

Organisational Behaviour
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Lecture – 51
Organizational Culture - Part 1

Warm welcome to this lecture series on Organizational Behaviour, we are in the chapter on Organizational Culture.

OUTLINE

Definition
Impact of culture on Individuals
Levels of culture
Organizational culture
Cultural dimensions
Dimensions of organizational culture
Strong culture
Dominant and Subcultures
Creating sustaining and transmitting culture
Expressions of organizational culture
● Changing organizational culture



So, this is going to be the outline of the chapter, we will start with the definition of culture and we also understand the impact of culture on individuals. We will look at different levels of culture and we will talk about organizational culture in a specific sense and also what are the dimensions of organizational culture. We will also talk about different aspects of culture like strong culture, weak culture, dominant culture, subculture and concepts like this.

We will also talk about how to create or how culture is created within an organization and how it is transmitted within an organization, and how culture, organizational culture is expressed in organization? And also finally, we will talk about; if you need to change organizational culture, what has to be done.



DEFINING CULTURE

The ways of thinking, behaving and believing that members of a social unit have in common.

The total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action.

The total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group.



So, culture is a very broad term. In fact, many other disciplines also talk about culture as an idea; for example, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies. So, this term of culture has been used in many other disciplines, and the definitions of it vary from discipline to discipline. Because, when other disciplines talk about culture, they talk about national level culture or cultural elements of a particular group.

So, it depends on the context in which they define this idea of culture. But in this particular chapter, we can define culture or we can understand culture as the ways of thinking, behaving and believing that members of a social unit have in common. So, let us say there is a social unit; it can be a region, it can be a state or it can be a country, it can be a continent. So, it depends on which unit we are considering.

So, let us say we take the unit of Asians. Even though Asians there are multiple groups within this boundaries of Asia; we are all are called as Asians. Even though there are differences between Asian countries; there are some elements which are common among Asians, compared to other groups from other continents.

For example, if you compare Europeans and Asians; we assume that Europeans are different from Asians, which means Asians as a unit have some common element within them. Not necessarily the genetic makeup; but also you know the way they behave, the

way they understand the world or the outlook they have towards things, the way they approach problems things like that.

For example, Asians are generally considered to be more collectivistic; which means you know when they make decisions, they consult with elders or you know they will think about what others will think about them and all those things. But Europeans, they are considered to be more individualistic or westerners are considered to be more individualistic; which means, they give more importance to individual rights and individuals freedom or choice to make decisions.

Again these can be stereotypical ideas also; but at the same time there are some elements which are true also. So, let us say if you take a smaller unit of India. So, Indians we assume that, they have some common characteristics, some common belief systems, some common way of thinking compared to people of other country in Asia; maybe Chinese or people like Sri Lankans or Japanese.

For example, if you take Japanese; Japanese are considered to be very punctual hard working, very sincere in whatever task they do. Indians on the other hand are considered to be more you know quick, quick, quick fix oriented; you know Indian jugaad we call it. So, they are very good in finding out solutions which are workable.

So, these are some of the assumptions we make; sometimes they are true also. So, what I am trying to say is, each of these social groups have some things which are common among them. So, those elements are can be called as culture; I am putting it in very simple words, you know things are not as simple as I explain it, it can be more complicated.

But to make you understand the common element, the idea of common element, I am giving those examples. So, in a, so another definition says, culture as the inherited ideas, beliefs and values and knowledge which constitute the shared basis of social action; which means a social group, how it will behave to a certain situation whose determined by the kind of ideas, beliefs and values and knowledge which it has inherited over a period of time.

Which means historically the experiences the social group has undergone, that has become the cultural values of that particular social group. And that decides how that social group will behave in a particular situation. For example, let us say there is a conflict situation. How will this social group behave depends on its history over a period of time and its interaction with other social groups, and also what it believes to be its core values the social groups core values.

So, some groups, social groups are very cooperative, some groups are very aggressive; some groups are very you know collaborative and cooperative. So, these are some of the ways in which culture exhibits. And also culture it is a very broad term culture; because it includes a total range of activities and ideas of a group which is shared among people and it is transmitted and reinforced by members of the group.

So, how is culture transmitted? Through reinforcement by other members; for example, if the larger social group believes in certain values, if one member does not agree to it or one member deviates from that idea it is reinforced or it is you know the person is made to follow those values by other members of the group. In other words, cultural values are reflected as social norms also, norms mean unwritten rules.

IMPACT OF CULTURE ON INDIVIDUALS

Culture influences both conscious and unconscious level of the mind.

Cultural norms are very powerful in influencing our behaviour.

Culture influences our value system and how we see things.

Culture is learnt and reinforced by people around us.



