The impact of organizational culture on employee behavior and attitude

By

Boniface C. Nwugwo

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Abstract

Every organization has a unique culture. Each organization's culture differs from what it values most, what it expects and accepts from its employees, and how it gets things done. For instance, performing the same job for Wal-Mart is different from performing it for Sears, as is performing it for Microsoft compared to IBM, General Electric to Boeing, Dell to Sony, etc., etc. The better an employee's needs and expectations fit with the requirements of the culture of the organization the happier the employee and the organization will be. The more successful the company, the more defined its culture tends to be, and the more that the employee will be expected to either embrace it or leave. The culture of the organization to a large extent shapes the behavior of individuals and groups in organizations. Using the Double S Cube framework with existing literature on the impact of organizational culture, this paper examines the effect of organizational culture on employee behavior and attitude.

Introduction

As we march into the twenty-first century, the environment in which organizations operate is increasingly turbulent, rocked by forces such as globalization and rapid technological change. Social and demographic forces have dramatically changed the make-up of today's workforce, which is now the most educated and ethnically diverse in history, in addition to having the greatest representation of women. These developments are profoundly affecting the way in which organizations organize themselves, just as they are influencing individuals' behaviors and attitudes to and expectations of both organizations and work.

Organizational systems always find ways of controlling behavior so as to maintain a balance in the system, even when that balance may be less than optimal for the organization's success. Some of the ways organizations do this are through the formal and informal cultures in place. Every organization has a culture that sets the rules for employee behavior. Culture is the style or behavior patterns that organizational members use to guide their actions (Cohen, 1993). For example, an organization whose culture values the initiatives of all its members will have a different climate than an organization in which decisions are made by senior managers and enforced by

their subordinates. The combination of organizational structure and culture drives behavior.

In their book, 'the character of a corporation' (Goffee & Jones, 1998), the authors described four basic cultural forms that prevails in any organization. The four basic cultural forms are *networked*, *mercenary*, *fragmented*, and *communal*. Using two very old and well-established sociological concepts, Sociability and Solidarity, the authors developed a framework for defining and understanding organizational culture. They called the framework the Double S Cube, which contains the four different forms of culture mentioned above, plus four more, those cultures' negative "twins". These so-called negative "twins" are the dysfunctional cultures that get in the way of business, and some organizations do have dysfunctional cultures.

It is easy for any form of culture to be functional or dysfunctional. All it takes to slip from the good to the bad is for people to exhibit the behaviors of Sociability or Solidarity for their own personal benefit instead of the organization. To gain a full understanding of organizational culture, one needs to understand the positive and negative cultures as well. For that reason, both the negative and positive aspects of culture are included in the framework. In this paper, I would like to examine the effect an organization's culture has on employee behavior and attitude. Therefore, the title of the paper will be

the impact of organizational culture on employee behavior and
attitude.

A number of studies (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Denison, 1984;
Ouchi, 1981; Posner, Kouzes, & Schmidt, 1985; Pritchard &
Karasick, 1973; Sathe, 1985) have already established that
organizational culture affects employee's productivity,
performance, commitment, self-confidence, and ethical behavior.
While there has been a lot of research on the impact of
organizational culture on performance, there has been little
research on the effects of culture on employee behavior and
attitude. Using the Double S Cube framework and the existing
studies on the effect of organizational culture on performance,
my intention is to perform an analysis of the available
literature, relating the studies to my topic. Based on the
analysis of the existing literature, I would draw some
conclusions from those studies as to the impact organizational
culture has on employee behavior and attitude. But as culture
means different things depending on the context, a definition of
terms with respect to this paper is provided below.

Definition of Terms

What is organizational culture?

Culture is one of those terms that is difficult to express distinctively, but everyone knows it when they sense it. The word "culture" is used with many different meanings in everyday spoken language and in scholarly literature. Social anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century studies of primitive societies used the term "culture" originally. It was used to describe the primitive societies' ways of life that were not only different from the more industrialized parts of America and Europe, but were often very different among themselves (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Formerly, the American Heritage Dictionary defines "culture" as "the arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought created by a people or group at a particular time."

