

Structural Approach to Changing Organizational Cultural Values

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Abstract

Changing organizational cultural values involves a revelation of desired organizational cultural values and internalization of these values by employees. A value structure engendered by existing relations among values serves as kernel of a suggested structural approach to changing organizational cultural values. The value structure allows to introduce a concept of structural complexity internalizing organizational cultural values. The approach is represented by a sequence of procedures. Dividing the value structure into substructures, taking into account their structural complexities, allows an order to be created internalizing the desired values and provides lesser resistance of employees in internalizing the values. Assigning accountability to leadership team members, adjusted with the structural complexity of internalizing the values, forming behavioral tasks for internalizing each value, and the setting of a task performance measure are realized by a detailed strategic plan for internalizing the desired organizational values. Self and peer-constructive confrontation is engendered, owing to the use of different stimulation and facilitation mechanisms, and allows the channeling of energies of employees towards effective performance of the behavioral tasks. It provides productive internalization of desired organizational values by employees. Fitness of current states of internalization of the desired organizational values to their required states is determined through the use of the corresponding extent during evaluation of the value internalizing process.

Keywords: value structure, changing organizational culture, structural approach

1. Introduction

Performance of an organization depends on an organizational culture (Beitler, 2006; Kotter & Heskett, 2011). Hence, organizational development requires conducting needed changes of organizational culture (Burke, 2007; Cummings & Worley, 2009; Sveningsson, 2009; Anderson, 2011; Cameron & Quinn 2011). Functional and structural approaches should be used for changing organizational culture (Schabracq, 2007). The goal of changing organizational culture and the ways of its attaining are determined by a functional approach. A structural approach examines interdependences between levels (elements) of culture.

Organizational culture includes the following levels: shared assumptions, cultural values, shared behaviors, and cultural symbols (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2010; Schein, 2010). A central level of organizational culture is represented by the values. Organizational values are standards that influence the organization. The values are based on shared assumptions and cause shared behaviors. Therefore, a top-priority challenge is changing organizational culture values.

It is impossible to change organizational cultural values without a corresponding change of employee values guiding individual behavior because organizational behavior is shaped by the shared values of individuals (Hultman, 2001). Consequently, changing organizational cultural values should be realized by values-based leadership (Kraemer, 2011) through unfolding desired values of organizational culture and internalization of these values by employees. Since a value is an enduring belief determining a personally preferable mode of conduct (Rokeach, 1979), implementation of organizational values causes shared behaviors of employees.

Therefore, process of value internalization by employees can be realized as a result of performance of corresponding behavioral tasks. Change of organizational cultural values is guided by a leader of an organization and leadership team members serving as change agents (Schabracq, 2007; Cameron & Quinn 2011). The leader should delegate organizational accountability (Evans, 2008; Connors & Smith, 2011) for changing the organizational cultural values to a leadership team. Then, he should assign individual accountability for changing the values to the team members according to the determined extent of accountability. The team members, for one's turn, should assign individual accountability for internalizing the desired organizational values to every employee.

The employees resist the need to internalize desired organizational values. It is caused by employee unawareness of their values before changes in organizational culture (Cameron, Quinn, 2011), and unwillingness or inability to change personal behavior. Resistance to internalization of desired organizational values engenders confrontation of values. It provokes conflicts between leadership team members and employees. The leadership team members should provide a means of overcoming resistance to change (Markham, 1999; Palmer, 2003; Maurer, 2010) and reduce the conflicts. The existent constructive confrontation strategy is directed to solving this problem (Magee, 2001; Hoover & Disilvestro, 2005). However, it isn't enough to overcome resistance to change and reduce the conflicts. It is needed to promote productive internalization of desired organizational values through guided self and peer-constructive confrontation.

The desired organization's values are interdependent. For example, the value "level service" depends on the values "response time" and "quality performance." It means that internalization of some value by employees may require prior internalization of one or several values preceding this value. Consequently, value interdependence entails the order of internalizing the values.

