

**FACETS OF INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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**Abstract**

This article reviews the various facets of Institutional Environment today including its definition, components, significance and its impact in educational sector. The term Institutional Environment is viewed in different terminologies as Institutional Culture or Organizational Culture. As much as personality shapes an individual, organizational culture shapes its members' responses and defines what an organization can or is willing to do. Organizational Culture makes an impact on motivation, performance, learning, trust, behavior, values and beliefs. Cultural artefacts, including management styles, are seen as powerful symbolic means of communication which can be used to build organizational commitment, convey a philosophy of management, rationalize and legitimate activity, motivate personnel and facilitate socialization. Culture not only shapes individual's behavior but contributes to the effective performance of the employees and results in job satisfaction.

**Keywords: Institutional Environment, Organizational Culture, Organizational Commitment**

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### **Institutional Environment**

The term Institution has several meaning in social science. But on the present context an institution has to distinguish conceptually from organization. As defined by (Esman, 1967) Institutions are "organizations, which incorporate, foster and protect normative relationship and action patterns and perform functions and services which are valued in the environment." In another subsequent definition (Esman, 1967) has defined an institution as "a change-inducing and change protecting formal organization." He also stressed that the institutional accomplishment related to objectives. The definitions point out the characteristics of an institution as relatively indispensable organization, related to the requirement of the society, structure of the institution tries to hold the norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions of the society and the best effort to produce goods and services that add value to society.

According to (Zucker, 1977) Institution means (a) a rule-like, social fact quality of an organized pattern of action (exterior), and (b) an embedding in formal structures, such as formal aspects of organizations that are not tied to particular actors or situations. Environment of an institution assumes that the basic process is reproduction or copying of system-wide social facts on the organizational level, while organization as institution assumes that the central process is generation (meaning creation of new cultural elements) at the organization level.

Institutional Environment is defined as positions, policies, programs and procedures of modern organization and is expression of powerful institutional rules which function as highly rationalized myths. Organizations may seek legitimation of their activities through active control or shaping of the institutional environment (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), in order to gain access to societal resources, thus insuring their long-term survival (Scott & Meyer, 1983). The extent of an organization's continuing control over its own boundaries determines the amount of environmental penetration, institutional or otherwise (Meyer & Zucker, 1986).

The institutions that result from institutional processes such as formation of rules, laws, certification, accreditation, prevalence, and precedence and have two underlying characteristics: they can be identified in terms of patterns (Jepperson & Ronald, 1991) and they have the ability to recur by reproducing themselves (Friedland & Robert, 1991).

Grewal & Dharwadkar (2002) in their study have found that the institutional environment perspective relies on the primacy of (1) regulatory institutions (e.g., laws), (2) normative institutions (e.g., professions), and (3) cognitive institutions (e.g., habitual actions) in influencing the legitimacy of channel members in the larger societal context.

Selznick (1957) identified institutionalization as a "process" through which organizations become stable so as to be able to fulfil personal or group needs. In his view, therefore, institutionalization is about the infusion of value beyond the technical requirements of the task at hand. To Berger and Luckmann (1967), Institutionalization is a set of habitual actions whose formation process precedes institutionalization and is attributed, over time and in a shared manner, to a certain actor or actors who begin to perform roles in the social context.

The concept "institutional environment" provides important insights concerning the organization or environment interface. The environment as far as the educational institutions consists of the physical environment as well as the psychological, social and political processes in the institution. Rao et al., (1999) in their study mentioned that the physical dimensions include the place of location of the institution, its buildings, ambience, design and architecture, symbols, and infrastructure facilities. These

are all important constituents of the learning environment. The softer dimensions include the curricula, teachers, teaching-learning processes, vision and leadership. The psychological and social processes include the way the vision is articulated and shared, the way the leadership is exercised, the empowerment process, evaluation and development processes and faculty-student interactions. It is also found that the institutional processes like its vision, values, leadership, empowerment, faculty development and planning. influences the adoption and institutionalization of innovations.