Organizational culture evolves from the social practices of members of the organization, therefore, it's a socially created reality that exists in the heads and minds of members of the organization as well as in the formal rules, policies, and procedures of organizational structures. Culture is an ongoing process of reality construction, providing a pattern of understanding that helps members of organizations to interpret

events and to give meaning to their working worlds. Thus, culture is an evolutionary and dynamic process that incorporates changing values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions regarding the organization (Kropp, 2000).

Others (Kotter & Heskett, 1992) see organizational culture as a two-level process, which differ in terms of their visibility and their resistance to change. At the less visible level, organizational culture refers to values that are shared by the people in a group. These values tend to persist over time despite changes in the group membership. For example, the notion of what is important in life can vary in different organizations. In some settings, people may care deeply about money, in others about technological innovations or employee well being. Culture at this level is very difficult to change, partly because group members are often unaware of many of the values that bind them together. At the more visible level, organizational culture represents the behavior patterns or style of an organization that persist because new employees are automatically encouraged to adopt them by their fellow employees. Those that fit in are rewarded and those that don't are sanctioned.

Corporate culture can also be viewed as a system. The inputs to this system include feedback from the society, professions, laws, stories, heroes, values on competition or

service, etc. The process is based on the organization's
assumptions, values and norms. For example, the company's values
on money, time, facilities, space and people. The outputs or
effects of culture are organizational behaviors, technologies,
strategies, image, products, services, appearance, etc.

What is Sociability?

Sociability is a measure of the degree of friendliness
among members of a community (Goffee & Jones, 1998). Sociability
focuses on social interaction. Communities with good sociability
have *social policies* that support the community's purpose and
are understandable, socially acceptable, and practicable. Sheer
enjoyment and comfort of sincere and reciprocal friendship bring
the community together.

Sociability is not just a personal life experience, it
exists also in workplaces. The level of sociability in an
organization is often the first thing a new employee notices. As
a matter of fact, sociability at the workplace is not much
different from sociability in the private lives. It simply means
that people relate to each other in a friendly, caring way. When
a co-worker is sick and lands in the hospital, he or she gets
flowers and/or personal visits in the hospital by colleagues. In
most cases, sociability at the workplace extends to having
relationships outside the office. Co-workers go out after hours
for drinks in the evenings or on Fridays to celebrate the end of

the work week, they spend time together on the weekends, they join the same extracurricular activities, their kids play together, and so on.

An example of high-sociability relationship is illustrated by a personal experience I had when I worked for another department in my current company. A woman that worked in my unit, which consisted of about thirty-five people, was diagnosed of a rare form of kidney disease, and eventually she died from it. For her funeral, my unit manager rented a van in addition to his own van to transport thirty-five members to the church. After the funeral, her close colleagues continued to visit her parents who were retired. Having such relationships in this particular unit enabled the woman's family to cope with their loss, and in turn reinforced the commitment of her co-workers and the company. Working in a high sociability organization tends to blur the line between one's work and personal life. For people who enjoy friendships, this is a dream come true, but for individuals, who value their personal space and privacy, this kind of organization would be a nightmare.

Sociability is all around us in our daily lives – at birthday parties, neighborhood picnics, and other social gatherings. In short, sociability flourishes among people who share similar ideas, values, personal histories, attitudes, and interests (Goffee & Jones, 1998). There is more to sociability

than what has been said thus far, but as we shall see later, sociability has its value-added benefits as well as some drawbacks to an organization.

What is Solidarity?

Solidarity has become synonymous with "labor movement", referring to the common interests and sympathies that unite a group. This is probably because labor unions demonstrate solidaristic relationships more than any other group. In contrast to sociability, solidarity is based not so much in the heart as in the mind. According to (Goffee & Jones, 1998), solidarity is based on common tasks, mutual interests, and clearly understood shared goals that benefit all the involved parties, whether they personally like each other or not.

Members of high-solidarity communities such as labor unions, police officers in pursuit of a criminal, surgeons around an operating table, or lawyers being threatened by legislation to curb their freedom to advertise on television, always work together against a common enemy. They might hate each other personally, but one would never know it when they are seen in action. They work together as a team like a well-oiled machine, each piston spinning in unison to achieve the desired outcome no matter what. Whether it's police officers making an arrest, or surgeons racing to save a patient's life, or lawyers lobbying hard to beat back an attempt to curb financial gain,

the goal is always the same, eliminate the common enemy first, ignoring all personal differences.

