Examining the functioning of organizations from the aspects of organizational culture and leadership

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Abstract. Organizational culture and Leadership both have been under research for a long time, as they play a vital role in the performance of an organization. The organizational culture is the set of rules or acts as a guidebook of an organization for achieving the objectives while leadership defines these rules and implements them as well. Organizational culture is dependent to a great extent on the norms and values of the society or the country where it is located. Important for achieving the objectives of an organization, this factor plays a vital role while setting the organizational culture. Incorporating organizational culture and then sustaining it is done by the leaders. Leadership if does not play an effective role in regards to implementation of the organizational culture, can collapse the organizational structure. Leaders are required to develop the qualities according to the organizational culture and should be responsible to come forward to transform if necessary and implement the system. The organizational culture should fulfill the needs of the organization's goals and the norms of the society. Both leadership and organizational culture are co-dependent on each other and should be understood together.

Introduction

Organization is a structured and managed unit of people formed to achieve the specific goals. To run an organization a proper hierarchy is required that defines the chain of command and thus defining the activities and duties to be performed by each member of the organization. Roles and responsibilities when fulfilled properly within the given time frame ensure the success of the organization. To gain success it is mandatory for the organizations to adapt according to the environment and to be adapted by the environment. For example, if an organization is not adopted by the cultural norms of a region it cannot flourish there and so is the case if an organization is not able to adapt the environment it will not survive. it's not only external environment that influences there are a lot other factors that contribute to the success and failure of any organization such as the leadership qualities, the type of leadership, organizational culture and the motivation level of workers.

For the organizations to prosper its purpose has to be defined, as a matter of fact, the way how an organization will function actually depends on its purpose. The core process or set of activities carried out within the department/organization is the simplest way to describe the functions of organization. Giving the rule book is not enough like everything there should also be a measure to judge how an organization is functioning. Group behaviours, interaction and liaison among the departments,

leadership, organizational culture, the use of power and the internal politics are some means to determine the functioning of the organization.

Here main focus is organizational culture and the leadership. To provide the guidance in the management and the creation of culture is leadership. There are many other characteristics that define a good leader. It is necessary to create an effective culture in an organization, the culture that benefits the organization. This means implying the right kind of values and improving the work environment. Good leadership offers the same but implication is a bit different as the cultures and leadership are interconnected, as the organizational culture is implemented by the leaders.

1. Organizational culture

Organizational culture is among the most discussed and researched topics, for it defines how the organizations work, what are the norms and believes the organizations follow. The cultural dimension is central to all aspects of organizational life. Organizations that care about the organizational culture to be followed very strictly they are still driven with the thoughts of the people who are a part of that organization, for example, the way of thinking of the people, their values and ideas. While those organizations which do not care much about the culture for the excuses like the system is too complicated to bother about or they do not feel the need for the organizational culture to be practiced does not reduce the significance or the need of the culture (Alvesson, 2012).

The system works with the collaboration of different occupations working for the betterment in their own fields. Thus in a world with so many diverse occupations we need to understand that there will be cultural diversity in different organizations, it is a possibility the thinking and the belief to some extent of the same culture can be similar but the occupational believes also are built on the occupation. It clarifies that for every occupation there is an environment that is unique from the other occupation's culture. That is why it is highly important to study organizational culture so that we could define this phenomenon.

Schein defines the culture as follows:

The culture of a group can be defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 2010).

The groups which interact together and had a shared learning develop some level of culture but this is not true in all cases. The groups or an organization that have too many leaders and worker changes show a lack of shared believes.

Any group with a stable membership and a history of shared learning will have developed some level of culture, but a group that either has had a great deal of turnover of members and leaders or a history lacking in any kind of challenging events may well lack any shared assumption. Not every collection of people develops a culture, and, in fact, we tend to use the terms 'group', 'team', or 'community' rather

than 'crowd' or 'collection of people' only when there has been enough of a shared history so that some degree of culture formation has taken place (Schein, 2010).

1.1. Impact on the performance of the organizations

Some of the impacts on the performance due to proper organizational culture implication can be:

The most common that is expected is called strong-culture thesis. Explaining it further, it actually describes the commitment of an organization's employees and the higher command to have the same values, believes and norms. Defining and practicing a strong corporate culture ensures an increase in the profits of the organizations. This claim by researchers is defended by making a rational point that if the all the employees will be free to give the insight and the ideas in the decision making it will result in the goal alignment for the whole organization. A common culture helps to attain the goals and to agree upon them. This organizational practice provides the harmony in the goals of the whole organization along with the new ideas. And another benefit it offers is the sense of responsibility that the employees have to take while proving the insight.

