Organizational Culture and Organizational Climate

Nature and Functions of Culture in Organizations

Selznick - organizations as institutions each with a character that provides a basis for analysis of its culture - Peters and Waterman (1982), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Ouchi (1981)

- Organizational culture is the attempt to feel, sense, atmosphere, and character of the organization.
- Includes norms, values, ideologies.
- The basic theme is that effective organizations have strong distinctive cultures and a basic function of executive leadership is to shape the organizational culture.

Definitions of Culture

- Ouchi (1981) symbols, ceremonies, myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of the organization to its employees.
- Mintzberg (1989) ideology or the tradition and beliefs of an organization that distinguish it from other organizations.
- Schein (1992, 1999) deeper level of basic assumptions, values, and beliefs that become shared and taken for granted as the organization continues to be successful.
- General definition - a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity.

Levels of Organizational Culture

- Shared Norms
- Shared Beliefs and Values
- Collection of Tacit Assumptions
- Culture of Efficacy
- Culture of Trust
- Culture of Academic Optimism
- Culture of Control
Shared Norms

- Shared Norms - unwritten informal expectations that occur below the surface and directly experience behavior. Communicated to people by stories and ceremonies that provide visible examples of what the organization stands for. Often stories are created to reinforce the basic norms of the organization.

- Teachers quickly learn the norms – don’t tell tales outside school; support your principal; don’t rock the boat

- Norms are reinforced by sanctions; people are rewarded and encouraged when they conform to the norms, ostracized and punished when they violate the norms of the group

- Norms define the culture

Levels of Organizational Culture

- Tacit Assumptions—Abstract Premises about
  - Nature of human nature
  - Nature of human relationships
  - Nature of truth and reality
  - Relationships with the environment

- Values—conceptions of the desirable
  - Openness
  - Trust
  - Cooperation
  - Intimacy
  - Teamwork

- Norms—
  - Support your colleagues
  - Don’t criticize your superiors
  - Handle your own problems
  - Be supportive of colleagues
  - Be available to get your students extra help

Shared Values and Beliefs

- Values are beliefs of what is desirable. Values often describe what members should do to be successful in the organization.

- Shared values define the basic character of the organization and give the organization its sense of identity.
Theory Z Organizations – Ouchi (1981)

- Organizations are structured to operate and promote basic values of intimacy, trust, cooperation
- These core values are the dominant values that most members accept and share; they influence virtually every aspect of organizational life
- Promote distinctive culture
- People invested in the organization

Culture - Deal and Kennedy

- Widely shared organizational values
- Enforced through individuals to create a coherent and stable organization
- Relates and coordinates interpersonal values and social intercourse
- Requires a sense of stability and predictability
- Belief that what employees do is important to others
- Reinforces the nature of work in the organization

Examples of shared values

- Commitment to the school
- Commitment to teaching
- Cooperation and teamwork
- Trust and group loyalty
- Egalitarianism
- Serve your students
- High academic achievement

Culture as Tacit Assumptions

- Culture exists when individuals share a view of the world around them and their place in that world. A pattern of basic assumptions that have been developed by the organization as it learned to cope with its problems of external adaptation.
- Assumptions work repeatedly and are taken for granted; tend to be uncomfortable and non-debatable, and thus highly resistant to change
- When organizations develop a pattern of basic assumptions, they have strong cultures.
Two Examples of Tacit Assumptions

- Truth comes from teachers themselves.
- Teachers are responsible, motivated, and capable of governing themselves.
- Truth is determined through debate, which tests ideas in an open discussion.
- Teachers are family; they accept, respect, and take care of each other.

Contrast:

- Truth comes from experienced administrators and teachers.
- Most teachers are loyal to the school.
- Relationships are basically hierarchical.
- Teachers respect each other’s autonomy in the classroom.
- Teachers are family who take care of each other.

Functions of Culture

Strong cultures promote cohesiveness, loyalty, commitment, which turn keep people from leaving the organization. (Robbins, 1991)

- Creates distinctions among organizations
- Provides a sense of identity for the organization
- Enhances stability in the social system
- Social glue that binds the organization together; provides standards for behavior

Strong culture can be either functional or dysfunctional.

Common Elements of Culture

- Innovation – the degree to which employees are to be creative and take risks.
- Stability – activities focus on the status quo rather than change.
- Attention to detail – concern for precision and detail.
- Outcome orientation – management emphasizes results.
- People orientation – management decisions are sensitive to people.
- Team orientation – degree of emphasis on collaboration and teamwork.
- Aggressiveness – employees are expected to be competitive rather than easygoing.