Of course, solidarity is not only good for customers and investors. Many people actually enjoy working in environments where goals and objectives are clear. Such people like to know their company's goals, the agreed-upon method of reaching them, and the type of professional behaviors that would be rewarded. Like sociability, solidarity has its positive and negative aspects, as we shall see later.

The Double S Cube Framework

According to the authors, "the character of a corporation can be illuminated by identifying its sociability and solidarity" (Goffee & Jones, 1998, p.21). A good understanding of these two concepts enables one to build a better character for an organization and alter them when necessary.
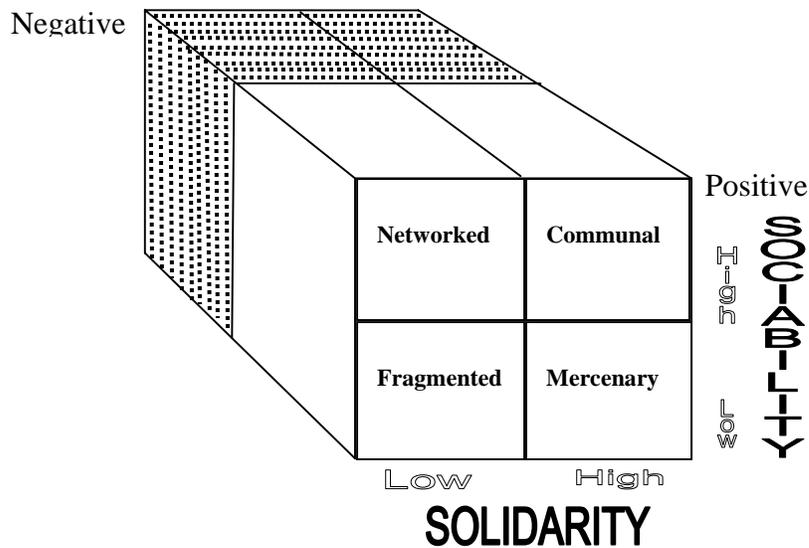
Negative

Positive

	Networked	Communal
High SOCIABILITY	Fragmented	Mercenary
Low		

Low   High

SOLIDARITY

Figure 1 – The Double S Cube

The vertical axis of the Double S Cube is the sociability dimension and the horizontal axis is solidarity, both ranging from low to high. The non-shaded, front areas of the cube are the positive forms of culture, while the shaded, rear sections of the cube are the negative forms of culture. Those organizations characterized by low solidarity and high sociability possess what (Goffee & Jones, 1998) called

'networked' cultures. The opposite of networked culture is the 'mercenary', which is characterized by high solidarity and low sociability. An organization that is low on both forms of relationships, that is, low solidarity and low sociability, yields a 'fragmented' culture. Finally, when an organization is high on both solidarity and sociability, a 'communal' culture is created.

With the Double S Cube defined, culture and its effect on people's behavior and attitude can now be explained using the model as a framework. But before I do that, I would like to examine more closely the values of sociability and solidarity and their potential drawbacks in relation to organizational culture.

Benefits of Sociability

The benefits that accrue from a high sociability relation-ship organization are many. Such an environment promotes high morale and a common spirit of enthusiasm and devotion to duty (Goffee & Jones, 1998). Sociability is often beneficial to creativity because of its promotion of teamwork, information sharing, and receptiveness to new ideas (Amabile, 1996). A healthy sociability environment creates an atmosphere in which people are more likely to go beyond the formal requirements of their jobs. They simply work harder than technically necessary, helping their colleagues to get the job done.

Many startup companies with fewer than fifty employees have a culture characterized by minimal bureaucracy, relatively egalitarian relationships, an environment that loves creativity and talented people, an unusual degree of straightforwardness in internal communications (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Extraordinary levels of sociability characterize such cultures in their early years. These organizations tend to be ambitious with members that are about the same age, and sharing the same attitudes. They may talk and joke a lot, but they are deathly serious about their work. Such a collegial atmosphere often times extends outside the office. They often spend weekends together, participating in the winter and summer activities.

One such organization that I know in the Washington DC area once had its entire group participate in a 10K race for the Whittman Aids Clinic. When one of the members developed a knee problem about 3 kilometers to the finish line, those colleagues who witnessed the incident stopped to attend to her. After resting, they all walked with her for the remaining 3 kilometers to the finish line. The same attitudes usually are carried over into business. People work tirelessly for each other, bounce creative ideas off each other, and the company grows quickly.