Therefore, the goal of this paper is to present an approach to changing organizational cultural values through taking into account value relations. The approach provides productive internalization of desired organizational values by employees.

2. Related Research

The different directions of research relative to the aforementioned goal of this paper are examined. The directions involve: changing organizational cultural values, personal-organization fit, and relations among values. Rhoades, Covey & Shepherdson (2011) defined fundamental principles and suggest a method of creation and maintenance of high-performing organizational culture based on shared values through integrating value-based behavior in the daily lives of employees. According to the method, the authors describe a process of changing organizational culture values involving determination of the desired values, and development and implementation of a plan for changing employee behaviors based on these values. They assert the most critical element of changing organizational values is helping employees adopt the behaviors corresponding with the values by means of their inspiration and rewarding.

Cameron & Quinn (2011) created a strategy for changing organizational culture and personal behavior. A step-by-step process is represented for realization of the strategy. Their Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument is used to assess proposed dimensions of organizational culture. The introduced competing values framework allows one to explain the value orientations that characterize organizations. These value orientations are competing with one another. The authors emphasize the need to investigate and the possibility of investigating organizational cultural change by means of quantitative methods.

Schein (2010) has developed a conceptual model for managed organizational culture change and defined underlying model principles based on the analysis of the psychosocial dynamics of organizational change. The author presents a mechanism for culture assessment.

Hellriege & Slocum (2010) examine confrontation as a cultural value, providing deeper analysis of interpersonal problems. Burgess & Burgess (1996) suggest a constructive confrontation strategy for resolution of intractable conflicts. Magee (2001) defines the skills needed for guiding conflicts through positive confrontation. Hoover & Disilvestro (2005) represent the constructive confrontation approach to decreasing conflict and increasing accountability.

Markham (1999) suggests “spiritlinking” leadership for overcoming resistance to organizational change. Palmer (2003) presents practical tools for overcoming human resistance to change. Maurer (2010) analyzes unsuccessful administration of organizational change and determines productive way for realizing change.

Connors & Smith (2011) have developed a strategy and tools for accelerating cultural change through creating accountability for results in the organization. The authors created the Result Pyramid Model, shaping the employee's direction to think and act for attaining the desired results.

Hultman (2001) examines balance between individual and organizational values. The author offers a systematic approach for improving organizational activity through cultivating values. Criteria for assessing values, the motivational model that allows one to explain personal, interpersonal, and organizational behavior, and values-driven interventions towards employees and organizations are developed.

Schabracq (2007) emphasizes the need for balance between an organization and its employees should be provided by change agents as a result of joint optimization of outcomes for organization and for employees. The author suggests the model integrating a functional and structural approach for changing organizational culture. O'Reilly et al. (1991) describe the method of calculation of conformity between personal and organizational culture by comparing the organizational values profile with the individual preferences profile.

Schwartz (1992) specified different types of values and dynamic relations among them. He determined dynamic structure of values which is built owing to analysis of the probability of conflict or compatibility between each pair of value types.

The analysis of the above publications shows the authors do not attempt to create an approach to change organizational culture as a result of performing tasks by employees engendering individual behavior directed towards internalizing desired organizational values. A quantitative measure which would allow them to assess a dynamic process of internalizing organizational values by employees is not introduced. The authors do not suggest a constructive confrontation tool for channeling energies of employees towards effective internalization of organizational values. A mechanism empowering to overcome resistance of employees to internalizing the values is not represented. The order of assigning accountability for changing organizational culture values to leadership team members is not determined. The suggested value structure does not take into account of relations among values predetermining logical order of their internalization.

Hence, development of a new systematic approach to change organizational culture is needed. The approach should shape the dynamic process of internalizing desired organizational values by employees through use of existent relations among values.

3. A Structural Approach to Changing Organizational Culture Values

The goal of the structural approach is to provide effective internalization of desired organizational values by employees through a determined order of realizing this process.

