Culture Matters: Values and Norms in view of Organizational Performance

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Abstract

Organizations must implementing sustainability initiatives in different communities with varied socio-cultural systems that used to foster building their effective performance by using the society as a basic driving force is the only best mechanism in Ethiopia. The main intent of the study is to view the national Values and Norm's contributions for organizational Performance that initiates to fill socio-cultural and political factor related gaps that are observed in our nations. To realize such types of objectives and fill those gaps the study has used observation, review of literature, worldwide research and Medias. The study shown those national cultures impact the balanced organizational culture which, in turn, impacts performance. Organizational wide best performance have derived from societal culture by implementing: Be clear about what you want the culture to be, Assess the culture of your business, infuse the environment with your cultural values tips of procedures have recommended by the study.

Keywords: Culture, Performance, nations

1. Background of the Study

Definition of culture is not fixed, but broadly agreed upon as “the pervasive and shared beliefs, norms, values, and symbols that guide everyday life transmitted by symbols, stories and rituals often taken-for-granted”, “an integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for symbolic thought and social learning and “the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group”. The prevailing value emphases in a society may be the most central feature of culture (Hofstede, 1980).

Culture consists of ways of perceiving, thinking, and deciding that have worked in the past and have become institutionalized in standard operating procedures, customs, scripts and unstated assumptions that guide behavior (Triandis, 1995).

Culture is defined as beliefs and values that are widely shared in a specific society at a particular point in time (Ralston, 1993), as shared behavior patterns (Mead, 1973), as values, ideas, and other symbolic behavior-shaping systems transmitted in a given society (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952), and “as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes one group of people from another” (Hofstede, 2001). An important aspect of culture is that it consists of shared knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals that guide human activity (Hofstede, 2001).

Culture itself is a product of a group of people living together, but it can also be considered as a tangible and an intangible environment when people live and work together. As long as culture with its artifacts, values, norms, history connects a given group of people, distinguishing them from others, and, on the other hand, culture itself is under the undisputable influence of historical and religious developments, geographical positions, and climate conditions, we definitely have a national culture and subcultures of a national culture otherwise called interregional cultures within a country, as well as organizational culture and organizational subcultures which characterize unique aspects of organizational divisions, such as: departments, divisions, units in different locations.

With the worldwide globalization trends, studies of organizations and their organizational cultures have gained more importance. However, there remains a limited empirical understanding of organizational culture in the context of construction.
Studying culture is not just to fulfill the ambitious whims of different individuals, neither to justify the unsatisfactory attitudes of the present with the distinctive developments of the past. The study of culture is not a separate issue to fulfill the career of the individuals that study these fields, but it extends further into the national and global aspects. Lane & Ersson (2002) in their response to the research question “does culture matter for social, economic or political outcomes?” continue to explain the link between the non-political importance of cultural identities with socioeconomic development, which is a broad enough concept to cover a number of outcomes.

According to Kandula (2006) the key to good performance is a strong culture. He further maintains that due to difference in organizational culture, same strategies do not yield same results for two organizations in the same industry and in the same location. 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 organizational culture has an active and direct role in performance management.

The first problem is to define the nature of the relations and boundaries between values, norms and performance. The second societal problem is to guarantee that people behave in a responsible manner that preserves the social fabric. That is, people must engage in the productive work necessary to maintain society rather than compete destructively or withhold their efforts. People must be induced to consider the welfare of others, to coordinate with them, and thereby manage their unavoidable interdependencies. The third societal problem is to regulate people’s treatment of human and natural resources. The cultural response to this problem labeled harmony emphasizes fitting into the social and natural world, trying to appreciate and accept rather than to change, direct, or exploit. Important values in harmony cultures include world at peace, unity with nature, protecting the environment, and accepting one’s portion. But these are depleted by the young society highly because of globalization. These may be the first polar of balance in the society but in the other side of the polar there have been exercising profit based running of companies by ignoring the societal major concerns this can be implied by ignoring corporate social responsibility of them to preserve cultural aspects of the given community they have been operating. Since individuals by themselves or companies by their own they want to operate in their vacuums which haven’t any point of contact i.e. may be culture. Because of this gearless play no one effectively contributed for the targets that have set.

The other gap have emanated from politics and its ideology. In Ethiopia ethnic based division have not been paving the way of fostering and exercising community based culture rather everything, when and where ever must be exercised through the path of the government, which bluffed attitude and attention of history today. Especially in the past twenty seven years individuals stick themselves towards materialistic orientation, even they have sold our grand artisans work. In comparative with the previous regime that relentlessly crashed dodger and cheating and considered as an ideology but in the current politics even leader have said that cheating can be considered as work, if no one cached in a practices. Hidden genocides by the ruling party in the previous year’ shesitate individuals to exercise or manifest behavior, values of society openly. For example incidences like genocide of Ethiopians during oromoIrreecha festival celebrations that was held at Lake Arsede, Bishoftu (Debre Zeit) in 2008. Such types of practices my hinder dissemination of cultural practices.

