



ECGE6002Q: Skills for Life: Employability and Future Pathways

Theme 2: : Professional Aspects of Employability

Part 2: Organisational Culture

Organisational Culture & Professional Behaviours

- In Part 1 of this Theme, we have focused on individual behaviours.
- However, in our final discussion we began to discuss the role that an organisation has in promoting such behaviours
- It is important to note that individual staff will find it difficult to adopt and develop professional behaviours unless the **culture** of the organisation allows them to do this
- Indeed, as Mullins & Christy (2013, p.3) argue; organisational 'culture has important repercussions for the effective management of people and the study and understanding of workplace behaviour'.
- *What do we mean by the term **culture**?*

Organisational Culture

- It can be argued that, in order to allow staff to develop professional behaviours, an organisation needs to have certain characteristics
- This is because ‘every organisation is made up of human relationships and human interactions’. (CIPD, 2020)
- ‘Culture is therefore central to the role of the profession and must be managed and developed accordingly’. (CIPD, 2020)
- The culture of the organisation gives a steer to employees as to what is acceptable and what is not, what values and behaviours are expected and how much influence the employees have.
- ‘It’s also important to continually assess that culture, as the organisation’s purpose and values will affect the standard of its customer service and influence the engagement and retention of its people’. (CIPD, 2020)

Organisational Culture

- Organisational culture has been described as a set of ‘beliefs, values, and norms learnt and shared by a group of people via their common experiences’ ([Hofstede](#), 1998 *cited in* Ng & Ng, 2014)
- Martin (1992) goes on to identify three distinct types of organisational culture, namely;
- An **integrative** culture
- A **differentiated** culture
- A **fragmentation** culture
- We will look at each of these in turn

An Integrative Culture

- An integrative culture is one in which ‘the objective is to obtain a consensus regarding the values and basic assumptions of the organization and to produce consistent actions’. (Law, 2016)
- This integration brings unity, predictability, and clarity to work experiences (Law, 2016). And is, therefore, seen as best practice.
- In an integrative organisation the management model the principles that the organisation upholds and the employees feel included in decision making
- The values of the organisation are integrated into its everyday practice which means that they are consistent and fully embedded
- An example would be the Southwest Airlines in the USA ([Brown, L. 2024](#))

A Differentiated Culture

- In a differentiated culture, different Departments and teams have their own, separate, consensus and internal sub-cultures
- This is common in very large organisations with much specialisation and where teams and departments do not mix or integrate
- Sub-cultures with very different goals (e.g. sales and accounts) will inevitably develop different cultures (e.g. maximising sales vs minimising overheads)
- The organisation may have common values but these will be interpreted differently by different sub-cultures
- In some cases, this is seen as a positive situation, for example in the case of Amazon

A Differentiated Culture

- Given its vast and diverse operations, different departments within Amazon have developed their own unique sub-cultures:
- **Amazon Web Services (AWS):** This department has a culture focused on innovation, technical excellence, and customer obsession.
- **Retail Operations:** The retail side of Amazon is highly customer-focused, with a culture centered around efficiency, scalability, and logistics. This department prioritizes operational excellence and cost-effectiveness to ensure timely delivery and customer satisfaction.
- **Corporate Headquarters:** The corporate offices, including departments like HR, finance, and marketing, have a more traditional corporate culture

A Differentiated Culture

- In a differentiated culture, different Departments and teams have their own, separate, consensus and internal sub-cultures
- Law (2016) argues values and norms can 'differ greatly between each subculture';
- 'This [in turn] produces **inconsistencies** throughout the organization'. (Law, 2016)
- This is common in very large organisations with much specialisation and where teams and departments do not mix or integrate
- This can lead to the development of 'toxic subcultures' or counter-culture which is a concern in the field of Human Resources ([Leary, B. 2023](#))
- And work is being done on moving a differentiated organisation towards integration (see for example [Kretschmer & Puranam, 2008](#))

A Fragmented Culture

- Law (2016) describes this type of culture as having ‘multiple interpretations of values and assumptions, which produce great ambiguity’.
- In this type of organisational culture there is no **consistency of values, approach or behaviours**.
- Law (2016) goes on to point out that this can arise from;
- ‘fast changes within the organization,’
- ‘the growing diversity of the workforce, and
- ‘the increasingly global environment with which organizations are faced’.
- This last point has been part of the work of [Geert Hofstede](#)

A Fragmented Culture

- A fragmented culture can negatively affect an organisation in the following ways:
- **Poor Communication:** When departments or teams operate in silos, communication breakdowns are common. This can result in misunderstandings, duplicated efforts, and missed opportunities for collaboration.
- **Lack of Cohesion:** Fragmentation can create a sense of disunity within the organization. Employees may feel disconnected from the company's overall mission and goals, leading to lower morale and engagement.
- **Inefficiency:** Without a cohesive culture, processes and workflows can become disjointed. This can lead to inefficiencies, as different parts of the organization may develop their own ways of doing things, which may not align with each other.

A Fragmented Culture

- A fragmented culture can negatively affect an organisation in the following ways:
- **Inconsistent Customer/Service User Experience:** A fragmented culture can result in inconsistent customer service and product quality. Different departments may have varying standards and practices, leading to a lack of uniformity in the customer experience.
- **Difficulty in Implementing Change:** When an organization lacks a unified culture, implementing changes can be challenging. Resistance to change may be higher, and aligning different parts of the organization towards a common goal can be difficult.

Discussion Point

Take a moment to think about each of these organisational cultures.

Which do you think is preferable?



Recognising the culture of the organisation you work for can help your career planning.

How do you think it can help?



Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

In their [Effective Workplace Index 2020](#) the FWI list 7 components of an effective workplace, namely;

- Job Challenge and Learning Opportunities
- Supervisor Support for Job Success
- Autonomy
- Culture of Respect, Trust, and Belonging
- Work-Life Fit
- Satisfaction with Wages, Benefits, and Opportunities to Advance
- Co-worker Support for Job Success

We will now look at each of these in turn

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Job Challenge and Learning Opportunities

- My job lets me use my skills and abilities.
- The work I do on my job is meaningful to me.
- My job requires that I be creative.
- I get to do a number of different things on my job.
- My job requires that I keep learning new things.
- My job lets me develop new skills and abilities.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Supervisor Support for Job Success

- My supervisor or manager is supportive when I have a work problem.
- My supervisor or manager recognizes when I do a good job.
- My supervisor or manager keeps me informed of the things I need to know to do my job well.
- My supervisor provides me with feedback that helps me to improve my performance.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Autonomy

- I have a lot of say about what happens on my job.
- I have the freedom to decide what I do on my job.
- I feel I can really be myself on my job

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Culture of Respect, Trust, and Belonging

- Managers at my workplace actively seek out information and new ideas from employees at all levels of the organization to guide their decision making.
- I can trust what managers say in my organization.
- I can openly share my ideas and opinions with any level of management.
- My supervisor treats me with respect.

Continued.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Culture of Respect, Trust, and Belonging (contd.)

- I can trust what the highest level of management in my organization says.
- I can trust what my immediate supervisor says.
- I can trust what my co-workers say.
- I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Work-Life Fit

- My supervisor or manager really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life.
- My supervisor or manager is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of.
- I have support from co-workers that helps me to manage my work and personal or family life.

Continued.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Work-Life Fit (contd.)

- I have the schedule flexibility I need at work to manage my personal and family responsibilities.
- My work schedule or shift meets my needs.
- My job lets me do the things in my personal life that I find meaningful.
- I consider my immediate supervisor a role model for how to manage work and personal life.

Continued.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Satisfaction with Wages, Benefits, and Opportunities to Advance

- I am satisfied with how much I earn in my job.
- I am satisfied with the benefits my job provides.
- I am satisfied with my opportunities for advancement.

Families and Work Institute ([FWI](#))

Co-worker Support for Job Success

- I have the support from co-workers that I need to do a good job.
- My co-workers and I work well together.
- My co-workers and I appropriately share credit for success and responsibility for shortcomings.
- My co-workers and I generally resolve conflicts with respect and attention to everyone's needs.

N.B. This seventh component is a relatively recent addition. Why do you think it was added?



Effective Workplace Self-Evaluation

Guided Study

This self-evaluation, based on the Families and Work Institute 'Effective Workplace Index' (2020) allows you to evaluate your feelings about current organisation to assist your career planning.

Once you have completed the self-evaluation you can decide whether your current organisation is meeting your needs as an employee.

*This will be **your** evaluation. Some of the categories may not apply or be important to you.*



OECD Guidelines

- Another model for measuring the characteristics of an effective workplace has been produced by the OECD

We have come across the OECD before in our studies.

Why do you think they are being used as a source here?

Be prepared to share your reasoning.



OECD Guidelines

- The OECD Guidelines on Measuring the Quality of the Working Environment (2017) lists six 'job characteristics' to measure the effectiveness of the workplace culture, namely;
- the physical and social environment of work
- job tasks
- organisational characteristics
- working-time arrangements
- job prospects
- the intrinsic aspects of the job.

These can be seen in the table on the next slide:

OECD Guidelines

Table 4.1. Dimensions and characteristics of the quality of the working environment

Dimensions	Job characteristics	
	Job demands	Job resources
A. Physical and social environment	A.1. Physical risk factors A.2. Physical demands A.3. Intimidation and discrimination at the workplace	A.4. Social support at work
B. Job tasks	B.1. Work intensity B.2. Emotional demands	B.3. Task discretion and autonomy
C. Organisational characteristics		C.1. Organisation participation and workplace voice C.2. Good managerial practices C.3. Task clarity and performance feedback
D. Worktime arrangements	D.1. Unsocial work schedule	D.2. Flexibility of working hours
E. Job prospects	E.1. Perceptions of job insecurity	E.2. Training and learning opportunities E.3. Opportunity for career advancement
F. Intrinsic aspects		F.1. Opportunities for self-realisation F.2. Intrinsic rewards

Developing Organisational Culture

- We have seen how the culture and characteristics of an organisation can positively and negatively affect the behaviours of its workforce
- Much work has also been done on the steps an organisation needs to take to effectively change its culture
- For example, in the CIPD (2011) publication *Developing organisation culture: six case studies*

Developing Organisational Culture

- In its 'Culture Change Checklist' the CIPD (2017 pp. 32-33) highlights the following;
- Planning the culture change
- Who needs to be involved in the culture change and to what extent
- The role of leadership
- Encouraging employee buy-in to the new culture
- Enabling culture change through the organisation's infrastructure
- Developing the capabilities needed for the new way of working, and
- Measuring the impact of culture change



That's all very well, but what does it have to do with us?

- The Aim of this module is to;

foster a range of behaviours, attitudes and competencies which develop enterprising thinking and an employability mindset and enhance students' ability to critically reflect on their own development needs

- And one of the Learning Outcomes is that students will be able to;

critically reflect on the importance of continual learning and future thinking for own personal development and employability;

- Therefore.....

That's all very well, but what does it have to do with us?

- If you are in an organisation with an **integrative culture** then you should ensure that you use this to support your own reflective practice and development
- If you are in an organisation with a **differentiated** or **fragmentation culture** then you are unlikely to be experiencing self-realisation and should use this knowledge to be proactive in planning what you will do to change this, and
- If you are in a Supervisory or Management role then you should use this knowledge to ensure that you are contributing to a positive culture

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