The benefits to business are enormous. The kind of open, uncensored, freewheeling brainstorming that happens naturally among friends often uncovers good ideas and creates a commitment

to performance that supersedes formal job descriptions. People
in high-sociability work environments seldom have a punch-the-
clock mentality. They just work until the job is done because
they don't want to let down their friends (Goffee & Jones,
1998).

Drawbacks of Sociability

Just as there are several benefits of high sociability,
many drawbacks abound. For one thing, it can breed poor
performance and mediocrity. Since there is a prevalence of
friendships, poor performing members may be tolerated, as no one
would like to rebuke or fire a friend. In addition, such an
environment is often characterized by an exaggerated concern for
consensus (Goffee & Jones, 1998). In other words, people are
reluctant to disagree with or criticize one another because they
don't want to jeopardize their friendships. But in a business
setting, such a tendency can lead to diminished debate over
important company goals, strategies, or simply how work gets
done. The consequence is that business solutions are
compromised. Instead of applying the best or optimum solution to
a problem, any solution would do.

Another damaging aspect of sociability is that in the
extreme case, it can develop into cliques and informal, behind-
the-scenes networks that can undermine the organization. An in-
group could develop to sabotage others. Those closest to the

manager who have the boss's ear could indirectly run the
business behind the scene. On weekend outings, members of the
in-group could make their case for certain initiatives or
strategies to be enacted, even recommend certain hires and
firings. On Monday morning when these initiatives are acted
upon, those who were not part of creating them would feel
disempowered. Morale goes out the window, and before long, a
dysfunctional environment of haves and have-nots emerges.

Benefits of Solidarity

One of the hallmarks of high solidarity relationships is
the ruthlessness and piercing focus they display (Goffee &
Jones, 1998). Organizations characterized by high solidarity
relationships are deathly focused on their goals. If the goal is
to win, then everything they do is geared towards that. Meetings
are focused on the agenda, no chitchats, poor performers are
dispensed with, and if somebody left the company, no one spent
time reminiscing on what his/her usefulness was. Even though
this might sound heartless, organizational solidarity can be a
very positive thing, especially for customers and shareholders.

For example, most people with illnesses preparing to
undergo surgery would care less if their surgical team is
composed of golfing partners. All they want is a team of doctors
ruthlessly committed to curing them, so committed that they
would never look the other way if one of the surgical team

members appeared to be drunk, dazed by the flu, or simply not prepared for the job at hand.

Another illustration would be an investor with some money to grow, sooner rather than later. The investor would rather invest the money in a company where meetings are fixated on goals and competitive growth strategies instead of one where meetings deviate into friendly banter about basketball. No doubt the investor would be more comfortable sleeping knowing that he/she placed a bet on a company where managers and employees know the competition and agree upon a battle plan to defeat it, rather than one in which the same topic was open to good-natured debate.

Drawbacks of Solidarity

Solidaristic behaviors can be bad for the organization as well. Some of the relations that characterize solidarity could be detrimental to the organization. For instance, excessive focus on the group's goals and requirements can be oppressive or hurtful to those individuals who get in the way. A very unlikely example is a herd of elephants wondering in the wilderness of the Serengeti searching for water and food. Imagine being forced to abandon a new infant for the good of the whole. In the middle of their journey, one of the elephants gave birth. After several hours of trying to get the calf to walk, the herd was forced to abandon the most recent addition to their group, to the mercy of

the elements. Continued caring for the calf would have impeded the search for food and water, and thus jeopardize the survival of the whole.

Organizations with high-solidarity cultures can have the same do-or-die philosophy (Goffee & Jones, 1998). Often times, managers are asked to fire individuals who are getting in the way of profitability without actually finding out why those individuals are not contributing. Sometimes, the root cause of non-performance could be personal reasons. Something at home might be bothering the individual that could easily be corrected if the organization would spend few hours to investigate. Instead, such people are left to the elements to hang.

As the preceding discussion has shown, when solidarity behaviors are good, individual actions fit together in ways to help move the goals of the organization forward and protect shared interests. However, when they are bad, solidaristic behaviors only benefit localized cells within the organization. People begin to pursue objectives at the level of their own group at the expense of the overall organizational interests. They make sure their targets are achieved even if it damages the business as a whole. For example, this is possible when a local division achieves its bottom-line objective but at the expense of the company's brand or reputation.