So how does culture impact individuals? So, culture is like you know the kind of the core of any social group, it is the characteristics of a social group. And any social group

consists of individual members; sometimes there can be conflict between the individual member's value system and the larger groups value system. So, that is where you know the friction between the individual and the larger group happens.

So, how does. So, many a times the larger social group tries to influence or change the individual; may not necessarily in a very direct way, that individual himself or herself may feel pressure within. You know this is like if you remember personality chapter; the superego is the representation of the larger society.

So, in a way the superego disciplines or tries to reinforce the larger social values when the individual deviates from those norms. So, we can also relate this with cognitive dissonance idea. If you remember, we studied cognitive dissonance in attitude chapter, where two conflicting ideas existing at the same time.

Sometimes when your value system and the larger social groups value system conflict; it is a sort of conflict between you are you and you which believes in your rights and the you which believes in the larger social groups value system and its importance. So, it becomes a sort of you know divided personality; I mean I am just you know using a very common language. So, you know it becomes a kind of a conflict for the individual.

Culture is a very powerful mechanism, which influences both conscious and unconscious level of the mind. So, in a way our most of a behaviour the influence comes through these cultural norms and it becomes difficult for us to unlearn these cultural norms, especially when you have lived in a country or in a culture for a very long periods of time.

Unless until we expose ourselves to newer situations, newer cultures; we become very fundamental in nature. So, that is the danger of you know being part of a very strong culture or a very closed culture.

So, how does culture affects us consciously and unconsciously? I will give a very simple example. So, let us say, you are meeting someone for the first time. What, in what ways do you have to greet this person? Which is a very conscious behaviour. So, you will

think about how to greet it, greet this person; should I say hello or should I say you know Namaste or should I say you know something else.

So, we use the greeting in a conscious way. Unconsciously how does culture affect this behaviour? When you meet someone for the first time, how close you stand to this person, ok. Some cultures it is to stand very close to a person, even if you meet them for the first time; even between strangers, conversations happen, when conversations happen, people stand very close to each other in some cultures.

Some cultures people maintain a certain distance. So, you never consciously think about where should I stand when I greet this person. So, it is it happens at a very unconscious level. So, a simple thing like greeting someone, both conscious level and unconscious level culture impacts our behaviour.

So, that is where culture is a very powerful mechanism which influences our behaviour; not just simple behavioural elements, but also the way we think, the way we understand the world you know in terms of our attitudes, how we perceive things all these elements are strongly influenced by the larger social norm, which is the representation of the culture.

Like I said, culture influences our value system. What we think or what we consider as importance in our life is decided by the larger cultural values; because many of these values which we imbibe, which we get in our life are through a socialization. You know when we interact with others in the society, we understand what is important for us in our life.

So, our value system, our perception, our attitudes everything is like influenced by culture. And culture is learned you know, so the society; who creates this culture or how this culture is sustained? In fact, it is a very interesting question, you know it is not like culture stays there forever; sometimes cultures change also within a social group. And also people learn culture through reinforcement from others in the group.

So, unless and until the social group believes, these values are important for our existence; they will sustain that culture, they will try to reinforce it on other members.

At some point when members feel these values, these values are not suiting us for the social group or these values are not helping us for in the survival of the larger social group; those values might be, those values may lose their importance.

So, that is where culture may change. But most of the times this change happens after a lot of you know pressure either from inside or from outside. Otherwise culture is believed to be true, on a normal day people will never question these cultural values. So, that is how culture is learnt and reinforced.



LEVELS OF CULTURE

National/regional culture

Organizational culture

- The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organisation from another (Hofstede 1991)

Professionalization

- Values we learn through the training for a functional specialization.



When we say culture, culture can be of different levels. Like I said social groups can be of different sizes, different levels; like I said it can be a region, maybe a state or it can be a district or it can be you know a particular place, a city, or a town, it can be a country, it can be a continent. So, you know culture can be of different levels.

Culture can exist at organizational levels also. So, this is where we are moving towards understanding what is organization culture. Organizational culture means, every organization is a social unit; every organization is a social entity. So, every organization has a history and also the kind of experiences that the organization has underwent changes from one organization to another.

In other words, every organization's culture and experiences history are unique compared to other organizations. So, every organization has a unique history and culture. So, that leads to culture at organizational level. So, what is organizational culture? Organizational culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one organization from the other.

For example, you are working in a company like you know Tata; you belong to Tata group, visa v another employee belongs to Infosys. So, TCS employees and Infosys employees, obviously there will be a differences in the way they approach work related problems ok; I mean specifically if they have worked there for long years in that particular organization.


So, the way things are managed in a company like TCS, organizations like TCS will be very different from the way things are managed in an organization like Infosys and also the value systems also differ, ok. So, organization culture is cultural differences are exhibited in terms of cultural differences across organizations. Professionalization means, every job or every profession, there might be certain core values.

