ORIGINAL ARTICLE

CORPORATE CULTURE AND HEALTH CARE ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRAK

Each organization has a particular culture, due to personal interactions, with certain values shared by its members. Corporate culture is defined as 'the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments'. Positive corporate culture is linked to increased staff alignment, advanced level of employee commitment, increased employee productivity, enhanced organizational effectiveness and increased profitability. Researchers claimed that most studies suggesting the associations between culture and performance are methodologically weak. Cultural transformation has been a big part of NHS reforms and health system redesign in United States to deliver improvements in quality and performance. Environment, market competition, technology advancement, information age and government policies will influence the cultural change within the organization. Undesirable culture might emerge if the organization does not act appropriately to manage its corporate culture. There are six critical success factors for the implementation of corporate culture changes: committed and effective leadership, clear definition of the desired goals, rigorous implementation of a change management model, effective mitigation of change resistance, active governance structure and a design model, and effective communication. Among the issues in implementing corporate culture within healthcare organizations are middle managers dilemma, cultural diversity and subcultures within the organization, size of healthcare organization and critical mass.

INTRODUCTION

Every organization has its own unique culture, regardless of their types or size. Corporate culture will exist as long as there are personal interactions within the organization. What matters most is the suitability of culture type for the organization. Some called it their personality while others see it as a way of doing things in the organization. Each organization has a unique culture with certain values shared by its members. There are good and bad cultures, as well as strong and weak ones. A good and strong culture is often associated with the success of an organization. Positive culture will aid the organization to achieve its objectives. Organizational culture is never static and it changes and evolves. In fact, the organization has to keep pace, or otherwise lag, in the market competition.

The private sectors saw that strong corporate culture is a gateway to distend their profit by

serving the customers better. They embrace it, make customers happy, boost profit and make themselves happier. The public sectors saw the development and gradually began practising their own corporate culture. The dynamic and flexibility of corporate culture enable all kinds of organization; big or small corporations, profit or non-profit, health care or mechanical industries; to apply the concept of corporate culture in the workplace. Organizations adopt corporate culture upon a belief that it is related to organizational performance. Positive corporate culture is linked to increased staff alignment, advanced level of employee commitment [1,2,3], increased employee productivity, enhanced organizational effectiveness and increased profitability [4,5].

Various studies suggested that cultures might have been an important factor associated with the effectiveness of organizations (health care and non-health care). However, some researchers claimed that most studies suggesting the associations between culture and performance are methodologically weak [6]. Therefore, interpretations must be made with caution. If the relationship between culture and performance remains to be clarified, is it reasonable to intervene with corporate culture to improve performance and effectiveness of the organization? Does it mean that we have to

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implement it just because major health care players like National Health Service (NHS) in United Kingdom and U.S. Health Department adopt it? Cultural transformation is a big part of NHS reforms to deliver improvements in quality and performance [6,7]. In the United States, health authorities utilize culture change as a key element of health system redesign, in the wake of high profile medical errors. Organizations seem to adopt the concept of corporate culture because they believe it will have positive influence on the effectiveness of their operations and help them to reach the organizations' goals.

The healthcare market is becoming more competitive than ever. Organizations must compete with each other to 'sell' their products, either goods or services, to the consumers. Health care organizations are facing stiff competition from each other as well as the external environments. Hospitals and clinics compete to attract patients. Drug companies and pharmacies contend to ensure their drugs are listed and the physicians favour their drugs. Medical laboratories compete to ensure that their facilities become the preference when it comes to medical investigations. Technology advancement, variations in consumers' needs, fast economic growth and changes in labour structure are among the factors, other than competition, that push the organizations to be at their very best. Only the fittest will survive (at least according to Charles Darwin). Facing with such development, organizations must resort to their most valuable asset that is the human capital. Whole participation of workforce, the knowledge, the skills and the effort, is required to sustain the effectiveness and success of the organization. A strong corporate culture will aid to ensure that every member contributes to achieve the organization's objectives [2].

Corporate culture plays an important role in the implementation of new strategies in an organization especially when the changes involve the policy and direction of the organization [8]. It does not mean that corporate culture will change the whole values and norms because policy changes also depend on the size, structure, system and history of the organization. Therefore, in order to facilitate policy changes, sometimes only some elements in the corporate culture would change. Studies done in developed countries like United States and Japan showed that organizations with strong corporate culture are more competitive and more successful in implementing new policies. Such cultures allow full participation of employees in making decision and flexibility in performing tasks [1,3].