Review of existing Literature

Research efforts on the impact or effects of organizational culture from the employee perspective have focused mostly on company performance. Company performance here refers to economic success such as sales growth, profitability, and employment. Many if not most of the studies concluded that organizational culture has a statistically significant relationship with a company's profitability or productivity.

According to a 1994 study of employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) companies in the state of Washington (Ownership-Associates, 1998), it was found that the higher rates of employment and sales growth rates associated with ownership culture and participation were statistically significant. The study further concluded that such companies tended to outperform both non-participative employee-ownership companies and participative non-employee-ownership companies.

In another study by the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the United States Government using tax data not available to non-government sources, the effect of ESOPs on corporate performance was conducted. The GAO study concluded that employee participation showed a statistically significant relationship with changes in either profitability or productivity of an ESOP firm's performance (GAO, 1987). A strong ownership culture can

increase employees' satisfaction with their jobs, improve labor-management relations, and encourage commitment to the company. The conclusion of (Ownership-Associates, 1998) is that there exists an array of mechanisms through which employee-ownership can influence company performance. According to them, organizational culture is a mediating factor between the legal fact of ownership and performance results.

There has also been a number of studies on the impact of organizational culture on behavior. Carrol (1982) observed that culture, like morals, laws, and customs, shape behavior and is something that older generations hand down to younger ones (Carrol, 1982). Holfstede (1991) expressed culture as a collective programming of the minds of one group that differentiates them from other groups. He believes that this programming of the minds is derived from one's social culture (Hofstede, 1991). Hall & Hall (1987) used the computer metaphor to explain the impact of culture on individuals. He likened culture to a large complex computer that programs the responses and actions of people. They contend that individuals must learn the programs of their organization's culture in order to make the system work (Hall & Hall, 1987). In another survey of 103 human resource professionals at major U.S. based organizations in which they were asked to identify the most important factors influencing the management development programs in their

organization, two-thirds of the respondents mentioned four factors. The four factors identified by over two-thirds of the respondents included the Chief Operating Officer's vision and values, the organization's strategic plan, the operating needs of the line organizations, and the organization's culture (The-Conference-Board, 1996).

It is evident that existing research from organizational culture point of view has identified positive associations between culture and performance, and a relationship between culture and behavior. Despite the identification of these relationships, however, there has been little effort to connect organizational culture to employee behavior and attitude. This paper will now consider a "missing link" in the study of culture – the influence that organizational culture might have on employee behavior and attitude.

Cultural Influences on Behavior and Attitude

   Organizational members are intentionally acculturated into the assumptions and belief systems of their companies' culture. One method of transmitting cultural values and beliefs is through group norms. Norms help to shape the behavior of group members so that it is in accordance with the values and beliefs of the organization's culture. Culture, acting through institutionalized belief systems and group norms, can be a very effective means of directing the behavior of organizational members toward activities deemed important to the goals of the organization.

   Incidentally, it appears that there is a life cycle to the four cultures described by the Double S Cube (Goffee & Jones, 1998). Companies often migrate from one culture to the next based on the size and complexity of the organization. Initially, they start out as communal, which is not surprising given their size and the likelihood that the owner and founder is around to create a sense of high energy, clear vision, and deep commitment. In most start-up companies, employees work closely in a fluid, exciting, and often intense environment. That feeling of community rarely stops at the close of business. Co-workers usually move from the office to a local bar or restaurant, where discussion about business continues until they

return to their homes, only to see each other again on the weekends for softball and more talk, often about work.

But, as companies grow, they gravitate from the communal to the networked quadrant. This is mainly because of the difficulty in maintaining a balance of sociability and solidarity in groups of more than a fifty individuals. As reporting structure and relationships increase and roles differentiate, the solidaristic aspect of the communal culture weakens. Another culture where a lot of things happen because of relationships, replaces the communal one. The high sociability is reinforced by the fact that communal cultures leave behind an attitudinal legacy (Goffee & Jones, 1998). Because people assume they are going to be friends with their co-workers, they continue to socialize in the old ways. What ends up diminishing is the shared sense of goals, which is the defining hallmark of solidarity.