According to the approach, changing organizational cultural values involves: building structure of unfolded desired values of organizational culture, determining the order of internalization of the values by employees, forming behavioral tasks performance which is needed for internalizing the values, providing effective performance of behavioral tasks, and monitoring of the value internalization process. The approach is realized by the following sequence:

Step1: Building the structure of the desired organizational culture values

Building the value structure based on relations among desired organizational values is realized by this step. The desired organizational values are unfolded as a result of diagnosing an organizational culture and creating a vision of an effective organization (Cummings & Worley, 2009; Schein, 2010; Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

The structure of the desired values caused by their relations may be represented by graph $G(V, E)$, where V is a set of values, $(v_i, v_j) \in E$, if internalizing value v_i is required prior to internalizing value v_j . The set V of values is put in order according to the ordinal function of the graph (Harris, Hirst & Mossinghoff, 2008). As a result, graph G has several levels. The values of the first level do not have preceding values. The values of the last level do not have subsequent values.

Example1:

The three-level structure of desired values is represented by Figure1.

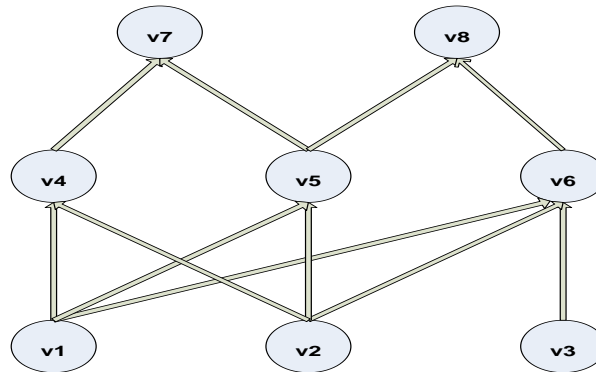


Figure1. The values structure

Step2: Calculating the structural complexities of internalizing the values

Every value may be characterized by the structural complexity of its internalizing. The structural complexity of internalizing a certain value is equal to the quantity of the “ways” to the value. Hence, structural complexity of every value on the lower level of the graph G equals zero. Structural complexity of a certain value on the next level is equal to the quantity of values preceding this value. The structural complexity of every value on the following levels is determined as a sum of structural complexities of preceding values.

Example2:

The structure of a set of the desired values with marks for the structural complexities they are internalizing is represented by Figure2. Structural complexity of internalizing every value at the lower level equals zero. Structural complexities of values v_4, v_5, v_6 of the next level are equal to 2, 2, 3, accordingly. Structural complexities of desired values v_7, v_8 that are placed on the top level are equal to 4 and 5, accordingly.

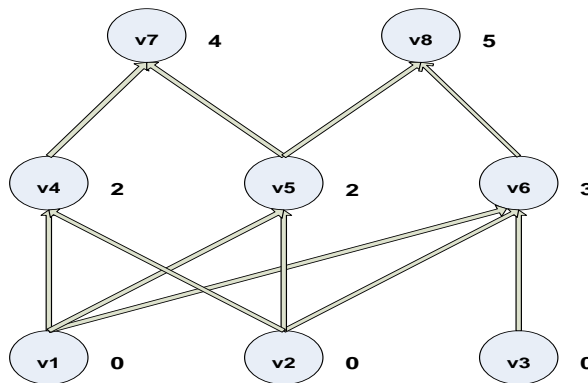


Figure 2. The structure of desired values with marking the structural complexities their internalizing

Step 3: Determining structural order of internalizing the values

Dividing the structure of desired organizational values into a number of substructures for assignment of structural order of internalizing the values is realized by this step. A sub-structure of structure G (V, E) relative to a desired top-level value should be chosen for determining a structural order for internalizing the values. The sub-structure can be characterized by dynamic weight. The weight of the sub-structure is sum of structural complexities of internalizing the values containing in the sub-structure. Dynamics of sub-structure weight are caused by order of choice of the sub-structures for value internalizing. So, since different sub-structures intersect relative to values (i.e. the sub-structures have common values), then the preferable choice is that one sub-structure reduces the weight of another sub-structure.