Each organization is unique. Therefore, the corporate culture of each organization must be unique with appropriate values and norms to achieve the organization's goals. New players and developing organizations require cultures that support whole employee participation, innovativeness and high entrepreneurship. A more stable organization needs a different set of values and norms to focus on sustainability and efficiency. This flexibility allows corporate culture to operate in all kinds of situation.

Health care organization faces unhealthy customers who deserve extra attentions. Other organizations deal with, mostly, physically healthy customers. Hence, health care organizations have greater social responsibilities (besides providing goods, services and making profits). Health care customers trade their valuables with goods or service. Patients are willing to exchange something they value with health care products to maintain healthiness or treat their illnesses. Ideally, patients must be treated the same way the employees want their relatives to be treated. Therefore, the appropriate and fundamental values required in health care organizations must, at least, include tender care, respect and professionalism [3,9].

What is corporate culture?

What is corporate culture? Unfortunately, the answer is not straightforward because scholars are still debating on the precise meaning of corporate culture. 'Corporate' literally means 'sharing' or something that is shared by members of a group [10]. The word 'corporate' commonly refers to business companies and organizations. In simple term, 'culture' means 'the way of life'. The word 'culture' stems from the Latin '*cultura/colere*', which means to tend crops or animal, to cultivate or to foster [2]. Yet, the exact meaning of 'culture' is still debatable. This creates a number of definitions of 'corporate culture'. According to Cummings and Woley, corporate culture is 'a group of basic assumptions, values, norms and artefacts shared by the members of an organization'. The definition regards corporate culture as the shared assumptions by workers on how to accomplish jobs and how to interact with each other at workplace and with other customers. Schein defines organizational culture as 'the set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines how it

perceives, thinks about, and reacts to its various environments'. This definition highlights important characteristics of corporate culture that operates at different levels and the influence on workers' behaviour at work. In summary, corporate culture consists of the way of accomplishing tasks in an organization and healthy relationships between organization members and other customers[2].

Corporate culture has four main elements that exist at different levels[2]:
      i.   basic assumptions
      ii. values
      iii. norms
      iv. artefacts

Basic assumptions, as the name implies, are the most basic elements of corporate culture. So basic that they are unobservable. The assumptions form the core of corporate culture. They are organizational values that have become so taken for granted over time that they become assumptions. The assumptions are concerned with how a particular issue should be appropriately handles in that organization. All members of the organization generally accept the basic assumptions. They are highly resistance to change. If greeting superiors is a basic assumption, people will find it inconceivable to see employees who do not greet their higher-ranked officers during their encounters. Another example is that we can assume that a basic assumption for health care workers is patients' treatment must be prioritized to provide the best care.

Values must attach dearly to every member's hearts (and practised, of course). The existing values will constantly remind the employees what is important and what deserves more attention. If the value of the health care organization is teamwork then all activities must involve the team, instead of individual effort, to ensure patients receive the best care. Other important values for health care organization members are caring, professionalism and respect.

Norms guide the organization members on how they should behave in particular situations. Norms comprise of all implicit behavioural rules in the organizations e.g. salute higher ranking officers, segregation of gender in social functions.

Artefacts are the manifestations of all other major elements. It consists of individual behaviour and practice, the structure, the system, rules and procedures and physical aspects of the organization. Artefacts are visible. Manner of dress, use of acronyms and frequent feasts are visible behaviours exhibited by workers. Artefacts are easier to change than the less visible aspects of corporate culture.

Corporate culture is a dynamic concept. The culture is affected by almost everything that occurs within an organization. It is a powerful force to determine individual and group behaviour. Key members of the organization can consciously create the desired corporate culture; but even when unattended, the culture may evolve across time [4,11]. Corporate culture gives an organizational identity to employees. Employees would have a vision of what the organization represents by appreciating its corporate culture. Knowledge of corporate culture helps new employees to interpret what goes on inside the organization. It provides an important context of event, which would otherwise seem confusing. The culture is also a source of stability and continuity to the organization by providing a sense of security to its members. Culture helps to stimulate employee enthusiasm for their jobs. People can fulfil their desires around tasks. A strong culture typically honours high-producing and creative individuals as heroes [2].

There are four major determinants in the organization that determine the strength of corporate culture: communication, motivation, leadership and national [2,12,13].