For example, if you are a doctor, if you are a physician; there are certain core values which are common among all the doctors throughout the world. Similarly, if you are a researcher, academic researcher; the set of experiences you undergo are more or less similar for academic researchers throughout the world.

So, the profession of academic, academics has a certain core values which are common among people irrespective of the national, nationality they belong to or irrespective of the organization they belong to. So, sometimes there can be overlapping or conflicting cultures in terms of national culture, regional culture, organization culture, and professionalization.

For example, as a person I might belong to a particular continent and also a particular country, where there are common limits between me my country and the continent, but there are also some differences. Similarly, I work in a certain organization which has a certain kind of a culture and also my profession also insists on certain value system.

So, all these things create a kind of a dynamic situation, where the individuals have to balance out the demands from each of those culture. So, the point of insisting on this idea is, it is not as simple as we think ok; there are multiple layers of culture, multiple levels of culture, multiple you know ways of approaching culture.





ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Personality of the organization

A system of shared meaning and beliefs within a organization that determines, in large degree, how employees act.

Culture is perceived and shared by employees



So, now, we are moving towards organization culture. Organization culture to explain in simple words, it is like a personality of an organization. So, personality for a person is, personality if you remember the concepts we learned in personality.

Personality are the core, you know characteristics of an individual, which reflects in his or her behaviour, attitude, perception things like that. Similarly, for an organization, if you take an organization as an entity; the organization culture is like the personality of the organization.

So, the organization culture of the organization decides how that particular organization will behave in a certain situation. You know it can be a market challenge, it can be a crisis situation, it can be you know in situations where they make profit or a change initiative. So, the culture of the organization influences how an organization reacts to these kind of different situations.

So, it is the shared meaning and beliefs within an organization that determines the larger degree how employees act. So, like we saw earlier, the organization culture influences the employees behaviour and that determines, how employee will act or behave in a situation within the organization.

And like like national culture, organizational culture is perceived and shared by employees. So, many times organisation culture is imbibed, you know culture is imbibed within the individuals and also it is shared among employees.

So if you ask someone what is your organization culture; they may not be able to say what it actually means for them. But when you look at that behaviour, you will understand how their organizational culture manifests itself in employ, individual employees behaviour.

Motives	Characteristic organization
Achievement	<i>Industrial organization</i>
Influence (expert power)	<i>Educational institutions, scientific organizations</i>
Control	<i>Bureaucracy</i>
Dependency	<i>Traditional or one-man organizations</i>
Extension	<i>Community service organizations</i>
Affiliation	<i>Clubs</i>



So, organization culture also varies across industrial sectors. What I mean to say is, education institutions there might be certain kind of an; you know all the educational institutions, they might have similar culture. You know IT industries they might have similar culture; medical institutions, they may have similar cultures. So, there can be similarity in terms of sector also; that is because, those sectors are driven by certain kind of motives.

So, what drives the sector can also influence the organizational culture of the organizations, which are part of the sector. You know for example, let us say telecom sector; right now in India, telecom sector is highly competitive. So, that gives a sense of you know competition or a sense of motive to individual organizations in that particular sector also.

So, every organization in that sector, telecom sector; they have to be competitive, you know that becomes the DNA of the organization. And that influences the individual members or the employees behaviour also. For example, teaching profession, you know teaching sector, academic sector is considered to be you know relatively a very calm and you know very easy going kind of a sector; not very competitive, I mean it changes in some cases also.

So, education institutions, the goal is long term; you know to be an expert power, to influence others. But industrial organizations, the goal is to achieve, to be very competitive. Bureaucracy, like government sector the motive is controlled, you know to try to create order. So, all the bureau organizations in this sector government sector, they tend to have a similar kind of culture.

One man organizations, organizations owned by families or businesses owned by families or few people, they tend to be very dependency oriented, they try to create dependency among its employees. NGO's or communities service organizations, they tend to reach out to people. For example, an organization like a religious institution, a church or a mutt; they their focus is not to be very competitive.

You know their focus is to help; at least in their philosophy, it is to help others, so that the motive will be extension. So, this particular slide talks about, how industry wise also there might be similarities across sectors and also organizations.



CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Power distance

Uncertainty avoidance

Individualism – Collectivism

Masculinity – Femininity

Long term orientation



So, I will stop here; in the next section, we will talk about the dimensions of organizational culture or culture. In fact, this is a very popular model; it talks about five different elements of culture. This model is proposed by someone called Hofstede; this is a relatively old model around 1980s to 1990s it was proposed, but even now this model is used to understand organization culture and also national level culture.

So, I will stop here; in the next, next section, we will talk more elaborately about this particular model. Till then take care.