



# The Cultural Factors and Their Influence on Organizational Values

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## Abstract

Cultural values play a very prominent role in grooming an organization from within. A healthy environment provides better productivity, which, in turn, brings prosperity to the organization. One of the primary responsibilities of a leader in an organization is to develop and maintain the organizational culture. The success of a leader will depend, to a larger extent, on fair communication of organizational culture. Organizational culture and its values influence the organizational functions. Cultural values are the deeper level of shared values and belief that are followed by the members of the social group. This research paper discusses in detail about the influence and impact of culture upon organizational values. Productive cultural change will occur if leaders correctly analyze the organization's existing culture, and evaluate it against the cultural attributes needed to achieve objective of the organization.

**Keywords:** Organization, Leader, Culture, Values, Environment

## Introduction

Values are the basic senses of a person which help him do decide what to do and what not to do. Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. For example, if someone follows the value to work honestly and he/she joins a new company and notices that people are not honest to their work, he/she will feel uncomfortable with that situation. In that case such an incumbent may leave the company. When people don't follow their values they feel dissatisfied and when they follow them they feel satisfied and happy. Actually values are the set of some principles what are actually valued day-to-day life. Sometimes, people value things but cannot follow.

Considering a simple example, people often say, "I believe in Truth" or "I hate Liars", but if in case it happens somehow that they lie they are bound to feel unhappiness within. This happens because they give value to truth but are unable to follow their own values. Many times people become confused with their own values and never can fill up this gap between what they value and what they follow.

Generally, the values are set according to the society, or what is learnt from the parents, teachers, elders and other people of the society. Societal norms define the way people behave and keep a mindset within. But basic values never change. Almost every society follows some core values. Irrespective of the level of civilization or economic development or independence, all societies demand their people not to kill anyone or to harm others or to lie etc. These kinds of values are followed by every society whether it is in east or west, doesn't matter. It is so because to maintain discipline and to avoid disorder in society.

Values function not only at a personal or individual level, but also at an aggregated level. This could at the level of a society, nation or an organization. In the present study, the focus is laid on organizational values. While personal values work at an individual level, organizational values are deep rooted which reflect in procedures, methods, policies, rules and strategies of an organization to accomplish a particular goal.

## Culture and Cultural Values

Organization is an artificial being and organizational culture is its personality. Culture may be considered as combination of the norms, values and assumptions along-with the visible signs or handiworks of all members of the organization and their respective behaviors. One can tell about the culture of organization by its arrangement of furniture, members' wear, employees' behavior etc.

Culture is the collective programming of human mind to adopt the environment collectively and adjust with the different situations. Culture is the manifestation of human intellectuality. Culture acts as a behavioral rule which explains how to behave in a group and what should be value standard to maintain oneself with the changing situations or environment. One can understand the nuances and the meaning of culture particularly when one attempts to bring the organizational changes. The professionals off late have realized that the long lasting organizational change should consider the changes in the organizational structures and routine processes, in order to change the corporate culture in the long run.

There is no single definition for organizational culture. This topic has been studied in various disciplines like anthropology, sociology, social psychology, moral philosophy and business ethics etc. The cultural value could be an absolute or else a relative ethical value, assumption of which can be the basis for ethical action. However, in the recent past, the APA (American Psychological Association) has defined the culture as, the belief system of the organization that consists of value orientations which in turn may influence social institutions, norms, practices and customs. Language, use of symbols, ceremonies, customs, methods of problem solving, use of tools or technology, and design of work settings are coming under culture of a society.

Cultural values are the pattern of shared values that the group learned to solve the problems with and to improve internal integration and external adaptations. Cultural values have an important role to teach new members the correct way to perceive, think, and feel problems. In order to thoroughly understand culture to the deepest level, one has to go to the level of assumptions and beliefs. It is an established fact that the organizational cultures are initiated, preserved and transformed by people. However, the leaders also create and maintain the organization culture though in parts. Therefore, the leaders become the main source for the creation and generation of the ideology of an organization, manifestation of the principal values and depiction of norms. The organizational values therefore expect certain set of behaviors or specific outcomes of behavior from the members of the organization. In the same line of rationality, the organizational culture provides that individual members also accept the behaviors by other members. There are certain acceptable ways of realizing organizational goals while preserving the culture at the forefront. The values and norms should be established as the permanent feature of the organization.

On the basis of number of studies conducted in the field of we may infer that the adoption and preservation of the culture necessitates that there should be interpersonal interaction within the subgroups. Interaction with peers in the job is the most important to manage effective employees. Interaction is important for the orientation of newcomers. Interpersonal interactions in organizations help newcomers learn the culture of the organization. Cultural values not only assist in sense-making through the meanings they convey; they also aid the sense-making process by involving the expression of emotions and help people to cope with stress.

