

Cultivating the Organizational Cultures in Higher Education

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Abstract---This research is to describe the strategies for cultivating the organizational cultures in Higher Education and the role of leader on it. The main purpose of research is to describe the leadership strategies in cultivating organizational culture and values to member of organization. The research adopts the qualitative approach through interview and observation. Research is conducted at State Islamic Malang University in Malang Indonesia. The findings showed the leader has important role to promote the organizational cultures in organization. Although the organizational culture may be conceptualized as something emerging from social interaction and shared cognition of knowledge and belief, but the role of leader is more important aspect on it. The leader willingness to create, promote and control organizational values has positive impact on the existing of organizational cultures.

Keywords—cultivating culture, organizational culture, higher education.

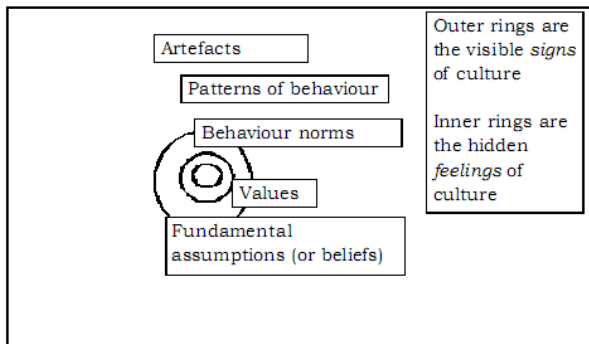
I. INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATIONAL culture is not new concept but it's a term that has been studied for many years. Some researchers see culture as something emerge in the organization because of social interaction and shared cognition of knowledge and belief and others see culture as something cultivated (Watson, 2006). For the past number of decades, most academics and practitioners studying organizations suggest the concept of culture is the climate and practices that organizations develop around their handling of people, or to the promoted values and statement of beliefs of an organization. Schein (2004) highlights that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture; that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work with culture; and that it is an ultimate act of leadership to destroy culture when it is viewed as dysfunctional' (p.11).

Culture therefore gives organizations a sense of identity and determines, through the organization's legends, rituals, beliefs, meanings, values, norms and language, the way in which 'things are done around here'. An organizations' culture encapsulates what it has been good at and what has worked in the past. These practices can often be accepted without question by long-serving members of an organizational culture.

One of the first things a new employee earns is some of the organization's legends. Legends can stay with an organization and become part of the established way of doing things. Over time the organization will develop 'norms' i.e. established (normal) expected behavior patterns within the organization. A norm is defined as an established behavior pattern that is part of a culture. Schein (2004) emphasis that 'perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture as a concept is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious' (p.8). Schein uses an analogy that culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual.

We can see the behavior that results, but often we cannot see the forces underneath that cause certain kinds of behavior. Yet, just as our personality and character guide and constrain our behavior, so does culture guide and constrain the behavior of members of a group through the shared norms that are held in that group' (p.8). Schein (1990) emphasis that there are visible and invisible levels of corporate culture (the 'culture iceberg' analogy - the visible levels (surface manifestations) of the 'culture iceberg' incorporate observable symbols, ceremonies, stories, slogans, behaviors, dress and physical settings. The invisible levels of the 'culture iceberg' include underlying values, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and feelings. Often, change strategies focus on the visible levels. Deal and Kennedy (1982) emphasis the more visible levels of culture (heroes, rites, rituals, legends and ceremonies) because it is these attributes they believe shape behavior. But it is the invisible levels that may be of more interest to public sector organizations in terms of their influence in progressing or impeding organizational change. Rousseau (1990) in his critique of researchers who concentrate on one or a few attributes, proposes a multi-layered model which he structured as a ring (see Figure .1). Rousseau's rings are 'organized from readily accessible (outer layers) to difficult to access (inner layers)'. Rousseau's model appears to capture all the key elements of culture: 'a continuum from unconscious to conscious, from interpretative to behavior, from inaccessible to accessible' (Rousseau 1990, p.158).



Source: Rousseau (1990) Cited in Cooper (1994),

Fig. 1 Rousseau's model of culture formulation.

Organizational culture, then, is made up of more 'superficial' aspects such as patterns of behavior and observable symbols and ceremonies, and more deep seated and underlying values, assumptions and beliefs. Some proponents argue that organizational culture can be changed by focusing on the more visible aspects such as rites and rituals, as these help shape behavior. However, others argue that this is a misunderstanding of culture and that the 'deeper' aspects of culture such as beliefs and feelings must be taken into account when considering organizational culture and potential changes to culture.

