mediating variable in AI integration; and that the development of Organisational Cultural Intelligence (OCQ) is a strategic imperative for organisations that wish to deploy AI in ways that are genuinely augmentative of human capability and genuinely aligned with their cultural identity.

The future of organisational culture in the AI era will be shaped not by the technology itself, but by the quality of the human choices made about how that technology is designed, deployed, and governed. Schein's model remains an invaluable heuristic for navigating these choices. A reminder that culture operates at multiple levels of depth, that the most consequential changes are often the least visible, and that genuine cultural transformation requires not merely new artefacts and new espoused values, but a willingness to examine and, where necessary, to revise the basic underlying assumptions that form the invisible bedrock of organisational life.

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