Communication refers to the exchange of information, ideas and feelings among the organization members. Managers must be able to communicate and interact well with their subordinates. The organization will achieve its objectives and create success when understand and appropriately execute their responsibilities. Management must make continuous efforts to increase the quality of communication in the organization. Regular informal gathering of staffs can break the barriers and promote interactions. Formal communication methods for transmitting corporate culture include formal statements of vision, mission and objectives of the organization. Retelling historical success stories and mentoring are among the informal communication methods of changing or introducing new culture values among the health care workers.

Socialization is a form of cultural communication. Socialization is a continuous process of transmitting key elements of an organization's culture to its employees. Examples of socialization methods are corporate

orientation training for new employees and role modelling by mentors. These methods are necessary to help shape the attitudes, thoughts and behaviour of employees.

Motivation refers to the willingness of staffs to work towards achieving the organization goals. It is implicit yet, the impact is measurable. The manager's responsibility is to generate pleasant work environment to stimulate positive behaviours among the members. Carrot and stick methods are outdated. Instead, a pleasant work environment will encourage the staffs to give better services. Negative consequences are likely to follow if management failed to motivate employees. Poorly motivated and dissatisfied employees will produce poor services, resistance to management control, high staff turnover, and theft and even sabotage [13,14,15].

Leadership refers to the ability of the head of staffs to influence their subordinates to accomplish the tasks. Leadership style is an important aspect to consider. Autocratic managers make their decision and ensure that the job is done. Democratic leaders ask for contribution of ideas from staffs to consider and usually make collective decisions. Such atmosphere can stimulate creative ideas. Both leadership styles have their merits. They are practical in different situations. In critical conditions, the autocratic style could be more appropriate. The second aspect is concerned with how managers would handle new and experienced workers. Experience workers do not require many instructions because they understand the expectations and even have their own initiatives to get the job done. The leaders must guide the new workers do complete their task in an anticipated manner.

National culture also exerts substantial influence on culture type of an organization [2,15]. The values that characterize an organization are likely to parallel to those of the national culture in which the organization operates. Japanese firms have cultures, which are characterized by flexibility and people orientation. U.S. firms are more likely to have cultures characterized by innovation, outcome orientation, individualism and aggressiveness.

Corporate culture changes and evolves. Environment, competition, technology advancement, information age and government policies will influence the cultural change within the organization. Undesirable culture might emerge if the organization does not act appropriately to manage its corporate culture.

Therefore, it is important to ensure that the changes in corporate culture will support the organization's objectives. Large health care organizations have their Human Resource (HR) department to manage the corporate culture. In smaller organization, the head unit should be responsible for it. Management of corporate culture is critical and for that reason someone must take the responsibility.

Health care organizations have two important customers; the consumers and the - more often neglected - the employees. Consumers or patients receive much of the attention because they are willing to trade something valuable to them, usually their money, with the health care products. Hence, the creation of various slogans: valued customers, customers are always right; patients come first, patient-centred services and so on. It is logical because without the consumers or patients, the health care organizations will have to cease operations – permanently. What about the health care workers? They are the valuable assets and human capital of the organization. The organization would literally collapse without them. And they deserve as much attention as the patients. These issues can be addressed simultaneously by inculcating appropriate values and norms in members of health care organization. Everybody gains. Herb Kelleher, executive chairman of Southwest Airline, gave an interesting comment when he was asked these questions. Who comes first? The customers, the employees, or shareholders [16]?

"That's never been an issue to me. The employees come first. If they are happy, satisfied, dedicated and energetic, they'll take good care of the customers. When the customers are happy, they come back. And that makes the shareholders happy."

Classification of Corporate Culture

Berrio identifies corporate culture profile based on the core values, assumptions, interpretations and approaches that characterize an organization [17]. The culture profiles or types are:

1. Clan
2. Hierarchy
3. Market
4. Adhocracy

Clan organization concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people and sensitivity to customers. Oriental firms such

as Japanese and Korean companies are the examples of organization with this culture type. The Clan culture is characterized as a family type of organization. It represents a friendly place to work with high level of loyalty, commitment and tradition. Clan organizations emphasize individual development, morale, teamwork, participation and consensus. Market organizations focus on external maintenance with a need for stability and control. Market culture is often found in organizations that are results-oriented and sales-driven.

