Dynamics of Organizational Culture: An Empirical Investigation

A THESIS

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Abstract

Organizational culture has been accepted as a critical factor for sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Sadri & Lees, 2001). Scholars have contributed towards a better understanding of organizational culture (Hofstede, 1980; Martin, 1992; Schein, 2004; Smircich, 1983); however, most of these studies were conducted in developed economies. Though limited, studies in the Indian context (Agrawal & Tyagi, 2010; Lakkoju, 2014; Mittal, Gupta, & Motiani, 2016; Samantaray, 2017; Solkhe, 2013) have predominantly captured organization culture by using existing frameworks having a narrow view of culture.

Studies have argued that to be successful, culture has to be aligned with the organization-specific activities. For example, Tichy (1982) argued that due to its unique characteristics, culture in a production setting should be different from the culture in a Research and Development (R&D) setting. Studies (Abbey & Dickson, 1983; Asmawi & Mohan, 2011; Bailyn, 1985; Judge, Fryxell, & Dooley, 1997; Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Miller, 1986) investigating organizational cultural in R&D organizations are plenty. These studies are predominantly conducted in the western context. Studies exploring the organizational culture in Indian R&D organization are limited. As the eastern context is argued to be different from the cultural lens (Hofstede, 1993), there is a need to study organizational culture in an eastern context such as India.

Organizational cultures are stable and enduring, resistance to change, incrementally adaptive to change, and continually in flux (Meyerson & Martin, 1987). The paradoxical nature of culture has been studied by many scholars. There is a vast number of research studies that focused static aspect of organizational culture by viewing culture as monolithic (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Hofstede, 1980; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein, 2004). Despite the considerable attention that organizational culture has received for more than three decades, there are only a few studies (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Fang, 2005; Hatch, 1993; Rodrigues,

2006; Weeks & Galunic, 2003; Zheng, Qu, & Yang, 2009) that focussed on the dynamic aspect of organizational culture. Further, most of these studies proposed only theoretical foundation/framework for understanding cultural evolution. However, there are only a few empirical studies that addressed the dynamic aspect of culture.

The present study is an attempt to address these research gaps by studying the culture of a successful R&D organization in the Indian context from the emic perspective and to assess temporal changes of organizational culture. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has been taken as a case study for this exploratory study. An in-depth interview method is predominantly employed for collecting primary data. The study also used data from secondary sources. To analyze the voluminous text data, grounded theory coding guidelines (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) have been followed. The thesis discusses the cultural dimensions elicited from data and changing aspects of organizational culture. The contributions and implications for practitioners and academicians are also discussed in the thesis.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Cultural change, dynamics of organizational culture, ISRO culture, Research & Development (R&D), India

Abbreviations

AMUL	Anand Milk Union Limited
APPLE	Ariane Passenger Payload Experiment
ASLV	Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle
BDR	Baseline Design Review
CDR	Critical Design Review
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
DoS	Department of Space
DOS	Disk Operating System
ESA	European Space Agency
GSLV	Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle
IIMI	Indian Institute of Management, Indore
IIMU	Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur
IIST	Indian Institute of Science and Technology
IISU	ISRO Inertial Systems Unit
IITP	ISRO Induction Training Program
INSAT	Indian National Satellite System
IRNSS	Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organization
ISTRAC	ISRO Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network
IT	Information Technology
ITES	IT Enabled Services
JCM	Joint Consultative Machinery
LVPO	Launch Vehicle Program Office
MDP	Management Development Program
MRR	Mission Readiness Review
OCTAPACE	Openness, Confrontation, Trust, Authenticity, Pro-action, Autonomy, Collaboration, Experimentation

OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDR	Preliminary Design Review
PRL	Physical Research Laboratory
PSLV	Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle
R&D	Research & Development
RISAT	Radar Imaging Satellite
SHAR	Shriharikota Range
SLV	Satellite Launch Vehicle
SROSS	Stretched Rohini Satellite Series
STP	Structured Training Program
TERLS	Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station
UN	United Nations

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