These and other factors have leaded the nation towards hostility, rumors, cheating, accepting everything without triangulations, which violate ethics that is the framework of values for moral behavior. It is a social glue to ensure that an organized society prospers and everybody’s interest is served. The above acts eroded individual energy, stability, feeling and emotion that affect individual, organizational and national wide performance.

Objective-The purpose of this study is to review national Values and Norm’s contributions for Performance generally.
Research Question-What are the major problems that affect performance during cultural exercise?

Conceptual Frame Work-Organization scholars have investigated how national culture impacts different aspects of organizations. Hofstede et al. (2010) argues that national culture is stable and mainly concerned with basic values whereas organizational culture is related to practices that are shared by members and therefore it is easier to change and manage them.

![Diagram showing the relationship between socio-cultural factors and organizational performance.]

Socio-cultural Factors

- Power Distance
- Individualism/Collectivism
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Masculinity/Femininity
- Long Term Orientation

Organizational Culture

Organizational performance

Political Factors

Fig. 1: The relationship between the four constructs.

The first five constructs show that the dimensional existence of national culture. The second construct is that emanated/manifested in the form of the above five adapted from the national culture to the organization. Thirdly the culture that we have based in the general nation and in the organization in particular highly determined our performance. These three major determinants of cultural interactions have been influencing by two major factor based constructs (i.e. political and social constructs).

According to (Hofstede, 1980) the five dimensions of organization culture are as followed: i.e

**Power Distance**: It refers to the extent to which people of a society accept the unbalanced distribution of power frequently. Power distance refers to the extent in which a nation accepts the factors that dissimilarity in its citizens’ mental and physical capabilities increase the inequalities for their welfare.

**Individualism versus Collectivism**: Individualism: It is a national culture quality that defines a flexible social framework in which people stress on the protection of themselves and their family. Collectivism: A national culture quality which define a close knit social framework in which people require from the others people of the group to take care of them and protect them.

**Masculinity/Femininity**: The masculinity represents a preference for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. While femininity, stands for a preference for coordination, emotions, caring for the weak and quality of life.

**Uncertainty Avoidance**: national culture qualities that describes the extent to which a society feels threatened by unknown situations and try to avoid them.

**Long-term Versus Short-term Orientation**: Long-term Orientation: A national culture quality which stresses the future, parsimony, and patience. Short-term Orientation: A national culture quality which stresses the present and past, fulfilling social responsibilities and respect for customs. Hofstede and Bond determined fifth dimension in which 23 countries long and short term orientation have been analyzed in 1998. The organizational behavior is associated to professional values and beliefs based on culture factors and norms which influence personality and productivity of organization.
1.1. Methodology
This paper is based on observation, Literature and media survey method and a short, but a deep review of worldwide research on the organizational and cultural field, in order to point out what national culture is, and reinforce the importance of it into organization developments. The culture is treated in different scientific disciplines, for different reasons. Like need to really consider national culture, as a new specific research field, tightly related to the organizational developments.

1.2. Analysis and Discussions
According to Ethiopia: Hofstede’s cultural Dimensions; high power distance country, inequality accepted, subordinates expect to be told what to do and salary gap exercising nation. In regard with individualism/collectivism orientation; collectivist society, long term commitment to family, loyalty, shame and common objectives manifest it. In line with uncertainty avoidance cultural exercise Ethiopia is high uncertainty avoidance, negative response to change, cautious and reserved, unstable and structural existences highly determined by the government and low risk country. Furthermore, Masculinity and Femininity Ethiopia concerned as masculine society, success driven, engage in competition, decisive and assertive, gender inequality and wage gaps. The last regard is that Ethiopian orientation; short term, past and present consideration, personal steadiness and stability, protecting your face, respecting tradition, reciprocation of greetings, favors and gifts. The major thing today is questioning are Ethiopians really practicing the above manifested features? These highly determined adaption of organizational culture and productivity of it.

It is also a factor in the hotel industry that it is dealing with globalized market for customers and employees so hotel managers must be aware of the effects of national culture on their organizations. This study shows that national culture impacts the balanced organizational culture which, in turn, impacts performance. Thus, hotel managers must take this factor into account when trying to manage the organizational culture. Thus, this research adds to existing knowledge in two ways, firstly, by demonstrating the effect of national culture on balanced organizational culture and, secondly, by demonstrating the effect of balanced organizational culture on performance in the hotel industry (Alireza and etal, 2017).

