ROLE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF A STRATEGIC LEADER IN BUILDING UP AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

This review paper is an effort to explore a method to assess and describe organizational culture. Compared to the study of communication and organizations, the study of organizational culture by communication scholars is relatively new. Many researches have been done to study organizational culture but not much effort has been done to relate it with the communication skill; which is the biggest attribute of strategic leader. Consequently, an effort has been made in this paper to assess and describe characteristics of organizational culture.

It is the need of the hour to understand and take interest in cultural complexities because of the proliferation of international business activity. Today, employees are influenced by membership in numerous "cultures" based on elements such as ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, geographic region, age (Gollnick & Chin, 1990), and organizational membership. For example, a United States citizen with a Hispanic heritage who works for Mitsubishi Motor Manufacturing in Bloomington, Illinois has membership in a Midwestern United States culture and operates within its belief and value systems. That person is also a corporate employee and must function in ways consistent with the corporation and its Japanese socio-cultural values. Although the Japanese corporation may alter operating policies to facilitate activities in the United States, it will retain many of its Japanese belief systems to insure consistency with the home office in Japan. Sometimes the design elements will be compatible with divergent belief systems; at other times, incompatibilities will exist.

It is very important to highlight these "obvious" complexities and potential conflicts within a corporate culture. Organizational designs are culturally-bound paradigms

for solutions; they are operation-alizations of cultural frames of reference that determine how problems are solved and relationships defined .They guide strategy for organizational development. Essentially, principles associated with a specific design become norms that influence employee actions and represent defining features of that organization's culture. So, identifying a predisposition for solving problems, i.e., an organizational design, contributes to the understanding of organizational culture.

Scholars and practitioners in India embraced the concept of organizational culture during the latter part of the Twentieth Century in an effort to move away from "mechanistic" models of design, and raise consciousness about oppressive environments in corporate sector (Daniels, Spiker, & Papa, 1997; Modaff & DeWine, 2002). During the past two decades many organizational communication books contained discussions of culture and evaluate organizational designs have been published. Often, discussions of culture appeared to have little in common with design theories. In fact, Conrad and Poole (2002) remarked that, ". . . we have examined strategies of organizing in isolation of one another. We did so because each strategy is so complicated that it is impossible to treat them together" (p. 127).

In response to this omission in the literature, the purpose of this paper is to provide a culturally sensitive assessment or comparison of organizational designs by integrating communication. Initially, cultural differences in organizational and communication designs will be described and assessed using the Communication Design Matrix (CMD) (Long, 1979; Cummings, Long, & Lewis, 1987; Long, DeJoy, Javidi, & Javidi, 1997). This will be followed by a set of conclusions about the use of this approach as a basis for understanding organizational culture.