School Culture (Deal)

- Shared values – “how we get things done around here.”
- The principal as a hero or heroine who embodies core values.
- Distinctive rituals with shared beliefs.
- Situational hero or heroine.
- Significant rituals to transform and celebrate core values.
- Schools of acculturation and cultural renewal.
- Balance between innovation and tradition and between autonomy and control.
- Widespread participation in cultural rituals.
Framework for School Culture -

- Stories - narratives based on true events that are often combined with fiction
- Myths - stories that communicate unquestioned belief that cannot be demonstrated by facts
- Legends - stories retold and elaborated with fictional details
- Icons - physical artifacts used to communicate culture (logs, mottoes, trophies)
- Rituals - routine ceremonies and rites that signal what is most important to the organization

Metaphors for School Culture

- The academy - learning dominant
- The prison - custodial institution
- The club - social club
- The community - nurturing environment
- The factory - assembly line

Research on School Culture

- Schools have a variety of cultures
- Culture influences change
- Change norms easier than change values
- Anxiety and culture
- Symbolic form of the organization

Four Kinds of School Culture

Describes the shared beliefs of teachers in the school

- Culture of Efficacy
- Culture of Trust
- Culture with Academic Optimism
- Custodial Cultures
Culture of Efficacy

- Collective teacher efficacy – the shared perception of teachers in the school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole have a positive effect on students. The culture of efficacy is a set of beliefs or social perception that are strengthened rather than depleted through their use and that

Sources of Collective Efficacy

- Mastery Experience
- Vicarious Experience and Modeling
- Social Persuasion
- Emotional Arousal

School Culture

The major influences on collective teacher efficacy is the analysis and interpretation of the four sources of collective efficacy.
Focus is on the Teaching Task and Teaching Competence

Collective Efficacy Research –

- Positive relationship to student achievement
- Greater effect on achievement than socioeconomic status
- Strong culture promotes high student achievement
Culture of Trust
School culture viewed in terms of faculty trust, the collective shared beliefs of teachers

- Enhances openness
- Builds relationships and reliance on others
- Interdependence
- Makes people vulnerable to others

Dimensions of Trust
- Benevolence
- Reliability
- Competence
- Honesty
- Openness

Culture of Academic Optimism
Collective belief about strengths and capabilities
- Teachers believe in themselves
- Faculty believes in the students
- Faculty focuses on student success in academics
- Faculty believes students can learn

Culture of Control
- Importance of student control, which is central to school life
- Custodial Culture – traditional school with rigid highly controlled setting in which maintenance of order is primary
- Humanistic Culture – where students learn through cooperative interaction and experience. Provide healthy school climate that leads to the development of more mature self-images for students
Organizational Climate

- Those characteristics that distinguish the organization from other organizations and that influence the behavior of people in the organization (B.H. Gilmer, 1996)
- A set of measured properties of the work environment, based on the collective perceptions of the people who live and work in the environment and demonstrated to influence their behavior (Litwin & Stringer, 1968)

Properties of Organizational Climate

- ...concerned with large units; characterizes properties of an entire organization or major subunits
- ...describes the unit organization rather than evaluate it or indicates emotional reactions to it
- ...routine organizational practices that are important to the organization and its members
- ...influences members behaviors and attitudes

Climate of the school is the personality of the school

- Disengaged teacher behavior – refers to the lack of meaning an focus in professional activities
- Cooperation and respect within the faculty and principal. Principal listens to and is open to faculty suggestions. Teacher behavior supports open professional interactions.
- Research Findings – openness is related to authentic teacher and principal behavior. Schools with open climates have less student alienation. Have stronger principals who are more self-confident.

Lenses to View Climate

- Openness
- Health
- Citizenship
Climate of organizational Openness
Dimensions of OCDQ - RE, RM, RS

- Supportive principal behavior
- Directive principal behavior
- Restrictive principal behavior
- Collegial teacher behavior
- Intimate teacher behavior
- Disengaged teacher behavior

Organizational Health
(Miles, 1969)

- Institutional Level
- Management Level
- Technical Level

Healthy organization is one in which all levels are in harmony. Organization is meeting its needs and coping with outside forces.

Unhealthy school is vulnerable to destructive outside forces

Climate of Citizenship

- Altruism – helping new colleagues and giving time freely to others
- Conscientiousness - using time efficiently and going beyond minimum expectations
- Sportsmanship – spending time on constructive efforts and avoiding complaining
- Courtesy – providing advance notices and reminders
- Civic virtues – serving on committees and voluntarily attending functions

Changing the Culture and Climate of a School

Clinical Strategy
  - Gaining knowledge of the organization
  - Diagnosis
  - Prognosis
  - Prescription
  - Evaluation
Changing the Culture and Climate of a School

Growth Centered Strategy
- Change is a property of healthy school organizations
- Change has direction
- Change should imply progress
- Teachers have a high potential for the development and implementation of change

Norm Changing Strategy
- Prevailing norms map the way things are
- Key norms are related to control, support, innovation, social relations, rewards, conflicts, and standards of excellence