Hierarchy type focuses on internal maintenance with a need for stability and control. The hierarchy aspect of an organization refers to how structured, inflexible, and process-driven an organization is in the way it operates [4]. This type is commonly seen in health care organization. At the opposite end of the scale, adhocracy refers to how flexible, informal, innovative, and dynamic an organization is. Organizations with adhocracy type concentrates on external positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality. Individualism is a common value in Western culture.

Identification of culture types helps to determine the existing and preferred culture in an organization. Other instrument such as Organizational Culture Profile assess culture type based on innovation, stability, respect for people, outcome orientation, detail orientation, team orientation and aggressiveness [1]. Culture types may co-exist in an organization with one or more dominant culture type [2]. The 'best' culture for all firms or even for all health care organizations does not exist. Organizational success does not only depend on the 'right' culture type but also organization's goals, industry, internal environment and demands of the external environment (nature of competition and national culture).

Role of leaders in corporate cultures

The management must be able to identify the right type of corporate culture. Type and strength of culture are critical to the organization's survival and success. Culture type must support the mission of the organization. Leaders should put their energies on developing a strong corporate culture that support the following culture-building activities: managing change, achieving goals, coordinating teamwork and customer orientation in organization [3,8]. These activities are the crux to organizational effectiveness.

Organization leaders must be willing to take a hard look at their organization's culture to ensure that the necessary changes take place to yield increased commitment among all employees. This is not always an easy path to navigate. Nevertheless, as long as leaders realize that every employee is an individual with the power to generate a negative impression of the organization, the changes in the culture that lead to employee commitment will ultimately create a more positive image of the company to its customers or clients. The overall operation of the company is the primary responsibility of its leaders. Leaders who recognize all of the components of a successful business will be the most likely to embark on a mission to retain valuable employees. Nevertheless, because the behavior of leaders is one of the factors that lead to employee satisfaction and commitment, managers must be willing to keep an open mind regarding potential changes in behavior [11]. For employee commitment to become the norm management must view employees as stakeholders in the company; employees are as much a part of the whole corporate picture as customers or clients, investors, suppliers or partners. The organization's leadership is responsible for the functioning of the organization.

Leadership and corporate culture are tightly intertwined. Ineffective leadership in any organization is a major cause of reduced productivity and becoming less competitive [5]. Transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to contribute beyond expectation. They provide the employees with focus, support and appreciation to encourage them to adopt the leader's vision as their own and be committed to making it a reality. These leaders could 'transform' people and organization to change their hearts and mind, and make behaviour congruent with the values and principles of corporate culture. Transactional leaders utilize rewards to motivate people. A complete leader must have both qualities and bring about changes in employees that are self-perpetuating. Ulrich outlines a six-stage process that leaders must perform to instill corporate culture among the employees: create and communicate the need for change, overcoming resistance to change, making personal commitment and sacrifices for change, articulate a vision, generate commitment to vision and institutionalizing the vision.

Leaders are the architect of workplace culture. They must design a work environment, coordinate its parts and provide comforts to

encourage employees to maintain the high levels of energy to perform their tasks. Employees prefer a culture that not only encourage them to adopt good values and beliefs but also mutually offers recognition and adequate opportunities for growth [3]. Leaders must be able to assess the strength of corporate culture of the organization and respond appropriately. Outsourcing the management of changing corporate culture to external consultants is another viable option.

Managers and HR department could employ organizational development (OD) to handle corporate culture [18]. OD is an application based on behavioural science that is concerned with strategy, structure and system development of an organization to increase its effectiveness. OD involves the whole organization and stresses on individual needs. Among the programs used in OD are total quality management (TQM), survey feedback method (SF), team building (TB), quality circle (QC), management by objective (MBO), quality of work life (QWL), job enrichment (JE), sensitivity training (ST) and transactional analysis (TA).

TA provides ways of thinking to resolve problems and reach goals through action-oriented analysis [19,20]. It examines how it influence the problem/opportunity faced by the organization. The important first step is to identify the differences between what is stated by the organization and how its members perceive them. It can provide answers on whether the organization is doing what it intends to do. Another section of the analysis is organization dynamic. It examines the individual characteristics and interpersonal relations, intra-organizational agitations and external pressures, which are important elements of corporate culture.

The organization and the employees must play their parts to build a strong culture. It is obvious that one-sided effort will result in futile attempts. Awareness campaigns, meetings, logo and slogans provide the knowledge and awareness among the organization members [9,21]. Employees must be aware of the existence of corporate culture so that they might develop interest and finally adopt the intended culture. In this case, ignorance is not bliss.