Institutional Environment also means about understanding the culture of the Institutions. Rao et al., (1999) in his study on Institutional Environment has used all the artefacts of Organizational Culture. These artefacts can be physical things, informational objects, or conceptual artefacts. As people internal and external to the organization encounter these artefacts, they also encounter the culture (May, 2001). Tierney (1988) was one of the first scholars to propose the extension of the term 'organizational culture' to 'institutional culture' to cover the work and running of universities as organizations in his essay 'Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials'. Hence Organizational Culture can also be also termed as Institutional Culture. There are many researches on Organizational culture by many of the experts.

Educational Institutions are also organizations in terms of input, process and outcomes. Therefore organizations here mean the institutions and since the institutional environment has similar artefacts of organizational culture, it could be viewed as Institutional Environment.

### **Definition of Culture**

Taylor(1871) was the first scholar who defined culture. He claimed that culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Pettigrew (1979) has tried to explain the process of creation of organizational culture. He has regarded culture as the source of a 'family of concepts'. The family includes the concepts of symbol, language, ideology, belief, ritual and myth. The concepts of symbols, language, towards the mobilization of consciousness and purpose, the codification of meaning, the emergence of normative patterns, the rise and fall of systems of leadership, and strategies of legitimisation. Organizational culture evolves through these processes and mechanisms, ideologies, beliefs, rituals and myths focus.

Schein (1985; 1991; 1992) in his studies defined organizational culture as "A pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel and in relation to these problems.

Organizational Culture specifies a 'set of broad, tacitly understood rules' and values that, over time, become so firmly entrenched within the organization they operate as the guiding principles to all the members of the organization (Camerer & Vepsalainen, 1988). Culture tells members what behaviours are valued and what are not.

### **Components of Culture**

Organizational culture is the system of assumptions, values, convictions and beliefs accepted and commonly interpreted by the members of the organization. It reflects both the real and declared values of the company and its members (Zsóka, 2007). Assumptions, sharedbeliefs, and shared rules are

important in order to create the culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Leadership not only affects the organizational culture, but is also affected by the culture itself (Schein, 1985).

Pfeffer(1981) incorporated the theory that any organization might have a number of different and competing cultures. Each of these cultures develops its unique structure and ideology. Pettigrew (1981) in a study proposed that the culture in an organization exists in different levels. The core level of culture is a complex set of values, assumptions and beliefs.

The organization's internal environment is represented by its culture and is construed by the assumptions and beliefs of the managers and employees (Ayca et al., 1999). Organizational Culture manifested in beliefs and assumptions, values, attitudes and behaviors of its members is a valuable source of a firm's competitive advantage (Hall, 1993; Peteraf, 1993), since it shapes organizational procedures, unifies organizational capabilities into a cohesive whole, provides solutions to the problems faced by the organization, and thereby, enhances the organization's achievement of its goals (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008).

Culture formation is influenced by a variety of factors: critical or novel incidents that set precedents, strong or charismatic leadership ability (Camerer & Vepsalainen, 1988), and employment policies and practices. For example, strong socialisation practices; selection strategies emphasises person-culture fit (Guest 1994; O'Reilly et al., 1991).

### **Significance of Culture**

Organizational Culture consists of the shared values and beliefs that give members of an organization meaning and provide them with rules for behaviour. These values are inherent in the ways organizations and their members view themselves, define opportunities, and plan strategies. As much as personality shapes an individual, organizational culture shapes its members' responses and defines what an organization can or is willing to do. The culture of an organization is seen in the norms of expected behaviours, values, philosophies, rituals, and symbols used by its employees (Mathis & Jackson, 2008). Culture evolves over a period of time but only if an organization has a history in which people have shared experiences for years does a culture stabilize. Culture is important because it tells people how to behave (or not to behave). Newcomers learn the culture from the senior employees; the rules of behaviour are perpetuated (Mathis & Jackson, 2008). In one culture, external events might be seen as threatening, whereas another might view risks and changes as challenges requiring immediate response. The culture type can be a source of competitive advantage, especially if it is unique and hard to duplicate. The institution that has a professional culture will improve the performance of the faculty members in HEI (May, 2001).