Some examples of organizational cultural impact on behavior are briefly described below. These are all based on the existing research on the subject of effect of culture on performance and behavior, as well as on the direct observation and experience of the author. Some details have been modified to protect the identities of the organizations and individuals involved.

Understanding of the firm's history and current approach

Knowing the culture of an organization allows employees to understand the firm's history and current approach. Once organizational cultures have been established, they tend to perpetuate themselves in a number of ways, usually through members of the organization. Other group members may screen potential group members to test how well their values and behavior fit in. Newly selected members are explicitly taught the group style. Historical stories and legends are told again and again to remind everyone of the group's values and what they mean. Managers explicitly behave and act in ways that exemplify the culture and its ideals. Senior members of the group may communicate the key values over and over in their daily conversations or through special rituals and ceremonies. Those people who follow the cultural norms are rewarded and those who don't are penalized.

As (Cohen, 1993) noted, commitment to an organization is influenced by its culture, especially if the individual shares the values of the culture. These may include identifying with the organization's goals, a willingness to help others, and valuing individual differences and creativity. For example, at one software development organization, there was an unspoken requirement for employees to work as hard as possible to build a technically superior product faster and cheaper. It was

competitively crucial to be the first to market with new
technology. Besides, the challenge to build new innovative
computer applications was exciting and appealing to the group of
software engineers who wanted to be on the cutting edge of
technology. They were encouraged by management to do whatever
was necessary to get the products designed and built. Management
was able to emphasize the values of the culture to help
productivity. After the team successfully delivered the product,
the software managers were able to use their understanding of
the organization's culture to encourage new goals and behaviors
to be adopted. They tapped the value of the hard work
demonstrated by the company to solve a problem with new product-
development teams.

Commitment to corporate philosophy and values

Organizational culture can foster commitment to corporate
philosophy and values. Commitment to corporate philosophy and
values can be enhanced by focusing on the actions of current
organizational members, by adding people who represent the
culture, and by socializing people to new ways of behaving.
Although, it is important to implement performance measures to
direct behaviors, however, it is equally important to have
informal mechanisms such as stories, celebrations, and symbols
to encourage behavior change. For example, one company wanted to

encourage all employees to initiate problem solving discussions and generate solutions to those problems. One group solved a quality problem by redesigning the packaging of the product, and they became instant heroes. Their names were published in the company newsletter, they received plaques for their innovation, and were praised in management speeches and talks. Such stories and symbolism undoubtedly reinforced the employees' commitments to the corporate philosophy and values.

Control mechanism for employee behaviors

Organizational culture serves as a control mechanism for employee behaviors. If the culture of the organization is characterized by competition (mercenary culture), then individuals may tend to behave in ways that are self-serving rather than in the best interest of the system. On the other hand, if the culture is characterized by collaboration (communal culture), then individuals will tend to behave in ways that serves the group as a whole. However, sometimes, there is a clash of cultures, especially when an individual or a group of individuals has a different set of values than the ones prevailing in the organization.

Consider a situation where a young man (whom I will call Hector) that grew up in Venezuela moved to the United States at 18 to attend college and majored in computer science. After

college, he landed a job as a programmer. He was assigned to work in a team comprising of three senior programmer analysts. It was expected that after a couple of weeks, he would work more independently. However, after four weeks, it became evident that things were not working as anticipated. The three senior analysts complained that Hector, although very competent and easy to relate to, was too dependent on others for direction. Hector never offered any suggestions at meetings but was only interested in pleasing everybody. His manager became worried, but since he did not want to fire Hector, he invited him to his office just to understand the situation from Hector's own viewpoint.

When Hector walked into his manager's office, he was very nervous and knew that something was wrong. He was embarrassed that things had reached that point. He was afraid that he might be fired. The manager tried to get Hector to express his feelings about the job and the people, but Hector was so tense he could not speak comfortably about those things. The manager changed his approach and asked him about his family. Hector then opened up in ways that the manager had never seen him before. It became evident that Hector missed his family and was feeling out of place in the company. It became clear to the manager that close relationships were important to Hector. By pleasing

people, he had hoped to create such relationships. It didn't work so he felt lonelier than ever.

It took some weeks for the manager to help Hector drop some of his expectations and take greater initiatives. The manager also had some discussions with the other senior analysts to help them understand Hector and perhaps what it might take to improve things. By getting into Hector's world the manager was able to make sense of Hector's behavior. Hector's image of the work place was built on a family metaphor (or communal culture) and he behaved accordingly.