Issues in Corporate culture

1.   Different approaches to corporate culture

It is imperative to determine the approaches used to depict corporate culture before the discussion. As pointed earlier, the organization would choose a definition that best suits its goals. Selected approach determines the direction taken by the organization (and the literature). There are three approaches [6,7].

   i.   Corporate culture is not controllable
   ii.   Corporate culture is controllable
   iii.   Corporate culture is not necessarily controllable

Corporate culture is not controllable

Corporate culture is a metaphor to describe the organization. It is the personality of an organization. Like personality, it cannot be controlled or manipulated. This approach suggests that corporate culture is not separable from the organization. We would only be able to understand the social construction at work but not the variables. Scholars who support this approach argued that links between corporate culture and performance are methodologically weak and their findings should be interpreted with caution. The proponents for this approach are mainly the post-modernist group. Since corporate culture cannot be controlled, efforts at changing the culture are considered futile.

Corporate culture is controllable

The entities (aspects/variables) are tangible. Every variable in corporate culture can be isolated, described, manipulated and evaluated. These variables are derived from structures, processes and systems. Most organizations that adopt corporate culture, probably place their, believes in this approach. Efforts are directed towards creating values and norms that will support the objectives of the organizations. The desired effect from the exercise is to improve performance. Studies in large international firms found that corporate culture could change. However, it requires a long-term effort and often spanning from five to ten years to complete. Despite lack of concrete evidence, it seems that many health care organizations including NHS and KKM favour this approach.

Corporate culture is not necessarily controllable

Proponents for this moderate approach believe that corporate culture is an emergent property of that organization's constituents. Corporate culture is a product of social interaction process in the organization. Hence, it may emerge unpredictably. This approach suggests that only some characteristics of corporate culture may be described and assessed. It is possible to manipulate certain aspects in the organization for the desired effects. The approach acknowledges the fact that attempts at changing the culture of the organization could lead to undesirable consequences and ensure that health care organizations to take more cautious steps when planning for corporate culture activities.

2.   Cultural changes and mitigation of resistance

What, which, when and how to change? Health care organizations must have the answers for these questions when they decide to embark on cultural changes journey. Studies cited five major reasons for changing the corporate culture: incoherent with current environment, very competitive and dynamic organization, growing organization, considerable organizational slack and facing impending crises [2,8].

First order change (reform) is about doing what you do better [6]. The organization believes that it is on the right tract except that there are more potential achievable benefits. Second order change (transform) is more radical. The organization thinks that in order to achieve the targets, it must do something different to make it better. The organization believes that current values and norms will not help it to achieve its goals or possibly jeopardize its existence. Therefore, it must inculcate a different set of values to get back on track or become more competitive.

The other issue is whether to change all or only some of the corporate culture aspects. Simultaneous change on all the different aspects of corporate culture is probably not desirable and even not feasible. Several cultural traits derived from Hippocratic Oath should be preserved. Different groups may conceptualize more recent values in health care organizations, such as teamwork and professionalism, centrality of patient care and belief in evidence, differently. Strategic planning for cultural change should be selective and aims at the balance between continuity and renewal of cultural values.

Cultural change cannot be easily being wrought from the top down by simple instructions. Successful strategies need to take into account the needs, fears and motivation of staffs at all level. Need analysis and employee involvement in planning could help to alleviate fear among the workers. Analysis of current and desired culture may give a signal to the staffs that their thoughts are considered and they are involved in the planning of cultural change.

There are six critical success factors for the implementation of corporate culture changes: committed and effective leadership, clear definition of the desired goals, rigorous implementation of a change management model, mitigate resistance, active governance structure and a design model, and effective communication [1].

No matter how perfect a proposed change of culture at workplace might be, individuals or group of workers will resist it. Resistance can be seen in a form of resignation or, worst, sabotage. Resistance to change is a behavioural response to real or imagined threats to an established work routine [16]. The reasons for resistance are individual's predisposition toward change (distrustful and suspicious to change), fear of the unknown, fear of failure, climate of mistrust and secrecy; loss of status, authority or job security; and disruption of existing work culture and group relationship.