However, there is another proposal at hand given by the researchers describing the interconnection of performance and culture. According to it if the people working for organization have a high performance rate it forms a firm corporate culture. This might be because the success moulds believe, values and aims into one, this is called cultural homogeneity. This encourages a wind of collectiveness creating a work environment spirit. With the time it becomes way of doing things that if sustained is a permanent organizational cultural change resulting in the success of the organization. If we look closer this change is a by-product of high success but the results can be enduring.

The impact that can serve the best for an appropriate situation should be recognized as those contributing to the success of the organizations. For culture to add to the accomplishment of the system it should be chosen accordingly. It also means that the organizational culture should not be against the norms and values of the people working for it at the same time should also fulfill the organizational needs. For of this condition will not be fulfilled it will collapse the organization rather than building it.

Cultural impacts can be seen in a positive way in another way, if the culture adopted by the organization is adaptive to the changes. The organizations in which risk taking, the people who trust their companions and support them and those who identify the problems and solve them work this organizational change can be brought easily. To ensure such adaptive environment organization need to have their employees trust them and that is the only way possible to implement this organizational culture. This is important as sometimes it becomes inevitable to change the culture to get the desires goals or to achieve a goal. But this should be kept in mind that too much change is not healthy for organization's growth. As it depicts the instability in the system (Alvesson, 2012).

2. Leadership and its impacts

Leadership is a concept that is very hard to define. For decades researchers have been trying to give a common definition of the leadership. Until now there is no proper explanation of leadership. There are as many descriptions of the leadership as there are types of persons. Leadership was just considered as a personal quality for a long period of time. It was also used to be considered an interpersonal skill. The way the person negotiates with the people in the daily life and how to influence others with their opinion. Now the concept of leadership has been evolved, it is considered to be a much more complex and a higher trait then just an interpersonal skill.

One of the definitions given by Alberto Silva, Keiser University

"The process of interactive influence that occurs when, in a given context, some people accept someone as their leader to achieve common goals"

Hence it will not be wrong to say that leadership depends on the performance by a personnel given according to the demand of the circumstances. The results decide if the leadership provided was right or not (Silva, 2016).

2.1. Types of leadership and their impacts

Leadership is not possible until there are any followers and it always has situational factors that are required to be pondered upon. Leadership style depends on the interaction among three things:

- The personal traits of the leader: values, attitude, believes and the norms followed by the person and the person's experiences.
- The follower's character types: Norms, values, attitudes and their collectiveness as a group.
- The circumstances: nature of the task, the organization's position, structure, type and the socio economic and political situation.

Some of the leadership traits with respect to leadership styles and their impacts are as followed:

2.1.1. Adaptability

This is the quality required in the leader and is one of the leadership aspects, which states the leader should not be stiff about their decisions but open to the new ideas. The decisions of the leader shall not be affected by their moods but be based upon the circumstances for the betterment of the organization.

2.1.2. Integrity

Effective leadership needs this as an essential part, for it wins the trust and commitment. Honestly and speaking truthfully is not enough, being honest about oneself is important too. A leader should be itself and be aware of its strengths and the weaknesses. Leadership cannot be built on a false premise. Adapting the circumstances to achieve the goal is different, but not practicing their principles is a leadership style that can be harmful to the organization.

Above given are just the traits that can define the leadership style of an individual or the leaders. As mentioned above type of leadership actually is the specific trait of the leader. There are some other leadership types that have been defined by Patricia Pitcher, a leadership professor at a Canadian University in Montreal.

According to her there are three types of leaders:

- Artist: Those who like to make something new the innovating ones who like to challenge the world's views. They are exciting, intuitive, creative, unpredictable, visionary, challenging ones and the entrepreneurial type. Their leadership style is specifically useful in the organizations which like to take the challenging tasks.

- The Craftsman: Ones who learn from the experience and have the capability to persuade others to follow them as they do not believe in the innovation. They are helpful, trustworthy, helpful, reasonable, realistic, steady and balanced,

- The technocrat: Hard headed, getting into details, non-compromising, sticking to the rules, logical and determined are the traits of them. They follow the rules and serve their energies on finding the facts and doing the things in an exact way.