### Some Types of Culture

There could be basically five types of organizational cultures, that are mentioned as below:

**1. The Blame culture:** As the name indicates, this type of culture has been the outcome of fear, distrust and disbelief. People are irresponsible and tend to blame upon others. Here the individual members would be self-focused; They would be self-centered and would not be committed to the company. In this culture employees are self-centered but not organization-centered. Innovation is zero in this type of cultural climate; due to the fact people are unwilling to take the risk of introducing new ideas. Some of the traditional companies in India working in smaller setups and which have very closed knit and hierarchical structures, predominantly family-run

businesses, do suffer from this sort of culture. There is a fewer team member in such companies and everyone wants to be close to the higher management, so they follow this kind of a blame culture.

**2. The Multi-directional culture:** A culture of this form encourages inter-departmental interaction and cooperation. In this type of culture there is a situation of confrontations in every interaction amongst departments that is eventually detrimental to the effectiveness and efficiency of individuals and organization both. This example is observed in several Indian organizations, wherein there is a segregation of departments, for example, field staff and office staff. While field staff show complete allegiance towards their peers and seniors who work in the field, the office staff generally stick to the office seniors to take up matters and show loyalty.

**3. The Live and let live culture:** This type of culture exhibits when the members of organization do not possess any passion towards their work or the organizational goal. They have almost nil vision and skills of creativity and do not want to move forward actually there is no visibility of proactive movement. They are equally loyal to themselves and their group which they propose to belong. Most of the government organizations suffer from this culture, where employees stick to what they do and do not care for the general welfare and improvement in the organization. Indian government organizations like state-run departments, oil & gas companies, etc. have this kind of culture.

**4. The Brand Congruent Culture:** In this type of culture the members and the working groups are zealous to work for the organizational goals and work hard to achieve it. The groups and the members cooperate fully and freely so as to achieve them. The members work with full passion with complete utilization of personal skills and knowledge so as to solve them proactively. They are willing to accept the views and decisions of management though at times they may not agree to it. The members usually place their individual goals and aspirations below in comparison to the group goals and aspirations. No conflict between organizations promise to customers and employees. Many are passionate about the product and service. Considering for example, most of the MNCs established in India promote this culture in their organizations. The employees realize that they are not just regular workers, but they also are the brand ambassadors of the company they work for. They present themselves before others in such a manner that they are promoting their brand, not just the service that they are offering. Companies like Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Microsoft, etc. have a strong and perpetual brand congruent culture, which is embedded deep within everyone in the organization.

**5. Leadership Enriched Culture:** In this type of culture the members would feel that the organization they work for is an extension to their personality. The goal of organization is fully aligned with the goals of the individuals and there is no difference between the two. They will be quite happy to work for the organization would like to achieve their goals within the broad boundary of the organization. The leadership of this culture creates more leaders instead of creating the followers. This type of culture induces the members to perform their best, instills more loyalty and aligns all to achieve organization goals. Primary values of a Leadership Enriched Corporate Culture are:

1. Everyone has something to offer to the individuals and the organization.
2. By assisting others to be their best, leaders excel in their own work profile
3. Leadership is an identity one must adopt, it is not a skill

Many of the organizations are now working to develop this kind of culture. It helps them promote new leaders and generate a competitive and aggressive environment within the organization. This also helps in taking off load from the top management. Examples include organizations like Nokia, P&G, ITC, etc.

It can be clearly observed that the five key types of organizational culture defined above, follow a series of changes in loyalty, beginning with the loyalty being firmly rooted in the individual and culminating in an egoless, harmonious working environment where loyalty is given freely to the organization as whole.

Another categorization of organizational culture comes from researcher Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, who identified the following four types of cultures:

1. Academy Culture: Organization is full of highly skilled people and it provides an atmosphere to employees to utilize and enhance their skills. Examples are colleges, nursing homes, big corporations, etc.
2. Baseball Team Culture: In this culture employees have a good demand in market. This kind of culture may exist in fast moving, services organizations like NBFC, Ad Agencies, etc.
3. Club Culture: In this culture people join the organization and stay with the organization. Organizations also give high value to seniority. Examples are the Police, Armed Forces, Govt. Departments etc.
4. Fortress Culture: in this type of culture employees who have specialized skills get further opportunities. Examples are Pharmaceutical Companies, Automobile companies, etc.

