

# Strategic Human Resource Management

## Lecture 5

### Strategies for Culture Management

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#### Lecture learning outcomes

At the end of this lecture, you will be able to:

- i. Explain the difference between organizational culture and climate.
- ii. Evaluate the organizational ideologies as proposed by Harrison and Hardy.
- iii. Discuss the strategies that support, reinforce and change organizational culture.

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this topic we cover the strategies for managing organization existing culture in order to achieve the appropriate culture. Also we discuss the culture ideologies as advanced by Harrison (1972) and Hardy (1981). This lecture focuses on the strategic management of organizational culture. For an organization to thrive, it must actively manage its existing culture either by reinforcing its positive aspects or by guiding it toward a more desirable state. We will explore frameworks for analyzing culture, such as those by Harrison and Hardy, and discuss the practical strategies used to shape it.

#### *Organizational Culture vs. Organizational Climate*

A critical starting point is distinguishing between two often-confused concepts:

- **Organizational Culture** refers to the deep-seated, underlying system of shared beliefs, values, assumptions, and norms that define "the way we do things around here." It is the subconscious, social fabric of the organization (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2020).
- **Organizational Climate**, in contrast, describes the more surface-level, measurable perceptions of the current work environment. It is how employees consciously experience the organization's policies, practices, and procedures (Schulte et al., 2021).

In essence, climate is about the current *weather* in the organization, while culture is the deeper, long-term *climate*.

## **5.2. What are culture management strategies?**

Strategies for culture management are about the achievement of long term objectives for either changing the culture in specified ways or for reinforcing the existing culture of an organization; its values and the way things are done around the organization. Organizational culture as defined by Furnham and Gunter (1993),

Organizational cultures are the commonly held beliefs, attitudes and values that exist in an organization. Organizational culture is the way things are done around the organization. It is concerned with subjective aspects of what goes on in an organization. Organizational climate refers to those aspects in the environment that are consciously perceived by organizational members while organizational culture is the deep structure within an organization. Culture change strategies will be concerned with how the culture of an organization can be moved from a present state to a future desired state. The strategy will be based on analysis of present culture and the extent to which it supports the achievement of business goals. Culture reinforcement strategies are based on the analysis of the existing culture and the desirable features of the culture that should be maintained. Strategies are based on focuses of development of shared values and gaining commitment to those values. The aim of this exercise is to ensure that the beliefs and norms are held and acted upon by employees. Organizations without the deeply embodied culture of that firm may concentrate first on shaping appropriate behaviors.

### **5.3.0. Analyzing Organizational Culture**

To manage culture, one must first be able to analyze it. Several models help categorize cultural types

#### **Harrison's (1972) Organizational Ideologies**

Harrison categorized culture into four types:

1. **Power-oriented:** Competitive and centralized, responsive to strong personalities rather than expertise.

2. **Role-oriented:** Bureaucratic and hierarchical, focused on rules, procedures, and defined job descriptions.
3. **Task-oriented:** Dynamic and competency-based, structured around projects and problem-solving teams.
4. **People-oriented:** Existential, where the organization serves the needs and development of the individuals within it.

In the analysis of a culture the 3 most important aspects to consider are:

1. The employees' behavior pattern
2. The organizational chart
3. The organization mission and vision

### 5.3.2. Hardy (1981) analyzed four types of culture:

Hardy's similar but influential typology includes:

- **Power Culture:** Control radiates from a central source; it is political and competitive.
- **Role Culture:** Governed by rules and positional power, characteristic of large bureaucracies.
- **Task Culture:** Based on expert power and teamwork, designed to be adaptable and bring the right skills together.
- **Person Culture:** The organization exists solely to serve the individuals within it.
  - The power culture in which there is a central power source that exercises control. There are few rules or procedures and the atmosphere is competitive, power-oriented and political.
  - The role culture in which work is controlled by procedures and rules, job description Which is more important than persons who fills it. Power is associated with positions in organizations and not people.
  - The task culture-influence is based on expert power, than in position o personal power. The culture is adoptable and team work is important. The aim is to bring people together, the right people to work together.
  - Person's culture- the organization exists only to serve and assist the individuals in it.

The individual is the central point.

Organizations should develop a more positive performance oriented culture. HR

strategies need to be congruent with the existing culture of the organization or designed to produce cultural change in specified directions. It is therefore necessary to analyze the existing culture to provide information on how HR strategies will need to be shaped

### **5.3.3. Cooke and Lafferty (1989) developed the following organizational culture inventory.**

This model provides a more detailed inventory of twelve cultural styles, which can be grouped into constructive, passive-defensive, and aggressive-defensive styles. Constructive styles, such as **Achievement** (valuing goal accomplishment) and **Self-Actualizing** (valuing creativity and quality), are generally linked to positive outcomes, while defensive styles like **Avoidance** (punishing mistakes) can be detrimental to performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2020).