Higher education is an educational level that follows a completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school, secondary school, or gymnasium. An institution of higher education is a community dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, to the study and clarification of values, and to the advancement of the society it serves. The organization of higher education is more complex than secondary school or school under it because there are elements that obliged the higher education to service.

One of important elements that must be considered by higher education organization is organizational culture. Attention to organizational culture is important because community college is a collection of diverse communities each of which has a cultural background and different values. University must take role to share the values and create the culture that run with the organizational vision and mission. The question is how does university manage the culture? What strategy took to cultivate it?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted by using qualitative approach in State Islamic Malang University. Data were collected by in-depth interview and observation technique. Rector, three vices of rectors, five lecturers and five employees are interviewed to obtain the data. For analyzing the data researcher use the Miles and Huberman (1994) theory that contain of four steps; collecting data, reducing data, displaying data and drawing and concluding.

III. FINDING

Base on the findings from the interviews and observation this study suggest that it is particularly important for managers to pay attention to culture when reacting to or planning major organizational change. Culture is particularly important when an organization is undergoing significant transformation or when introducing major reforms which require different or new cultural or value traits from those exhibited in the past. Culture change was demanded and driven by a number of people that shook people's trust in the public services. In State Islamic Malang University, new cultural traits were deemed important in promoting a new way of working. Organizational values are share from time to time by manager (rector) to promote culture in meeting and other opportunities.

The strategies conducted by manager (rector) to cultivate the organizational culture in higher education are: (a) Willingness of leader to build organization culture, (b) Creating the vision of organization as target values, (c) Promoting the values to organizational member (d) Developing the climate for change (e) Building team of promotion (f) Reward and punishment. These six steps of cultivating culture to members of higher education organization, really can be summarized into four steps are; (1) promoting (2) habituating (3) sharing and (4) being good culture.

In promoting organizational cultures Figure 2. Model of organizational culture's cultivation in higher education.

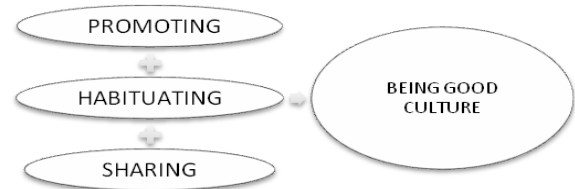


Fig.2 Model of Cultivating Cultural Values in Higher Education

Top leader has important role to promote the culture to member of organization. But he can't do it alone, he has to build a good team to promote it and plan some activities to promote the new values. It's may be take time till members of organization habituate with new values. After that top leader has to share that values to the member of organization till they understand well the goal of new values that must be practiced in the organization. If this process can be done simultaneously the good culture of organization can be created in higher education organization.

This finding maybe look near from Richards (1988) and Lewin (1951) model of cultural change. They describe a model of unfreeze-change-freeze. They outline four step of process; (1) unfreeze the old culture, (2) introduce new ideas about how things ought to be done, (3) systematically apply the new ideas, (4) refreeze the new culture. See also what is described by Eddy Barrett (2012) for strengthening risk culture. He said that for cultivating culture it's must be through three steps; (1) cultural awareness, (2) cultural

change, and (3) cultural refinement. Cultural awareness focus should be predominantly through communications and education. Cultural change can be done by organization through meaningful changes to established ways of operating and after that the organization should continually refine the culture to reflect ongoing changes in organization.

Another important point can be summarized from this research is that the key factor in cultivating a culture is that it has to be driven from the top. Rector as a top leader must have good will to cultivate the organizational culture to his members. Without intention of top leader cultivating culture will come to fail.

IV. CONCLUSION

Organizational culture in higher organization can be seen as system of shared cognitions, of knowledge and belief. Organizational culture may be conceptualized as something emerging from social interaction and a label of the total work organization. Nevertheless, the role of top leader can't be avoided. Top leader has important role in creating, promoting and existing organizational culture. The function of the leadership may well be the creation, the management and but he may become the destruction of culture. With the right strategy, leaders can produce good organizational culture. However, the mission of leader could come to fail without support from members of the organization. Leader should not impose his will arbitrarily, but he should always be shared with the members to get a better results.

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