Organizational Culture

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Authors Note

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Abstract

Organizational culture refers to the beliefs, expectations, values, norms, and work routines that influence how individuals, groups, and teams interact with one another to achieve the goals that exist within an organization. It is, therefore, essential to understand the relationship between organizational culture and effectiveness. A literature review was conducted that examined organizational strategy and implementation and how those theories related to biblical scripture and a Christian worldview. The results showed that a robust corporate culture allows for innovation that transcends business conduct's typical limits. These factors shape the organization's direction and potentially its overall success. A suggested strategy to implement a strong organizational culture would be: (1) make change a priority and lead by example, (2) keep corporate culture simple, (3) execute, and (4) engage every employee. This method can be used to implement change from a management perspective moving forward by providing a clear vision of the mission, objectives, and purpose.

Keywords: organizational culture, organizational effectiveness, values, beliefs, business management.

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Introduction

Organizational culture can be defined as the shared set of beliefs, expectations, values, norms, and work routines that influence how individuals, groups, and teams interact with one another to achieve the goals set forth by the organization. (Jones, 2019, p. 61) As organizations evolve, a strategy must be developed to include a robust culture that allows for innovation that transcends business conduct's typical limits. From a biblical perspective, Micah 6:8 (NIV) proposes that if we act justly, it will translate into doing what is right and with integrity. In contrast, love mercy in the workplace can be translated into being thoughtful, treating others with respect, and kindness. These principles align with a belief system related to mission, strategy, structure, and leadership, all of which are essential of a robust organizational culture. (Körner et al., 2015) These processes can be put into place in a real-world example. This author can use it as a management tool to communicate his organization's mission better and communicate its purpose.

Strategy

Jones (2019) proposes that organizational culture can be defined as the shared set of beliefs, expectations, values, norms, and work routines that influence how individuals, groups, and teams interact with one another to achieve the goals set forth by the organization. (p. 61) Schein (1990; as cited in Körner, Wirtz, Bengel, & Göritz, 2015) stated that organizational culture consists of the underlying assumptions and beliefs that the organization's members share and operate unconsciously. These beliefs relate to mission, strategy, structure, and leadership, all of which are essential determinates of a robust organizational culture. (Körner et al., 2015) With

a strong culture within an organization, it can facilitate employees and their managers in accomplishing their goals and tasks and have greater job satisfaction.

Baird, Su & Tung (2018) suggest that organizations with a more innovative culture will be more willing to experiment with new initiatives and strategies. For an organizational culture strategy to work, the business must develop a message that transcends the typical limits of business conduct. An excellent example of this is Starbucks. The coffee company was founded more on atmosphere and culture than coffee. Today, company culture shapes the workday experience for each employee. This culture emerges from the company's mission, mood, values, expectations, and more. All of these factors shape the organization's direction and potentially, its overall success.

Implementation

Ouchi and Wilkins (1985; as cited in Deshpande & Webster, 2018;1989) note that the development of interest in the concept of culture applied to organizational functioning was due to the realization by organizational sociologists that traditional models of organizations did not help them understand the disparities between organizational goals and actual outcomes. Before the 1980s, most formal models were organizations incorporated systems, structures, and people but not culture. (Deshpande & Webster, 2018;1989) Today, for an organization to remain competitive, firms must develop capabilities that lead them to adapt and offer quick responses to market changes. (Felipe, Roldan, Leal-Rodríguez, Leal-Rodríguez, Roldán, & Carmen Felipe, 2017)

The work of Mathew (2019) and Weerts, Vermeulen & Witjes (2018) found that when an organization implements and nourishes a strong organizational culture, it can play a crucial role in ensuring effectiveness, creating dynamic capabilities, and develop a commonly shared value

system that alleviates high employee turnover and ultimately attracts top talent. A suggested

strategy to implement a strong organizational culture would be: (1) make change a priority and

lead by example, (2) keep organizational culture simple, (3) execute, and (4) engage every

employee. From the literature, an example of culture in an organization could be implemented by

instating a shift away from the traditional paradigm of organizational change being about

structure (i.e., a top-down approach) to a culture-focused change (i.e., networks and behavior).