The findings by Anil and etal (2009) indicate that the respondents’ main cultural value orientations represent uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, and future orientation and that the levels of task performance and citizenship performance are good and moderate respectively. The impact analysis indicates that gender, future orientation, and power distance variables influence one aspects of CTP—citizenship performance towards interpersonal relationships. Implications of findings are discussed. Overall, the study provides a significant contribution to the predisposition and individual attributes theories of citizenship and task performance. The major objective of this study was to examine the impact of cultural values. The results revealed that the level TP was good and that of CP was satisfactory. Further, the respondents’ main cultural values were oriented towards university avoidance, future orientation, and collectivisms values. The study found that gender; power distance and future orientation values have significant impact on CPTIR. Other individual characteristics such as age, education, employment category, and tenure were not found significant in influencing CTP. Similarly, cultural values of individualism/collectivism, masculinity, present/past orientation, and uncertainty avoidance were found to be not significant in determining CTP.

Conclusions-
Values guide how we make decisions about and evaluations of behaviors and events. They represent basic convictions about what is important, right, and good to the individual. Although they do not have a direct impact on behavior, values strongly influence a person’s attitudes. So knowledge of an individual’s values can provide insight into his or her attitudes.
The norms and values of organization based upon different cultures influence on work force management. In an organization strong culture enables to effective and efficient management of work force employees. The net profit in an organization helps in enhancing performance of employees. The common path for making perfect use of resources in same cultural association helps in positive development of organization. On basis of particular conditions organizational culture is helpful in improving and providing competitive edge. The employee commitment and group efficiency helps in improving performance based upon organization sustainability. The nature and power of organization culture influence upon sustainability and effective of organization.

Managers in the third millennium are global managers. They have to learn about cultural differences, and how these differences shape the most effective managerial practices. The development of sensitivity to others begins with self-knowledge. Managers who learn about their own motives and cultural values can understand what motivates employees in other cultures. Managers who are sensitive to the variation in cultural values understand how such values shape the motives for coming to work, getting results, and innovating and initiating new developments. This knowledge enables them to modify and implement managerial practices that will be motivational and contribute to a person’s sense of self-worth and well-being. The main principle that should direct managers of the global world proposes the adoption of those effective managerial practices that best fit the cultural values of the organizations where they are implemented. This principle is supported by three sub-principles: self-knowledge; the identification of cultural values of different countries; and understanding of the meaning ascribed to various managerial practices by people with distinct cultural backgrounds. Successful global leaders are those who adopt these principles and use them as guidelines for implementing managerial approaches around the globe.

Attitudes are a secret power working 24 hours a day, for good or bad. This have emanated from perception that can be molded in a society at a childhood. These two things may grow to personality determination which influences the individual’s, institutions and community and nation. Everything has grown from perceiving then developing an attitude then creating favorable condition to act/ realize our outlook. Finally if it favored us take action and result have revealed which is termed as performance. These imply our ancestors are the base of our existence the weapon for our grand’s were not modern education rather culture. Let me terminated my conclusion by the proverb “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”. — William Shakespeare.

Recommendations

Since everything without any cultural based couldn’t existed it is recommended that a behavior change programme, based on the organizational behavior and performance conceptual framework, be developed and rolled out through Values distillations isolate globally polluted cultures from indigenous one and Workforce engagement through creating sustainable human energy by preserving home based culture and creating an alignment between the organizational wide guiding principles and rules

The strong culture of an organization based upon managers and leaders help in improving level of performance. Managers relate organization performance and culture to each other as they help in providing competitive advantage to firms.

To create organizational wide best performance we must have a base of societal culture which must be induced in the organization through Meredith (2012) Steps to take in order for an organization to assess and define company culture. There are three universal ways to defining, assessing, implementing and improving culture

1. First and foremost, be clear about what you want the culture to be
“Design leadership should take the time to be clear about its values. It is important to establish what you want in the culture before examining what you think is already present, so you will be inventing
rather than reacting.” “It doesn’t pay to shove expensive ‘new cultural principles’ down the throats of employees. Leadership can provide direction in key values, but creative participation from influencers can be essential.”

2. Assess the culture of your business — not what you think it is, but what it really is “The leadership of a company already has qualities and values without ever distinguishing them. They are present whether they are intended to be present or not, and these things are not necessarily what that leadership wants.”

Meredith suggests that it is a very useful exercise to get open and honest feedback from the employees about the current culture of the business. Next, you can assess where the gap is between where you are and where you want the culture to move to. Remember, it is important that your employees feel comfortable so that they don’t tell you what they think you want to hear.

3. Infuse the environment with your cultural values “Figure out how you are going to weave that culture into the fabric of the business and weed out the things that are undermining.”

It is important and useful to utilize “influencers” or key stakeholders within your organization as a vehicle to drive the culture within your company. “Too much time and money goes down the pipes with newly created cultural principals that are poorly embedded into the fabric of the organization.” If respected employees embody the values of the organization, they will be a driving force for the rest of the employees to follow suit. Meredith suggests that you have a regular check in to assess and discuss culture, whether it is quarterly or semi-annually.

Tips for Improving Company Culture—Have a clearly articulated vision, Leadership needs to be connected to the staff, Make sure employees feel comfortable with open and honest communication, empowered, and valued. Engagement must create at individual, institutional and community level.

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