Unfortunately, he went to work in an organization where the culture was opposite to the values he was used to. In this case, things worked out afterwards, partly because Hector was willing to change and adapt to the new culture, and partly because the manager was willing to look at the root causes of the problem. If Hector was not willing to change, he could have left the company on his own, or be fired. He could have also decided to stay, not adapt, but then would have been so miserable that his performance would have been impacted, which eventually would have led to him being terminated.

Employee ethics

Ethical behavior is defined as "that which is morally accepted as 'good' and 'right' as opposed to 'bad' or 'wrong' in a particular setting" (Sims, 1992, p.2). Organizations vary in the 'ethical climates' they establish for their members. It is also clear that the ethical tone or climate of organizations is set at the top. The actions of top managers, and the culture they establish and practice makes a big difference in the way lower-level employees act and in the way the organization as a whole acts when faced with ethical dilemmas.

The ethical questions that arise for employees in their place of work surfaces as an issue in every quadrant of the Double S Cube. Even moving into the communal quadrant with its apparent attraction of high sociability and high solidarity involves personal choices. Depending on the issue, the type of culture in operation influences the choices people make to a large extent.

Consider for a moment, the networked culture and its propensity to tolerate poor performance. Managers in such organizations often "carry" the weak members rather than fire them. The long-term effect is usually damaging to the collective good. Organizational performance may soften, hurting shareholders, and ultimately might affect good employees who have to be laid off to reduce costs. In other cases, the strong

performers might burn out from doing the bulk of the "carrying". This raises a big ethical question, but some people may look at the scenario and say, "it's okay to cover for a friend than fire one", which suggests that such people are not prepared to sacrifice individuals for a group. Others might look at it and say that "sometimes, people need to be fired, they will survive", suggesting that they have a higher comfort level with putting the collective good of the organization first. This does not mean that one response is better than the other, only to say that there is a wide range of what people are willing, eager, and able to do for their organizations based on the existing culture.

Another ethical question that employees face is 'how much are people willing to fit in?' Of course every organization places a layer of norms and rules upon its employees. They ask their employees to conform in different ways, requiring workers to leave, in varying degrees, parts of their authentic selves outside the office door. In each of the cultures of the Double S Cube, to "fit in" means something different. The real issue for employees then becomes whether they fit within their organizational culture, and if not, how much are they willing to compromise their true identity in order to enjoy the rewards of the company.

It is important to note that an effective organizational culture needs to encourage ethical behavior and discourage unethical behavior. Granted, ethical behavior may "cost" the organization at the short-term, but long-term, the organization wins. For example, a multinational firm may refuse to pay a bribe to secure business in a particular country where such practices are not frowned at, which might mean loss of sales for the company. Certainly, individuals might be reinforced for behaving unethically, especially if they do not get caught. Similarly, an organization might seem to gain from unethical actions. For example, a purchasing agent for a large corporation might be bribed to purchase all needed office supplies from a particular supplier. However, such gains are often short-lived. In the long run, an organization cannot operate if its prevailing culture and values are not congruent with those of society. Thus an organizational culture that promotes ethical behavior is not only more compatible with prevailing cultural values, but in fact, makes good sense.

Summary and Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown that organizational culture is the basic pattern of shared assumptions, values and beliefs that govern behavior within a particular organization. Throughout the discussion, it was evident that organizational culture is pervasive and powerful. For corporate leaders, it is either a force for change or an insurmountable barrier to it. For employees, it is either the glue that bonds people together or the force that drives them away from the organization. In short, culture is a set of values and beliefs for which individuals are equipped with cultural tools to understand, interpret, and utilize the cultural symbols they are presented with in the everyday world.

It was also shown that different forms of organizational culture are appropriate to different business environments. Using Goffee and Gareth's Double S Cube, I tried to show the effect of organizational culture on employees' behavior and attitude. However, I barely scratched the surface. This is one area of organizational culture that needs further studies. Most researches have focused on the relationships of culture and performance and not on culture's effect on employee behavior and attitude. It is a contention of this paper that organizational culture, acting through norms and organizational belief systems,

is an important determinant of employee's behavior and attitude

at the workplace.

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