There is evidence that attempts to change the culture might have a low success rate, in fact as low as 10% [2]. The culprits could have been unmotivated and dissatisfied employees. Managers must be able to anticipate employee resistance and bad consequences – staff turnover, absenteeism, and misuse of work time, pilfering and sabotage. A culture provides employees with expectations of how they should behave in a particular situation. Resistance and undesirable behaviour occur when such expectations collide with their way of doing things. Changes invariably evoke a sense of loss and threat. Employees' reaction might be negative and unpredictable. Even a small group of employees can cause disruption while a larger group will create disaster. A bureaucratic structure of the organization also contributes to the development of a culture of resistance. Strategic planning could alleviate this problem by understanding employees' fear and needs prior to the implementation of culture changes.

Labour Process Theory suggests that employee must maintain some control over their work to avoid resistance [2]. It is critical to avoid lack of ownership among health care workers because success depends on a critical mass of employees. They should be aware, possess knowledge about new culture prior to the development of interest, and adopt the culture change. New culture changes must be coherent with external influences such as the professional bodies and training colleges, which influence the internalization of professional core values [6,7].

Understanding the types, reasons and degrees of resistance can assist leaders in making the choice about whether or not a cultural change is appropriate and achievable. In addition, resistance will be unique among each group impacted by the change, including retirees, spouses, new employees, providers and vendors. By further understanding the types of resistance, leaders can make better decisions about what it will take to implement the change and when to begin the process. Unfortunately, many organizations spend more efforts deciding what changes to make than on preparing for implementation among an employee base. Employees acceptance and ownership is critical for be successful cultural change [5]. **Organizations should spend more of their energy assessing change readiness among the workers.** A proven change management approach will uncover potential resistance to change and managing its associated risk is possible. This will provide clarity around the reasons for change, a definition of the future, and the benefits to the organizations and health care employees.

Change management solutions must be designed with consideration of those who would be impacted. Firstly, the stakeholders must understand the proposed changes. The organization must be committed to help stakeholders understand the reasons for change. The organization must assign dedicated teams who understood the mindset of those impacted to be responsible for implementation. The implementation teams are accountable for ensuring stakeholders fully understood why change is necessary and how they would be impacted in the future if changes were not made immediately. Previous implementation of changes showed that stakeholders especially employee appreciate early communications [1]. They might not like the changes but by understanding the reasons and what is changing, employees would appreciate the information. Being informed and staying informed is a good thing for the workers and benefits the organization.

Secondly, the organization must have a solid infrastructure for change [1,2]. Health care organization must recognize early on which approach to implementation would be sustainable, repeatable and most efficient. In its application within their healthcare strategy, the implementation team responsible for deployment must be committed to follow the Change Management Model to ensure acceptance among employees [2]. Implementation teams are responsible for the level of ownership across all groups of people impacted. With the right resources, governance structure and effective implementation approach, the teams could provide the employees with customized information, education and motivation to change.

3.   Middle managers dilemma

The key players in the implementation of culture change are front-line supervisors and middle managers [22]. They provide the bridge for communication between top management and the employees. Employees are often appointed managers because of their skills and experience in their former job, but few if any were chosen for their proven managerial skills. As a result, many managers felt intimidated by the unrealistic expectations placed upon them by the lower level staffs [13]. The situation worsens when the top management display bullish behaviour and put high expectations on them. The problem is the structure of the organisation, in which managers who please their bosses are the ones who get ahead. To eliminate wrongdoing in corporations requires not just replacing or penalising a few individuals, but changing the entire organisational structure and culture. It is the structure within the corporate culture that shapes the psychology of managers and creates the context for problems to occur [11]. Middle managers are in the position of responsibility, but often without support, positive encouragement and respect. The other main concern for middle managers is high volume of work.

4.   Cultural diversity and subcultures

The culture found within an organization may be far from uniform or coherent. In fact, looking for

commonality may be much more difficult than examining the differences. Different cultures may emerge within different occupational or professional groups. These groups may even consciously differentiate themselves from one another by their cultural values and artifacts. Such subcultures may be associated with different levels of power and influence within the organization. Rivalry and competition for power between groups appear to be an important feature of the overall corporate culture [7]. Indeed, health care is tribal and hierarchical. It is apparent that some organizations function quite successfully with each subculture loosely coupled to other subcultures. Nonetheless, different subcultures may still share certain key cultural attributes while conflicting on others. The best form of cultural fit between subcultures is yet to be certain.

Management literatures on corporate culture tend to assert a relationship between 'strong', unified culture and organizational success. Yet only few large organizations can be characterized by a single dominant culture. Health care organizations have long been traditionally differentiated along different occupational lines – clinicians, non-clinicians, public health personnel, paramedics, managerial and supporting staffs. It is more likely that complex health care organizations have diverse cultures. Moreover, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that a unitary culture yields higher performance than a pluralistic one [6].