Purcell et al., (2006) and Guest (1994) have identified Organizational Culture as a crucial element in realising optimum performance levels among the workforce and linked to HRM, which comprises an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques (Storey, 1995). An effective culture is one that is both appropriate, meaning it fits the "strategic needs" of the organization; and has consistency, so that both managers and workers share agreement about what the cultural rules are (Camerer & Vepsalainen, 1988).

Organizational Culture makes an impact on motivation, performance, learning, trust, behaviour, values and beliefs (Morris, 2000). Cultures where employees are encouraged and supported to share knowledge need to be created. The initial step in achieving retention success is instilling in the firm's

culture that people are the top priority. A culture based on retention promotes positive energy and the desire for the employees to remain in their jobs (Heidi & Mark, 2010).

### Impact of Organizational Culture

Meyerson and Martin (1987) in their study determined that institutional culture promotes cohesion within organizations. Cultural artefacts, including management styles, are seen as powerful symbolic means of communication which can be used to build organizational commitment, convey a philosophy of management, rationalize and legitimate activity, motivate personnel and facilitate socialisation (Smirich, 1983).

Gibson et al., (2010) highlights that, the organizational culture influences the philosophy, structure, and the direction of Human Resource Management departments and functions. The organizational culture determines whether the organization will be a leader or a follower in the market because the compensation system reflects and communicates how the agency values its employees. The sustained success of organizations has less to do with market forces than with company values, less to do with resource advantages than with vision (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Organizational Culture is the key to organizational excellence and the function of leadership in the creation and management of culture (Schein, 1992). Organizational Culture strongly affects the commitment of employees with the organization. Good organizational culture and environment of the organization bind the employees with that particular organization and result in the decrease in turn over. Strong effect of organizational culture exists between the employee trust and employee commitment with the organization. Cultural aspect of organization has increased the interest in the human resource development program (Samina et al., 2010).

Brislin et al., (2005) argue that managers must understand the culture and psychology of their work force which will have an impact on their motivational strategy. Cummings and Worley (2005); Swanson and Holton (2001) in their study have recognized the impact that the culture of the organization has on their ability to foster learning and career development.

Nawab et al., (2010) in their study on four organizations with a sample of 210 people determined three factors of organizational culture; flexibility, participative environment and diversity affects the commitment of employees with the organization. The study shows that the participative environment is the most influencing factor of the organizational culture while flexibility is the least influencing factor.

Aycan(2001); Schwalb (1992); Super and Sverko (1995); Yu and Yang (1994) have done empirical work and they established the link between culture and motivation. The dialectic relation between culture and motivation is bridged through the cross-cultural motivational research (Erez, 1994; Erez & Earley, 1993).

According to (Kandula, 2006), the key to good performance is a strong culture. He further adds that some strategies do not yield the same results for two organizations in the same industry and in the same location due to differences in organizational culture. A positive and strong culture can make an average individual perform and achieve brilliantly, whereas a negative and weak culture may demotivate an outstanding employee to underperform and end up with no achievement. Therefore, the organizational culture has an active and direct role in performance management. Though several studies elaborate the effect of organizational culture on performance and success of an organization, the effect of strategy or competitiveness of an organization has on its culture needs to be studied.

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### Organizational Culture in the Educational Sector

The concept of Organizational Culture is not new to Higher Education; however, (Clark, 1980) defines four cultural spheres that affect academic life in colleges and universities. They are the culture of specific academic disciplines, the culture of the academic profession, culture of institutions and the culture of national systems of higher education. The strength of the Institutional culture depends on several factors. The primary criterion is the scale of the organization and the secondary is the tightness of the organization. Age of the organization is also another criterion. Organizational Culture affects curriculum and administration (Masland, 1982). As institutions and systems of higher education expand, there is increase in autonomy and the culture is focused as “integrated academic culture” Clark (1980). Hence culture is a critical element in an institution and management.