1. **Humanistic/helpful culture-** this is where organizations are managed in a participative and person centered way.
2. **Affiliative culture-** this is where organizations places a high priority on constructive relationships.
3. **Approval culture-** these are organizations in which conflicts are avoided and Interpersonal relationships are pleasant.
4. **Conventional culture** i.e. conservative, traditional and bureautically controlled organizations.
5. **Dependent culture-** hierarchy controlled and non-participative organizations
6. **Avoidance culture-** these are organizations that fail to reward success but punish mistakes.
7. **Oppositional culture** –these are organizations in which confrontation prevails and negativism is rewarded.
8. **Power-culture-** the organization that is structured on the basis of the authority inherent in member's position
9. **Competitive culture-** is a culture in which winning is valued and members are rewarded for outperforming one another.
10. **Competence /perfectionist culture-** organizations in which perfectionism,

persistence and hard work are valued.

11. **Achievement culture**- organizations that do things well and value members who set and accomplish challenging but realistic goals.

12. **Self-actualization culture**- organizations that value creativity, quality over quantity and both task accomplishment and individual growth.

#### 5.4. Appropriate Cultures

There is no single "best" culture. An **appropriate culture** is one that is consistent, shared, and effectively differentiates the organization in a way that supports its strategic goals. A high-performance culture, for instance, is one that aligns values and norms with objectives like quality, innovation, and customer focus (Hartnell et al., 2019).

A good culture exerts a positive influence on organizational behaviour. It helps to produce high levels of business performance. A good culture is consistent in its components and shared amongst organizational members which make the organization unique thus differentiating it from other organizations. The attributes of a culture vary by context i.e. cultures in service industry are different than those ones in goods industry. The culture that is good in one set of circumstances may not be functional in a different scenario.

#### 5.5. Culture Support and Reinforcement

These are programmes aimed to preserve what is good and functional in the present culture. The means of preserving the culture include:

- a) Reaffirming the behaviour which is believed to be important.
- b) Encouraging appropriate behaviours by providing financial and non-financial rewards for behaviours which are in accordance to expectations.  
Recognition and Rewards: Formally and informally rewarding behaviours that exemplify the desired values.
- c) Develop a statement of core-values which describe the basis for the desired behaviour.
- d) Articulating Core Values: Developing and communicating a clear statement of

core values that guide behaviour. Ensuring that induction procedures cover expected behaviours core-values and outline how people are expected to act upon them.

- e) **Strategic Onboarding:** Using induction and onboarding processes to socialize new employees into the core culture from day one. Reinforcing induction training through further training as part of continuous development programmes.
- f) **Continuous Development:** Reinforcing cultural expectations through ongoing training and leadership development programmes.

### **5.6. Culture Change**

Culture change programmes focus on particular aspects of the culture e.g. performance, commitment, quality, customer services, team work and organizational learning. The levers for change will include:

1. **Performance** i.e. performance related pay, performance management processes, leadership training and skill development, gain sharing.
2. **Commitment** – this can be achieved through communication, participation and involvement programmes, developing a climate of cooperation and trust and clarifying the physiological contract.
3. **Quality-** incorporating total quality management programmes.
4. **Customer service** i.e. customer care programmes
5. **Teamwork** i.e. team building, team performance management and team rewards
6. **Organizational learning-** taking steps to enhance intellectual capital.
7. **Values-** gaining understanding, acceptance and commitment through involvement in defining values.

### **5.6. Strategies for Culture Change**

When cultural change is needed, it should be focused on specific areas like performance, quality, or teamwork. Levers for change include (Kaufman, 2021):

- **Performance Management:** Implementing performance-related pay and robust performance management processes.

- **Enhancing Commitment:** Improving communication, participation, and clarifying the psychological contract to build trust.
- **Quality Initiatives:** Introducing Total Quality Management (TQM) or similar programmes.
- **Teamwork:** Utilizing team-building, team-based rewards, and collaborative structures.
- **Organizational Learning:** Investing in knowledge management and intellectual capital development.

### 5.7. Summary

Strategic culture management is a vital HR function. It involves analyzing the existing culture using established frameworks and then deploying targeted strategies to either reinforce a positive culture or systematically change an misaligned one. The ultimate goal is to ensure the culture is a source of competitive advantage, driving high performance and employee commitment.

We have learnt that culture management enables organizations to achieve the long term objectives. It is about the held beliefs, attitudes and values that exist in an organization.

### 5.8. Reflection:

1. What is the difference between organization culture and organizations climate.
2. Discuss Cooke and Lafferty (1989) on the organizational culture inventory.
3. Evaluate the programmes that can be used to preserve culture that is good and functional in today's organizations.

### Answers to Reflection Questions

1. **Organizational culture** is the deep structure of shared beliefs, values, and assumptions that unconsciously guide behavior. **Organizational climate** is the more surface-level, measurable perception of the current work environment, shaped by formal policies and management

practices. Culture is the enduring personality of the organization, while climate is its current mood.

2. **Cooke and Lafferty's (1989) inventory** provides a nuanced tool for diagnosing culture by identifying twelve specific styles. It is valuable because it highlights that cultures can be a mix of styles (e.g., strong in Achievement but also in Avoidance) and helps pinpoint areas for reinforcement or change, moving beyond simpler four-type models.
3. Programmes to preserve a good culture focus on **reinforcement**. Key methods include: a) implementing reward systems that financially and non-financially recognize desired behaviours; b) embedding cultural values into every stage of the employee lifecycle, from induction to ongoing development; and c) leadership consistently modelling and communicating the core values to ensure they remain alive and relevant.

## References

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