Introduced weight trait allows to range the sub structures. It empowers an organization's leader to set the order internalizing organization values. Thus, if a leader wants to avoid strong resistance (Markham, 1999; Palmer, 2003; Maurer, 2010) to internalizing desired values, he should begin change based on a sub-structure with minimal weight. If a leader has the possibility and the means to overcome strong initial resistance to internalizing desired organizational values, he should begin change based on a sub-structure with maximal weight. Bottom up order of internalizing values should be realized for each chosen sub-structure, i.e., from the beginning the values of first level of the sub-structure is internalized then the values of second level, and so on.

Example3:

The structure G (Figure2) is divided into two substructures G_1 and G_2 relative to values v_7 and v_8 of the top level. The substructure G_1 includes the values v_1, v_2, v_4, v_5, v_7 . The substructure G_2 includes the values $v_1, v_2, v_3, v_5, v_6, v_8$. The substructures intersect relative to values v_1, v_2 , and v_5 . The dynamic weight of substructure G_1 is equal by 8. The dynamic weight of substructure G_2 is equal to 10. Chosen structural order of value internalization is first, internalizing the values of the sub-structure G_1 , then of the sub-structure G_2 . After choosing the sub-structure G_1 the weight of substructure G_2 is reduced to 8 owing to subtraction of structural complexity of value v_5 common for both sub-structures. Structural orders of internalizing the values for sub-structures G_1 and G_2 are $\langle v_1, v_2, v_4, v_5, v_7 \rangle$ and $\langle v_3, v_6, v_8 \rangle$, accordingly.

Step4: Creating a strategic plan of internalizing the values

Creating a strategic plan consists in realizing following procedures:

- Forming an organizational covenant which will be a commitment of employees to follow the organizational vision
- Building a profile of desired organizational culture values because of the organizational covenant
- Defining the milestones of the leadership process
- Assigning the values that must be internalized by employees to some milestone. The values are assigned based on aforementioned weight range of substructures.

Example4:

The profile of organizational cultural values contains the set of desired values together with structural order determined on this set (Example1). Two milestones of leadership process are defined relative to the sub-structures G_1 and G_2 (Example3). The values v_1, v_2, v_4, v_5 , and v_7 , should be internalized to the first milestone. These values constitute substructure G_1 with the dynamic weight equal 8. The values v_3, v_6 , and v_8 of substructure G_2 with the dynamic equal 8 should be internalized to the second milestone. The values v_1, v_2, v_5 are common for both substructures. These values are planned for internalizing to the first milestone.

Step5: Detailed elaboration of a strategic plan

Detailed elaboration of a strategic plan involves:

- Delegating accountability (Evans, 2008; Connors & Smith, 2011) for changes of the organizational culture's values to a leadership team and assigning accountability to team members adjusted with the structural complexity of internalizing the values. It means more accountability for internalizing the values having more structural complexity. The leadership team is formed by the organization's leader. The members of the leadership team guide change of the organizational culture's values
- Determining a set of behavioral tasks that create an environment inducing employees' behavior corresponding to a desired organizational value from the chosen substructure. Performance of the tasks is directed towards internalizing a value.
- Forming employee covenants. An employee covenant is a commitment to perform the required tasks.

