

**Organisational Culture:
Resource or Hindrance?**

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Organisational culture is simply a driver. It manoeuvres individuals' performance with the embedded values of organisations (Parra & Castillo, 2013). As this is the case, managing a synergise working environment is certainly pivotal, most importantly because today the organisation is shaped in a pluralistic fashion in which employees' distinctive views, beliefs, languages, and values overlap with the existing organisation code of practice (Watkins, 2013). The pressure is to choose, whether to optimise the current growth culture or to diminish its influences. This exists as culture in an organisation possesses a double-sided consequence (Arogyaswamy, 1987). While it is believed that a positive culture will stimulate the organisation excellence, the negative workplace culture potentially leads to some degree of restrictions and ineffective teams, not to mention in critical times when organisations need to adapt to certain changes. This essay is devoted to discussing how and in what context both merit and demerit culture come to affect the multifaceted contexts of organisation, including how this essay believes that the cohesive organisational culture has a powerful positive influence. Part of this discussion is the possible strategies need to take by leaders in order to maximise the organisation's performance through its culture.

Studies on organisational culture share a commonality of definition on how it is relatively connected with various dimensions. The spectrums such as “values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols” are perceived to embody culture in an organisation (Barney, 1986). Align with this, Saffold (1988) referred that the central power of organisational culture lies in the degree to the embraced culture affects employment in an organisation. As the more the culture is aligned with its people, the more it will flourish. Meanwhile, culture in an organisation is also iterative. Its formulation is a process of collecting meaning from repeated actions (Watkins, 2013). Since this diversification and progression underlies organisational culture, this circular process within a group eventually leads to nurturing culture. Hence, it can be highlighted that the working culture carries a “subtle dictation” to people and developed under a particular milestone. But then how does organisational positive and negative culture come to form as well as influence the organisation members?

Since there are a plethora of organisational styles and cultures applied in the business world, a definite answer is vague. However, the widely-held paradigm suggests that the founder(s) has an essential role in directing the cultural norms in the organisation (Schein & Schein, 2016;

Williams et. al, 2017; Robbins and Judge, 2019). It is suggested that goals and targets of organisation that manifest a culture are heavily influenced by the founding father's viewpoints as the original concepts originated from them, or at least how the current management set the organisational goals as further explained by Robbins and Judge. Providing that visions and missions are aligned with the rest of the group members, then organisational culture is formed. Furthermore, to ensure values in organisation remain prevalent, a company mostly depicts founders' values as the instrument of organisation which is manifested through organisational stories and portrays their heroic figure to the whole teams even after the founder has stopped working from the company.

An example of a successful storytelling culture in an organisation is Southwest Airlines. Through its personalised website, the company encourages employees to anchor Southwest's engaging culture stories, most notably the company's dedication to serving the customers. The purpose is obvious, namely to both internalise and circulate the corporate core values. This is as explicitly stated by Southwest's culture and employee engagement communication specialist "these individuals are culture advocates who go out in the community and encourage our employees to own, strengthen and promote our legendary culture." (Strabrawa, 2017). In fact, the narration that the company governed in such a storytelling way has provided a sense of appreciation for kindnesses and services conducted by employees. As a result, workers will subconsciously shape their relatedness -or belongingness as in Maslow's need model- since the company is capable of fulfilling such higher-order needs to employment Alderfer (1969). Motivation might be levelling off once this need has been satisfied, however, the company does also stimulate an intrinsic reward. Counterparts at the company are accustomed to practising in acknowledging each other's work integrity. These ethical practices then increase and unify the 70,000 teammates at the company to synergise with the corporate missions (Marshall & Adamic, 2010).

However, there is also certain potential hostile reputation shaped to the whole company's image when the cultural practices are managed improperly or a certain individuals, such as from the board level, are involved in a disgraceful conduct which ruins the employer branding. Scandal issues which hit Uber management in 2017 had caused the company received a dysfunctional culture label and some other negative attributes from media. Further implication of the case has led the company to fire more than 20 employees, shaping the worst public image to company in

the year despite of its growing performance (Isaac & Wakabayashi, 2017). The claim to place top management as solely resources may hold a true connection in which it will lead to fallacy. On the one hand, accountability for leaders supposed to be a gradual exercise at any level of organisation as it will ensure the safer and the healthier environment to workers. As Mayes and Gethers (2018) stated “elevating leadership should therefore follow from an intervention that improves self-awareness of leadership weaknesses and what can be done to address those shortcomings”. This explain how transformational is required in the moment of critical.

Having said that, in some organisations, being flexible, independent, and conducting improvisatory are in fact the key to company success. A firm such as Arup (Arup Group), which has designed and constructed some iconic landmarks in the world, puts a highly emphasise on autonomy to both employment and creations. As the mantra “we shape our world”, the company culture is to co-work together with a wide range of background within shared values. As the outputs, notable achievements and projects created, ranging from awarding Stirling Prize 2007, to achieving an honour for its remarkable contribution to British engineering on fire structure design, to winning the Royal Academy of Engineering remarked to Arup’s track record (Arup, 2019). Of course there are more than its achievement that can be learnt from Arup. Organisational plurality is one of the prominent reflections to the company. Since 1946, the culture has been rooted the company’s best capacity and innovation. In spite of the company is governed by over 14,000 specialists, the self-designing team characterises the team performance. For one project, for instance, it could be employed different artist, architects, policymakers, and mathematicians all of which determine their compositions. The result is surprising; in the constructing processes different people come to mix their modelled thinking where their central is on human-centred designs. This culture then leads the employees to produce an innovative creation and develop a dynamic team. Trusting each other and willingness to learn from the team also outlines vital functions within a dynamic team member (Bergh, Thorgren, Wincent, 2009). On this occasion, the writer perceived that a cohesive culture attached to an organisation has a fundamental role in defining organisational success providing it is managed strategically and properly.

As for the strategies, there are certainly some approaches and steps on how healthy organisational culture can be formulated. In this regard, there are at least three tools that can be

employed by leaders to nurture the internal and external fit in organisational culture as defined by Chatma & Cha (2003). Firstly, the idea of recruiting and selecting should be based on cultural fit. As skills are essential for the smooth of the job task, getting matched to organisation culture is far more important to the newly recruited workers since it will drive them to retain in the organisation and develop their capacity both externally and internally. Secondly, socialising and gradual training should cover the whole organisational body. A continuous engagement opportunity with fellow organisation members as well as offering skill enhancements will ensure cultural awareness is acquired in organisation. Lastly, a rewarding scheme should be carefully planned for this step will maintain workers turnover rate lower and stabilise their motivation during the working period. Certainly, this can only be maximised if all fitted individuals in organisation commit to implant the culture to themselves and to the benefit of organisation.

To conclude, organisational culture is undoubtedly composed of a variety of values and norms. Likewise, culture in society at large, organisational culture can lead to effectiveness and efficiency or to slow pace and mess up a working performance which is obviously relied on how it matches with human resources and circumstances. It is apparent from the discussion that manageable and cohesive organisational culture will lead to positivity. Leaders, who hold the top position in organisation, have a morale responsibility in ensuring the culture is cohesive and aligned with organisation values, visions, and missions.

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