(Holbeche, 2019). In this author's opinion, these methods would be acceptable, but the first

suggestion that outlines a roadmap toward change would appear to be more appealing in today's

workplace. Nonetheless, by following these methods, a company-wide alignment will occur, and

progress will be swift.

Theory Evaluation from Scripture

According to Jones (2019), shared and instrumental values play a role in a company's

organizational culture. Terminal values signify what an organization is trying to accomplish, and

instrumental values guide how the organization will achieve its goals. (Jones, 2019, p. 64) From

a biblical standpoint, Micah 6:8 (NIV) tells us, "God has shown you, O man, what is good. And

what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with

your God." From an organizational perspective, the wording of "act justly" will translate into

doing what is right and with integrity. In contrast, love mercy in the workplace can be translated

into being thoughtful, treating others with respect and kindness.

McGhee (2019) suggests that Christians look to the New Testament and as it indicates

that a person of faith is ordered, led, and empowered by the third person of the Trinity, the Holy

Spirit. This influence results in specific actions. McGhee (2019) further suggests that spiritual

persons who cultivate a flourishing inner life with strong community interconnectedness will pay

off. Organizations can use this principle to help people achieve these goals and develop a

relationship that allows their employees to see how the company can be seen as a good fit

between what the firm is doing and what they believe. (McGhee, 2019)

New Thoughts and Recommendations

Jones (2019) postulates that managers play a critical role in developing, maintaining, and

communicating organizational culture and shapes the behavior of the employees and the

managers. (p. 68) Körner, Wirtz, Bengel, & Göritz (2015) take this a step further and explain that

interprofessional teamwork is critical in developing an organization's culture through leadership,

communication, and decision making. Organizational culture is difficult to perceive when you

are the owner of a small, family-run business. Still, recently, I led a group of thirteen adventurers

across Alaska by snow machine and sled dog teams, and I could see dysfunction in our trip right

away. My entire career has been based on a leadership model rather than a management

perspective and by trying to be the best leader I could, I often failed at managing my teams. We

started planning our expedition in August 2019 with a trip date of late February 2020. I could

immediately see that our group did not understand our mission, mainly because I did not have a

clear vision of our purpose. My goal was to bring the group together and accomplish an

enormous feat in the trip itself and provide goodwill and community service orientated projects

across the state. Instead, we became individuals with their own goals and missions, and the group

leadership and management quickly fell apart. In hindsight, I should have communicated our

mission more effectively. Instead, I gave everyone a voice on every aspect of our trip and our

poorly formulated message degraded our goals and objectives.

As I moved forward in this program, it has allowed me to gain a new perspective on how

I navigate to become a better manager. Before my studies here at Liberty University, I took a

purely secular approach to leadership and management. Having a better understanding of scripture such as Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV), which teaches that each local church is ultimately responsible for its decisions, it has allowed me to have a better understanding on how I can develop a more robust group or organizational culture which in turn will lead to a more strategic approach to meet our objectives.

Conclusion

Organizational culture can play a pivotal role in the success of a business. An organization with a shared set of beliefs that are supported strongly by strategy and structure will allow its employees or teams to interact with one another to achieve the goals set forth by the organization. (Jones, 2019) This strategic innovation will lead to greater job satisfaction as suggested by Körner et al. (2015). It also allows the organization to remain competitive and develop capabilities that lead them to adapt and offer quick responses to market changes. (Felipe et al., 2017) From a biblical perspective, organizational culture translates into doing what is right, and with integrity. In contrast, love mercy in the workplace can be translated into being thoughtful, treating others with respect and kindness. (Micah 6:8) Lastly, a broad understanding of healthy organizational culture will allow this author to make more competent decisions on communicating his company's vision moving forward from a management perspective rather than the comfortable leadership model that he has used his whole career.

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