

Chapter 12

Improving the Role of Organisational Culture in Change Management through a Systems Approach

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ABSTRACT

The chapter assumes organisational culture, which is most valuable resource of organisation, cannot often be treated coherently by managers in change management that ultimately leads to ineffectiveness and failure. In order to make organisational culture a powerful managerial instrument in change management resulting in high organisational performance the chapter proceeds through the following sequence. At first, it elaborates chief characteristics of organisational culture in order to underline its value; secondly, portrays significance of interpreting and managing organisational milieu; thirdly, emphasises necessity and difficulty of organisational culture change; and then offers a systems approach called two strands model of soft systems methodology to improve the effect of corporate culture on organisational performance. The last part describes the methodology in depth and shows how it is applied to a private hospital that generates its improved version dealing with the major issue of open, full and equal participation in organisational culture change management.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter emphasises organisational culture, which is polythetic and paradoxical, is an important resource in change management (Cummings & Worley, 2005). Organisations habitually direct attention to the purpose of powerful by which managers optimise performance and follow systematic procedures involving clear objectives and generalisable models. They predict, model and control organisation and tackle problems with cause and effect logic so that they realise objectives with maximum efficiency and efficacy. This certainly serves a paradigm of optimisation. However, organisations are social arenas

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where people have values, norms and beliefs design locally stable and shared systems of meaning in actions and interpretive systems creating and re-creating symbolic aspects due to continuous interaction. They should also be oriented toward attainment of goals of those who are silenced. The powerful usually generate an image of agreement among members regarding the purposes of the organisation. They give main concern for particular goals of certain individuals or groups at the expense of goals of others and tackle 'elite technicians' and powerful decision makers' assumed problems (Jackson, 2003). Thus, managers need help in improving processes where they make decisions about purposes of their companies and reach a settlement around those purposes. In dealing with complexity or soft issues that convey social and behavioural elements they have to identify different purposes and design alternative solutions. In successful running of companies they need an approach that encourages understanding human beings who create social world through different perspectives, intentions and standards of judgment, protect mutual understanding and handle resistance. Revealing and discussing cultural issues through a systems approach called two strands version of Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) empower managers to control the behaviour of the organisation and the process of change in harmony leading to effectiveness and success. This surely serves a paradigm of learning.

Given above argument the chapter aims to understand the nature of corporate culture and to enhance its relationship with organisational effectiveness in change management through a systems methodology. To this end, the chapter is divided into four major parts.

The first part, called the nature of organisational culture, delivers a descriptive evaluation of corporate culture in terms of definition, components, sources, diagnosis and transmission in order to highlight its importance. The second part, called the relationship between corporate culture and organisational effectiveness in change management, briefly underlines the significance of interpreting and managing the organisational environment in change intervention. The third part, called the difficulty of making organisational culture change, concisely describes forces for and impediments to change, underlines the role of complexity theory recognising the importance of living with disorder, irregularity and randomness in the process of organisational change, gives special attention to subcultures in organisations, and reviews and critically evaluates the 'culture change' approach proposed by Cummings and Worley (2005). The fourth part, called a systems approach to improve the effect of corporate culture on organisational performance in change management: soft systems methodology, portrays how corporate culture can become a powerful managerial tool through a systems approach called two strands version of SSM. In this part, the chapter begins with a brief account of emergence of SSM. It goes on evaluating philosophical and theoretical foundations and problem-context this systems approach is based on in order to justify why exactly SSM is chosen to apply. Then, it describes the stages of two strands version of soft systems methodology that includes a cultural stream of analysis and a logic based stream of analysis. The former generates the rich picture of the problem situation and the latter designs conceptual models and recommends feasible and desirable structural, procedural and attitudinal changes to improve the problem situation in a never ending fashion. The final section of this part concentrates on the use of SSM. It initially provides brief descriptive and critical accounts of applications of SSM in different fields in order to highlight procedural problems in its use. Then, it demonstrates the way two strands version of SSM is used in a private hospital in Turkey that resulted in offering solutions both for issues at the hospital and methodological difficulties in its implementation. In light of work of Torlak and Muceldili

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