The third type 'The technocrats' are running 80% of the world according to pitcher. She thinks right now the world needs those who are visionary, risk taking and confident leaders as that is the need of the hour.

Other than the above leadership styles Robert Blake and Jane Moulton in 1964 devised a leadership grid that defines leadership styles of five types. The grid is based upon the tasks on one axis and people's concern on the other. They are explained below:

- Authority obedience: Those leaders whose focus is fixed on the task completion and much on the people adapt this style. These leaders can drive their teams to achieve maximum outputs.

- Impoverished leadership: If the concern of the leader is neither the job nor the task this is the style they follow, they just want the job to be running and nothing else.

- Country club leadership: The leaders who build a friendly, comfortable and good environment are those who care about the people and their feelings. They minimise the factors that can cause a conflict.

- Middle of the road leadership: Compromising is the biggest trait of their leadership styles, they keep everyone at the organization happy. Either people or task is not strong for them and struggle to achieve the goals and getting the productive outcome from the people.

- Team leadership: Goal centred leaders with active participation in the task and achieving the success through involvement and dedication of people have this leadership style (Alvesson, 2012).

With the changing world leadership abilities required by the organization to run it have changed too. They should be able to manage the organization too if leader is visionary, able to improvise swiftly according to the changing situation, capable enough to judge the changing situation in time and keen enough to introduce the required future changes in time (Matkó, 2013).

There are many other factors that are involved in the making of a good and successful leader. One characteristic that is common in every leadership style of a successful leader is moulding themselves according to the circumstances.

3. Organizational behaviour and leadership

Culture and leadership are both interconnected to each other. As a matter of fact, it will not be wrong to say that culture is a system that resulted due to what the leaders imposed on the people working to achieve the same goal in the same organization. Believes, norms and the practices carried out together under a leader form the culture of that organization. It does not mean that culture is dependent on the leaders because on the other hand culture defines if the leader was successful or not. Aims towards which the leader worked forming an environment for the people if achieved it means the culture implemented was successful and the leadership style chosen was the appropriate one and vice versa. So, it will not be wrong to say that both of them are dependent and are a measuring tool for each other.

Incorporating or forming the organizational culture is not enough, the need of the group to propagandize and implement the new culture and values should be fulfilled as well. Leaders or the founders of the new culture affect the most while the setup is being placed in and can motivate the most for the group to adapt is as soon as possible (Matkó, 2011)

Research taken out in the field culture and leadership Richard Hendrickson in 1989 stated (Tohidi, Jabbari, 2012):

- The nature of leadership is related to the nature of culture.
- Leadership is essentially a form of cultural expression.
- The overall leadership can only be defined in terms of process.
- Can only lead to a multi-studied phenomenon

The fact that for different cultures separate leaderships styles have to be incorporated cannot be denied while the truth that they both are correlated in any case remains unchanged. The effects of these two common factors together can be adverse if not taken properly into consideration. With the changing business environment, none of the factors can be neglected. This is the duty of the leaders to lead with the appropriate leadership style and find the suitable organizational culture and implement it so that the organization could flourish. This not only defines the integrity of the leader but also other necessary traits required for the person to lead.

4. Case Study I: The Columbia Disaster

For the betterment of our planet and exploring the universe, a government organization National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) was founded in 1958 in the United States. Since then, NASA has initiated many programs and missions to accomplish its mission and vision. There were many projects which were successfully executed and resulted in enormous scientific findings, but occasionally NASA had to face failures too. In the first case study, I will discuss one of the biggest cases in the history of NASA which appeared to be a major learning for NASA.

4.1. Case Description

The engineers of NASA started Space Shuttle program in the 1970s with the purpose to access space in a cheaper way. Initially, the launch vehicles were destroyed while entering into Earth's atmosphere. The military would look for the astronauts in insulated capsules in the ocean. This would lead to loss of all the equipment were lost. In order to transform this, space shuttles with reusable equipment were launched so as to save money and effort. There are three main components of a space shuttle:

- The orbiter; reusable apparatus which carries astronauts, cargo, and other subsystems.

- The external tank; supply fuels to the orbiter and engines

- The rocket boosters; source to provide energy to escape Earth's atmosphere

As the space shuttle reaches the Earth's orbit, the rockets are separated and retrieved for future use. The external tank is not recovered as it detaches in the space.