Attitudes of the mainstream population and interaction between the cultures (cultural competence) will determine the outcome. The term *cultural competence* refers to the ability to work effectively with individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, or in settings where several cultures coexist [1,23]. It consists of the ability to understand the language, culture, and behaviors of other individuals and groups, and to make appropriate recommendations. Cultural competence is a developmental process that requires a long-term commitment. It is not a specific end product that occurs after a two-hour workshop, but an active process of learning and practicing over time. Becoming culturally competent is a daunting task yet not possible to accomplish. Steps to becoming culturally competent begin with developing awareness among the employees in which they should admit personal biases and become aware of the existing cultural norms, attitudes, and beliefs [23]. Employees must acquiring knowledge on how their culture is viewed by others. They have to develop and maintain cross-cultural skills by being more flexible and establish professional and working relationships with people of different cultures. Subcultures are distinct sets of behaviour and values that differentiate groups of people from a larger culture of which they are a part. Researchers define subcultures relative to the organization's dominant values. From this perspective, subcultures are classified in terms of whether they support, deny or simply coexist alongside the values of dominant culture. Another approach acknowledges that subcultures relate to occupational, specialty, departmental, ward and managerial. Subcultures also arise from different age groups, gender, race, political beliefs and occupations [6,7].

In health care organizations, one the overwhelming task is to create a cultural fit between strategic collaborates e.g. clinician-managers or doctors-nurses. Professional values are very resilient and usually dominant despite recent rise in the management culture in health care organization [7].

Culture change programmes must consider the impact of change on specific groups e.g. doctors, nurses, other health professionals and managers and to design appropriate policies and design appropriate policies to accommodate this. There are four approaches to manage subcultures:

1. Monoculturalism – to assimilate a single culture
2. Leitkultur (core culture) – allow subcultures but must support the core culture
3. Melting pot – all subcultures are mixed without intervention
4. Multiculturalism – peaceful interaction between different subcultures

Managers should anticipate that attempts to achieve cultural fit leads to:

1. Synergy – best elements are combined
2. Domination – accepts the right of dominance of a given group's culture
3. Segregation – balance between cultures by maintaining separation e.g. accommodation between nurses and doctors
4. Breakdown – fails to secure agreement between parties

The first three outcomes offer some scope for establishing a cultural fit. However, the last

ending may cause serious dysfunctional consequences to the organization.

6.   Size of organization and critical mass

To be competitive, a critical mass of employees has to take ownership of a culture[5]. The critical mass concept helps to understand the size of the population needed for a new technology to be considered successful. Morris and Organ (1996) concluded that critical mass is achieved when 10% to 20% of the target population adopted the notion [2]. This proves to be a challenge to large healthcare organizations. The third study on corporate culture by KKM in 2002 shows that only 28% attended corporate culture training program while only 13.3% understand the meaning of corporate culture [9]. The study implies that the percentage of workers involved in taking ownership of corporate culture could be less than ten percent. Large organizations often have physical and bureaucratic barrier that create the culture of distrust from both employees and employers[13]. Formal and bureaucratic structures contribute to a culture of resistance. This could be one of the reasons why it is very difficult to achieve a critical mass in large organizations.

        Working units in large organizations that exceed 150 persons do not function efficiently or create manageable social relationships[3]. These facts suggest that implementation of corporate culture should focus on more manageable smaller working units. Smaller unit sizes allow effective communication, detailed performance analysis, personal 'touch' and motivating members on a daily basis and in a meaningful way[24]. These units usually have their own subculture. Leaders must ensure that the subcultures support the organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

Healthcare organizations have their own unique corporate culture. Studies in large organizations showed the association between strong culture and organization performance. However, recent studies suggest that most of the studies are methodologically weak; hence, the result should be interpreted with caution. The right approach to corporate culture is still debatable. The three schools of thought regard the variables in corporate culture differently. The first group sees that corporate culture is controllable while the second group believes that corporate culture cannot be controlled. The third group argues that

only some of the variables are controllable. Therefore, the implementation of corporate culture by an organization depends on the selected approach.

Among the other issues in corporate culture management are management of employee resistance and the dilemma faced by middle managers. Subculture management in health care organizations could be a bigger issue than the main culture because of its diversity. Large organizations have a mounting task to attain the critical mass in the implementation of their corporate cultures.

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