Step 6: Constructive confrontation of the cultural values

Using the means directed towards overcoming resistance to change of an organizational culture and attaining productive internalizing of desired organizational values by employees is realized by the step. The means induce self and peer-consistent and constructive confrontation during performance of behavioral tasks providing internalization of desired organizational values. The step involves the following procedures:

- Creating constructive confrontation processes of internalizing desired organizational values by employees through use of different stimulation and facilitation mechanisms
- Channeling energies of employees towards performance of the behavioral tasks by means of the constructive confrontation process. The energies emerge as a result of self and peer confrontation caused by the need to internalize the desired organizational values
- Performance of the behavior tasks by employees. The result of a task's performance by an employee is represented by a behavioral cultural norm. It serves as explicit exercise of value which is implicit in its essence. Task performance is characterized by performance measure. The measure of task performance varies from zero (the task is not performed) to one (the task is performed completely). The meanings of the measure are determined by the member of the leadership team. A value is internalized by an employee, if all tasks needed for internalizing the value are performed completely. Therefore, required state of the value is equal to the quantity of the tasks which should be performed for its internalizing.

Step7: Monitoring of the value internalization process

Determining the fitness of current states of internalizing of the values by employees to their required states is realized by the step. The step involves the following:

- Calculating the extent of internalizing a desired value by an employee. Internalizing the desired value requires performance of a set of tasks (Step5). Consequently, the extent of internalizing the desired value is the sum of performance measures (Step6) of suitable behavioral tasks.

Example 5:

Internalizing a desired organizational value v_i requires performance of three tasks.

Performance measures of these tasks are 0.4, 0.6, and 0.5, accordingly. Then, the extent of internalizing the values v_i by an employee is equal to 1.5.

- Forming dynamic cultural profiles of employees. A dynamic cultural profile reflects the state of internalizing organizational values by an employee through presentation the extent of internalization of the values
- Evaluating the current state of internalizing the desired value by an employee by comparing the extent of internalizing the value with its required state (Step6). The procedure is realized sequentially according to structural order of value internalization for all desired values presented into the profile of organizational cultural values (Step4).

Example 6:

Required state of desired organizational value v_j is equal by three since internalizing this value requires performance of three tasks. The extent of internalizing this value is equal to 1.5 (Example5). Then current state of internalizing the desired value by an employee is equal to 50%.

- Determining the fitness of the current state of internalizing the desired organizational values by an employee to their required state. The current state of internalizing the desired values is calculated as a result of summation of corresponding extent of their internalization. The required state of the values is the sum of their required states. Then the fitness is determined as a result comparison of the current state of internalizing values with their required state.

Example7:

The extent of internalizing the desired values v_i and v_j by an employee is equal to 1.5 and 2.5, accordingly. Hence, the current state of internalizing these values is equal to four. Required states of these values are 3, and 5, accordingly. The required state of the values is equal to eight. Then, the fitness of the current state of internalizing these values to their required state is equal to 50%.

4. Conclusion

A structural approach to internalizing desired organizational cultural values by employees is suggested. The desired values characterize required change of an organizational culture. The approach involves: building a structure of unfolded desired values of organizational culture; determining the order of internalization of the values by employees; forming a set of behavioral tasks to perform which is needed for internalizing the value; providing effective performance of behavioral tasks; monitoring of the value internalization process.

Building a structure of desired values is realized through revelation of the relations among the values and the determination of the structural complexity for their internalization. It allows one to create a set order to internalize the desired values that provides the opportunity to overcome resistance to when working to change employee values. The order of the value substructures within a level and the order of a value's level inside substructures are determined.

Creating a detailed elaboration for a strategic plan of internalizing the desired values is directed towards assigning accountability to leadership team members adjusted with structural complexity of internalizing the values. It means more accountability for internalizing the values with more structural complexity. Furthermore, behavioral tasks for internalizing each value are formed, and the measure of task performance is introduced. Self and peer-constructive confrontation is created owing to the use of different stimulation and facilitation mechanisms. This allows one to channel energies of employees towards effective performance of the behavioral tasks. It provides productive internalization of desired organizational values by employees.

Monitoring of the value internalization process realizes calculating the extent of internalizing a desired value by an employee; evaluating the current state of its internalizing; determining the fitness of the current state of internalizing the values to their required state.

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