Organizational Culture is a complex concept influenced by history and continually created and recreated by institutional mission, traditions, and experiences (Love, 1997). The values and beliefs that faculty and administrators hold about faculty roles and rewards were as much embedded in how they interpreted their personal and institutional histories as they were the result of recent events and daily activities.

In the 1980s, organizational researchers across various disciplines began examining the role of culture within organizational life (Morgan, 1986; Schein, 1985; Smirich & Calas, 1982) and then connected it to effectiveness (Tichy, 1983) and central processes (i.e., leadership, governance) of the organization (Schein, 1985). Clark (1970); Lunsford (1963) and Reisman et al., (1970) used culture to illustrate that campuses had unique cultures from other types of institutions, describing the myths and rituals of colleges, and student and faculty subcultures. Several later studies on higher education linked institutional culture with institutional success (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Peterson et al., 1986). Further studies on leadership (Birnbaum, 1988), and planning (Leslie & Fretwell, 1996) demonstrated the way that different cultures shaped various institutional functions including governance. Institutions need to have a culture that encourages change (Curry, 1992). Culture or key institutional elements that shape culture, i.e., vision or mission, are modified as a result of the change process (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Tierney, 1988; Eckel et al., 1998; Guskin, 1996). Everett (1995) in his study found that there is relationship between innovation and institutional culture.

Tierney (1988) was one of the first scholars to propose the extension of the term ‘organizational culture’ to ‘institutional culture’ in his study to cover the work and running of universities as organizations. He describes the aim of his work as seeking to provide a working framework to diagnose culture in colleges and universities so that distinct problems can be overcome. He also emphasized that leaders in higher education can benefit from understanding their institutions as cultural entities. Institutional culture is viewed as ‘the prevailing ethos – the deep-seated set of norms, assumptions and values that predominate and pervade most of the environment’ (Steyn & Van, 2001).

University leaders are increasingly becoming more aware of the concept of culture and its significant role in university change and development. Further, universities possess distinctive characteristics, which correlate strongly with their respective cultures (Bartell, 2003; Sporn, 1999). At the university level, culture can be defined as the values and beliefs of university stakeholders (i.e., administrators, faculty, students, board members and support staff), based on tradition (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Values and beliefs are thought to greatly influence decision-making processes at universities (Tierney, 1988; Bartell, 2003) and shape individual and organizational behaviours.

Murphy and Cleveland (1995) found that research on culture contributes to the understanding of performance management. Magee (2002) determined that without considering the impact of organizational culture, organizational practices, such as performance management, could be counterproductive because the two are interdependent and change in one will impact the other. Ehtesham and Muhammad (2011) in their study found that the four organizational cultural traits of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission are positively and strongly associated with performance management practices at a confidence level of 0.99.

Bilimoria et al., (2006) aimed at determining the academic job satisfaction of female and male faculty members. It was found that both female and male members of faculty perceive that their job satisfaction is influenced by the institutional leadership and mentoring they receive, but only as mediated by the two key academic processes of access to internal academic resources and relational supports from a collegial and inclusive immediate work environment. Female faculty members' job satisfaction derived more from their perceptions of the internal relational supports than the academic resources they received, whereas male faculty members' job satisfaction resulted equally from their perceptions of internal academic resources and the relational supports received.

### Conclusion

This paper is set forth to review the literature on Organizational Culture. Culture is a challenging variable to research, in part because of the multiple divergent definitions and measures of culture. Notwithstanding, a wide body of literature has emerged discussing the components, significance and its impact on various factors sheds light on how Organizational Culture is the key to organizational excellence. Strategic initiatives and competitiveness of institutions may sometimes be hindered by organizational cultures' inertia to change. Rapid changes are needed for today's institutions to accommodate competitiveness due to market forces with respect to organization's culture need to be studied in current higher education domain. Predominantly, the culture needs to adapt or evolve to make institutions competitive in nature or maintain the market share while advancing the education and student quality.

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