### **Influence of organizational culture upon behavior of employees**

Employees spend most of their time surrounded by other colleagues or clients who are a part of the organizational setup and follow the prevalent organizational culture. In such a scenario the organization culture has a lot of influence upon the behavior of members of the organization. The way an employee acts is important for communicating a company's overall corporate values and performance goals. Beliefs and values instilled within the employees via their understanding of the organizational culture of their company will directly affect the way in which they interact with not only fellow colleagues, but more importantly, outside entities such as customers, clients and suppliers.

As an entity the organization is made of many individuals. The individuals in turn are reflections of individual belief, trust, honesty, behavior etc. When ten individuals work within the organization they are expected to inhibit and exhibit a set of behavior. Similarly, they are also expected to work in the formal and informal groups therefore they are expected to possess certain cultural manifestations as well. They are also expected to interact not only with each other and but with the external stakeholders also. Therefore, they are expected to display good culture during interactions with them as well. The core values that an organization has should be the manifestation of the goal and objective that all the members must look forward to adhere to. It is also quite important and necessary for the members to display the excellent behavior members while achieving the goals. This will further for the basis of expected behavior of individuals. It will also prescribe what type of behavior would be appropriate for the members to display in specific situations. The overall impact of this could be realized when the members would have an organizational feel in all internal and external interactions.

The organizational culture may cast both a negative and a positive impact on a company. Therefore, a thorough analysis has to be undertaken prior to adopting a certain type of culture. It is not necessary that a culture that has been good enough in some organization would be having the same impact in our organization as well. If the members are not convinced with the form of culture that is adopted, then it could also be counterproductive. Organization culture nurtures creativity in its members and promote overall tolerance of creative people. It promotes the ideas of seizing market opportunity as a way and means to deal with prosperity and survival. It is quite possible that some of the people in the organization would have one perception and others would have a different. The top level may think of the organizational values in one way whereas the bottom level may think quite contrary to it.

To influence culture of one's organization one must emphasize what's important for an organization. It includes goal of the organization and vision and mission of organization. This also includes rewarding system and control system. It also includes model of behaviors that one wants to see in the workplace. This could be the best way to have induced behavior set at the workplace. For example, if one wants to see more teamwork among your employees, then he/she involve oneself in team events more often.

Every individual has his/her personal values. But when one joins a group or community he/she has to follow the values of that group or community to survive within the group. Like that though organizational values are different

then personal values, one must know how to adjust with different situation in an organization and how to adopt the cultural values of that organization.

## Changing an Established Organization Culture

Cultural change is a slow process and one that should be approached carefully. Members will need time to assimilate the changes. If the company has a very strong culture, then changes may be extremely hard to bring about. Some important steps should be recognized to implement change in the organization. Before going for any change feedback should be taken from employees and should be evaluated properly.

Changes should first be introduced into the top level management team, they should be embraced and supported wholeheartedly by team members, as this will demonstrate the support and trust the management team has in the new changes, which will filter down and instill confidence within the workforce.

Efforts should be undertaken by the management team to stress that changes are not being made to fix a broken culture, and that the company does not need the proposed changes to continue functioning, but that the changes are being introduced to enhance the company and make some minor adjustments. Once this has been achieved, steps should be taken to familiarize the members of the organization with the proposed changes before implementing them. This will give people time to come to terms with the changes whilst not being effected by them. Often this kind of gentle approach to change will result in the workforce actively seeking the implementation of the changes, once they have been given sufficient time to consider them in a nonthreatening manner. Finally, when the changes are put into place, feedback should be gathered at regular intervals, this can be used to judge the effectiveness of the changes, how successfully the changes have been adopted and to measure the effects upon the members of the organization.

Culture of the territory of operations influences organizational values. This has been observed particularly in multinational organizations, which operate in multiple countries and have people from different nationalities, race and cultures work together. When such a company enters a new territory, it adopts a lot of organizational culture from the new country of operation. For example, when McDonalds started its business in India, it had a reputation of using buffalo meat in its food products. But it was not accepted by the Indian society. So to attract the Indian customers McDonald stopped using buffalo meat and introduced chicken and vegetarian burgers. This demonstrates how Indian culture affected the culture of McDonalds and its business proposition altogether in India, though it was following its global standards to establish its business in India.

## Conclusion

With changing times, organizations in India have started focusing on the values and cultural aspects within their frameworks. While the organizations in private sectors have started laying stress on ethos and cultural values, the government organizations too are not far behind. Many of them took the services of internationally renowned consultants to formulate the best approach for them to instigate good work culture in their organizations. These changes have been brought about as parts of HR restructuring, which has also had a positive impact on the organization's productivity on the whole. Improved work culture and habits have brought about a positive change in the working environments and even has proved to effective in bringing back people from abroad to work again in India.

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