Columbia Disaster was the second time that NASA had to go through such big disaster after Space Shuttle Challenger incident in January 1986. At the time of launch of Space Shuttle Challenger, it broke apart in just 73 seconds killing 7 crew members onboard on its 10th mission. Space Shuttle flight operations were adjourned for two and half years after this accident and it restarted in 1988. When the projects with Space Shuttle Challenger were going on, Space Shuttle Columbia was launched on its first mission Space Travelling System (STS)-1 on April 12, 1981. It was the first crewed flight of the Space Shuttle Program. Over the span of 22 years, Space Shuttle Columbia completed 27 missions.

The 28th mission of Space Shuttle Columbia (STS-107) was formerly scheduled for launch in May 2010. After 18 delays in the mission, it finally was launched on January 16th, 2003 and was supposed to return to Kennedy Space Center. In its 16 days of span in space, the team performed approximately 80 experiments in the fields of physics, material and life sciences etc. On February 1st, 2003, space shuttle Columbia devastated while re-entering the Earth's atmosphere over northeast Texas and killed all the seven crew members. This lead to suspension of shuttle fleet for two and half years.

4.2. Reasons behind the Tragedy

When this tragedy happened, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) was organized to explore the reasons and determine the cause behind such catastrophe. The final report by CAIB was released by August 26, 2003. This report and board came up with many reasons for the tragedy which included the physical as well as the organizational causes. The CAIB indicated that the accident was result of history of NASA, its cultural traits and long term organizational practices (Banerjee, 2007).

4.2.1. The Physical Cause

During the lift-off, a piece of insulated foam, size of a suitcase, fell from the external tank after 82 seconds. This foam collided with the edge of a left wing of the shuttle and breached to tiles of Thermal Protection System. It led to the entry of extremely heated air into the wing at the time of re-entry which finally resulted in melting of aluminium structure. Due to aerodynamic stresses, the left wing smashed and the shuttle lost control and broke.

4.2.2. The Organizational Causes

Apart from the physical causes, there were many organization causes which lead to such calamity. It was not the first time that foam piece was separated from the shuttle, but those shuttles returned safely, so it was not considered a serious issue. However, after the Columbia Disaster, the CAIB mentioned following organizational reasons in their report:

- Normalization of Deviance: Shedding of foam from the shuttle became a routine in NASA as it never caused any harm earlier. When such unacceptable behaviour turn into a normal and usual in an organization, it is known as 'Normalization of Deviance'. A problem which did not create any issue in the past, does not mean that it will always be the same.

- Flawed Analysis: Even though the breaking off of the tile was inadequate, but due to NASA's culture to neglect the design deviations occurred during manufacturing or assembly flaws was one of the reasons. As monitoring team to improve these shortcomings was not effectively in place and so their analysis reports could not be trusted.

- A 'Can do' attitude: NASA team always exhibits a 'Can do attitude'. The team was confident as if they are performing in the right manner, and nothing could go wrong. This attitude made them turn their eye away from the emergency situations even though the incidents happened in the past regarding the design failures. This over confidence did not allow them to place a safety back door for the ship or a failsafe system. Thus resulting in the tragic incident.

- Budget and schedule pressures: Cost cutting in the designs and the pressure to achieve the goal in the respected time at the expense of quality had a big role in this incident to happen. As they did not calculate all the possible scenarios due to it.

- Ineffective Communication and judgement: Inter departmental communication was very bad. Any discussion made on one site of NASA was not shared with the other sites. Other than that the risk analysis made were not complete as the communication between the technical team and the managerial staff was very ineffective. The judgement to declare the shuttle as operational rather than development was the result of the communication gap among the departments.

- Ignorance of relative risk: Incomplete information in the risk management and possible risks lead to miscalculation of safety measures. Due to time constrains and NASA's neglecting attitude towards safety risks were not investigated properly.

5. Case study II: Intel China

In 1985 Intel People's republic of China was established, but the decision to enter completely in the Chinese market was not made until 1993. That is when two foreign enterprises owning two establishments were formed. First one IADL, Intel Architecture Development Co, Ltd had the responsibility to deal with the development and marketing of Intel's products. In 13 offices 250 employees were incorporated throughout China in IADL, while Office in Shanghai had 100 and Beijing office had 80 were the biggest setup for Intel in the country. While the second establishment was for Intel's testing and assembly plant. More than 80 engineers in IADL were given the task to work in co-operation with multinational and local vendors to develop modern business and consumer applications for the PC users in China.

