

Chapter 17

Understanding and Managing Organisational Culture and Justice: Implications for Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This chapter highlights the importance of education for the development of excellence, expertise and knowledge leading to overall development in economy cannot be undermined. It focused on the understanding and managing organisational culture and justice: implications for higher education institutions. Organizational culture plays a critical role in creating a work environment where employees are committed and contribute to the success of the organization. Justice is a subjective and descriptive concept, in that it captures what individuals believe to be right, rather than an objective reality or a prescriptive moral code. As defined here, organizational justice is a personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct. Research has shown that employees appraise three families of workplace events. They examine the justice of outcomes (distributive justice), the justice of the formal allocation processes (procedural justice), and the justice of interpersonal transactions they encounter with others (interactional justice). Over the years, universities worldwide have come under increasing pressures to adapt to rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces emanating from the immediate as well as the broader post-industrial external environments. The unprecedented growth, complexity and competitiveness of the global economy with its attendant socio-political and technological forces have been creating relentless and cumulative pressures on higher education institutions to respond to the changing environment.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of education for the development of excellence, expertise and knowledge leading to overall development in economy cannot be undermined. This has necessitated a sound strategy for the development of higher education in almost all countries of the world. Establishing leadership in the world is possible only when we have a developed system of higher education in which efficiency remains the sole criterion to evaluate performance.

The system of higher education is found efficacious in making available to the society a dedicated, committed, devoted and professionally sound team of human resources to decide the future of any nation. This is possible only when the principles of quality management are inculcated in the system of higher education. Organisational culture and justice is inevitably common factor that will shape the strategies of higher educational institutions in their attempt to satisfy various stakeholders including students, parents, industry and society as a whole.

Higher education institutions have a distinctive organizational culture, which is very significant for its academic members, their activities and interrelationship. Higher education institutions organisational culture is also significantly complex. The commonly used definition of organisational culture as the way we do things around here may no longer be the case in the context of Higher Education. Birnbaum (1989) distinguished higher education institutions as: less differentiation of the working processes (e.g. a professor, associate professor and assistant lecturer carry out the same teaching roles); narrow specialisation of members; developed professional hierarchy rather than a structural one; weak interdependency among subdivisions e.g. departments, institutes; limited capacity to influence the 'raw material' quality (enrolled students); limited accountability and transparency on both an individual and organisational level.

Today's organization is predominantly dynamic as it poses large opportunities and challenges to the corporate practitioners and policy makers. Understanding such dynamism is very crucial to pursue the organizational strategic objectives. There have been researches in literature to explore the effect of organizational culture on various human resource development programmes of an organization. For example, scholars including Kotter and Heskett (1992); Magee (2002) claim that organizational culture help to provide opportunity and broad structure for the development of human resources' technical and behavioural skills in an organization. This makes sense because good behavior is driven by ethical values. An organization can guide the conduct of its employees by embedding ethical values in its culture. However, organizational excellences could be varied since cultural traits could be source of competitive advantage through casual ambiguity (Barney, 1991).

BACKGROUND

The world is changing rapidly and the level of organizations is also changing due to technological advancements which have affected their human resource developments programmes. Moreover, organizations differ in their cultural content in terms of the relative ordering of beliefs, values and assumptions. Organizational culture adapts overtime to cope with the dynamic changes and meet the varying demands of the organization in its quest for gaining competitive advantage in all its activities. Therefore, a supportive culture as noted by Ritchie, (2000) is considered as a motivational instrument which promotes the organization to perform smoothly and ensure success in all its endeavours.

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