In 1998 the profits dropped for Intel due to less demand for PC products, that was quite disappointing for Intel, there was a 36 percent decrease in net income and earnings per share then the first quarter

in 1997. The reason provided was building more product than customers wanted. Thus Intel committed to creating the microprocessors that will be suitable for the softwares of the upcoming millennium. To strengthen the brand name Intel targeted the new markets to increase the demands for Intel Products.

When the employees were being transferred Charles Tang was one of the first three being transferred from other Intel's sites in 1993. He was experienced in many areas and helped to establish Intel Architecture Laboratory. Establishing software developer support program was one of the major tasks of him; he had Account Managers (AM's) to support him. The main task was to build relationships with well-known software developers and vendors in China.

5.1. The issue

Charles Tang after getting a hold of Beijing division, his first aim was to get to know all the operations of each department. So to understand the roles of each employee he studied the files of all employees. For the employees to work up to their full potential individually and within team Tang reassigned jobs according to his best judgment as he found necessary. This was done to achieve the strategic aims of the department and so of Intel China. Qing Chen was a native of Beijing and was assigned to manage AMs. It was her first experience as the manager. While reviewing the files he looked into Li's project an employee of Intel working under him. Tang felt the necessity to interfere with his project, as the project was extended far beyond the necessity; the purpose though behind the project was sound. But due to Li's former supervisor's ambition, the scope of manager had mushroomed in parts. The project initially given was to produce a manual that provides tips for marketing of different software programs to local vendors producing software or a guidance how to manage distribution channels. Li took it too further and he transformed it into a book rather than a manual with detailed chapters on marketing plan and capitals. As Li took it to further away Tang estimated a year for the project to complete that project with Li's two months of research.

Tang decided to give the project to a more specified person who has the expertise in this field so he decided to give Li another project. So Tang asked Chen to inform Li to halt the project and assign Li a new project. When Li was informed he rejected it and even refused to listen to the reason behind it. Chen informed Tang about this and told that Li wants to continue the project and he was agitated due to the decision. With the reaction by Li, Tang decided to set up a meeting together as soon as possible to come to an agreement. It was critical also because the authority of direct supervisor 'Chen' was also at stake and empowerment of direct supervisor was essential.

Reasons behind Li's refusal:

- Li had researched for it quite thoroughly for it and did not want to go back at this stage.
- He had very good relations with the vendors and he was quite affirmative about his position in the company.
- As Tang was transferred from outside of China although he was actually native of Beijing, Li considered him as an expat. And blamed Tang's move of removing as an irrational decision claiming he does not know what workers in China go through.

5.2. Intel's culture

Tang knew about connections of Li and he did not want to lose him, but the major problems were the reaction of Li was an exception from Chinese organizational culture as Chinese organizational culture was more unquestioning as compared to western organizational culture and it surprised Tang. The other problem was Li's unawareness to Intel's culture. He explained that Intel's professional code states 'Disagree and commit'. Meaning even if you are against the decision but if it has been taken then every employee has to follow it.

5.3. Decision

Due to Li's reaction Tang was concerned as he responded quite emotionally. As Tang did not want to lose Li because of his connections and also because he cared about the welfare of his employees. He wanted to reach an agreement between Li's emotional attachment and his needs so he had the option to either give time to Li so he could complete the project or make some amendments in the project so it could be completed.

- Although concerned with Li's emotional attachment Tang decided to uphold the organizational culture of Intel i.e. 'Disagree and commit'.

- Another decision he took was to make employees aware of organizational culture and change the policies for internal communication, to make them more effective to avoid such confrontations in future.

Conclusion

Organizations are built on systems, running an organization without following a set of principles can be chaotic. This set of principles can be based on the beliefs, norms and mind-set of the society, these along with many other factors create an organizational culture that helps an organization to move forward. If we look into NASA's case, it is quite clear that organizational culture cannot be neglected at any cost and it plays a vital role in making decisions and finding solutions with collaboration. While the case of Intel China provides a peek into change in decision making process of leaders and managers and the problems faced due to the change in the organizational culture between two countries. It also provides an insight regarding the implementation of organizational culture based on a country's beliefs. Implementation and the type of culture that has been incorporated depend on the leaders. It will not be wrong to say that if leaders do not incorporate an organizational culture based on culture then that system has a high probability of failing. Leadership and organizational culture are co-dependent on each other and play an essential role in the functioning of the organization. Implementing required organizational culture with wrong leadership style cannot prove fruitful and will result in wastage of resources and it goes both ways.

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