Pragmatic Study on Corporate Culture of Selected Print Media Organizations

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to examine the corporate culture prevailing in Indian print media organizations. The study was carried out in four newspaper publishing organizations in India as newspapers are considered to be an important part of print media industry. A structured questionnaire was administered to 500 employees working in these four print media organizations. The questionnaire consisted of 68 statements which were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 "almost no extent" to 5 "to a very large extent". Through factor analysis, 13 factors were extracted for assessing the Corporate Culture. The thirteen factors for corporate culture were defined and labeled as Collaboration, Uncertainty Avoidance, Growth-oriented, Expressive, Autonomy, Experimentation, Contextualism, Openness, Confrontation, Power Distance, Trust, Group Norms and Importance given to merit. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis and to compare the corporate cultures of the four organizations. The results depicted that there were significant variations in the perceptions of employees with respect to corporate culture.

Keywords: Corporate Culture, Collaboration, Autonomy, Uncertainty Avoidance.

Introduction

In the current scenario, knowledge and facts are the tools for economic, political and cultural exchange. In any country, the presence of strong and constructive media can play a vital role in catering to the diverse needs of individuals, small and large businesses & production houses, various research organizations, private and public sectors as well as society as a whole. The media has a strong social and cultural impact upon society. Mass media largely consists of print media like newspapers, magazines, journals and other publications etc. as well as electronic media like radio, television, internet etc. In India, the media industry is undergoing remarkable change and is one of the fastest growing sectors. According to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, initially the growth of electronic media was being considered a challenge for the established print media but till date the growth of electronic media has not affected print media, which in fact has actually grown further both in terms of circulation and readership. The increase in literacy rate and advent of new technology have resulted in India emerging as the second largest newspaper market in the world as mentioned in a research report of World Association of Newspapers (WAN) (The Hindu, June 4, 2008). The print media of a country can play a very constructive role in the development of the nation by highlighting social and economic issues. Regardless of their societal function, media practitioners are influential because they touch the lives of all of us. For that reason, media companies should emphasize on such cultural values, beliefs and norms that promote ethical behaviour amongst its employees so that they come up with the right versions of information for printing. An organization can guide the conduct of its employees by embedding ethical values in its dominant culture. (Steven L. McShane, 2006). If the culture is strong and supports high ethical standards, it should have a very powerful and positive influence on employee behaviour. The purpose of this research study is to examine the corporate culture of four newspaper publishing organizations as newspapers are considered to be an important part of Indian print media industry. This would help in understanding the various variables that are part of the corporate culture of Indian print media organizations. The findings of the study will aid these print media organizations in obtaining knowledge about their cultural practices, this will further help in deciding which positive cultural practices should be stressed upon more rigorously to imbibe the right behavior and conduct among its employees.

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Corporate Culture

Shared understandings concerning ethical conduct can be seen as a shared cultural subelement, a "microcosm" of an overall organizational culture (Treviño, 1986, 1990). The word "culture" comes from the Latin word 'cultura' which is related to cult or worship. In its broadest sense, the term refers to the result of human interaction. Culture as Webster's Dictionary defines it as "the integrated pattern of human behaviour that includes thought, speech, action and artifacts and depends on individual's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations". Culture performs a number of functions within an organization. Corporate culture which is also popularly known as organizational culture serves as a control mechanism that guides and shapes the attitudes and behaviour of employees. A detailed definition is offered by organizational cultural theorist Edgar Schein, who defines it as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, Edgar H., 1997). House and Javidan (2004) define culture as shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations of or meanings attributed to significant events that result from the common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations.

Literature Review

People are one of the main assets of any organization but mostly companies continue to ignore their employees, instead seeking the magic formula, the immediate solution or the latest management tool, not giving organizational culture the importance it deserves. The notion that it is easier to implement a new policy than to invest time to analyze and improve internal organizational culture is not justified. An organizational culture of success tries to improve old ways without losing the tradition, it brings advantages to the organization, to the management and to the employees (Pirjol, Florentina & Maxim, Raluca Georgiana, 2012). Analyzing these critical incidents

can serve to assess the extent to which an organizational culture is ethical. Furthermore, these critical incidents can be fed back to organizational decision makers and can then be used to initiate organizational changes (Achilles Armenakis & Jeffrey Wigand, 2010). Institution building depends on the fluidity of organizational culture. Organizational culture as an entity nurtures the mission and the set of objectives of the organization (Kundu, 2009). O'Reilly, C. (2008) defines the role of corporate culture in promoting innovation and commitment in organizations. According to him, corporate culture is critical in developing and maintaining levels of intensity and dedication among employees that often characterizes successful firms. In his extensive study of organizational culture, Hofstede (1991) reported six dimensions: process oriented vs. results oriented, employee oriented vs. job oriented, parochial vs. professional, open system vs. closed system, loose control vs. tight control, and normative vs. pragmatic. However, he did not relate these dimensions to either antecedents or consequences of organizational culture.

Objectives of the Study

The present study is an attempt to assess the organizational culture in print media organizations. The study briefly addresses the following research questions:

1) To study the perceptions of employees regarding the prevailing organizational culture of their respective organizations.

2) To find out the differences between the oganizational culture prevailing in the Indian print media organizations.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant difference between the corporate cultures of the Indian print media organizations.

Methodology

Sample: The sample included four reputed newspaper publishing organizations (print media organizations) in Delhi. These four organizations are termed as Organization A, B, C and D in the study. The

respondents included all the full time employees ranging from executives to front line workers excluding part time workers. The sample frame of the study turned out to be 1896 employees for organization A; 568 for B; 832 for C, 465 for D with a total 3761. Thus, the sample frame for all the four organization was 3761 employees. From 3761, a sample of 500 employees across two strata (Executives and Non-executives) had been selected by using "stratified random sampling" technique for the study. Stratified sampling involves drawing separate probability samples within the subgroups to make the sample more efficient (Zikmund G.William, 2003). A stratified sample had been obtained by dividing the universe into two non-overlapping strata – Executive and Non-executives category. Then a simple random sample from each stratum had been selected. The stratified random sampling employed in this study was "disproportionate", meaning that a higher proportion of the universe had been chosen as sample in one stratum than in another. The main reason for using a disproportionate stratified random sample was the differences in the universe size of the four organizations.

The sample size of 500 was determined keeping the universe and sample frame in mind. The sample size constitutes approximately 8 percent of the universe. The total sample size was 500 employees out of which 251 employees were from Organization 'A', 70 employees from Organization 'B', 119 employees from Organization 'C' and 60 employees from Organization 'D'.

The average age of the respondents was 30-40 years and their average experience was 5 years. With regard to their marital status, 68% were married and 32% were unmarried. 79% of the respondents were male and 21% female. A total of six hundred seventeen questionnaires were administered out of which only five hundred thirty two questionnaires could be received back. Thirty two questionnaires were discarded due to incompletion of data.

Research Instrument: The instrument used in the study was "schedule cum questionnaire" that had been developed on the basis of literature survey for assessing corporate cultures. The questionnaire consisted of 68 items/statements for assessing corporate culture. Out of these 68 statements, 8 statements were related to demographic profile and the remaining 60 statements (both positive and negative statements) were designed to assess the corporate culture. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 "almost no extent" to 5 "to a very large extent". All the items of the questionnaire were worded in behaviourally-observable statements. The reliability of items was assessed by computing the coefficient alpha. The Cronbach alpha value for 60 items of corporate culture was .927. For a measure to be acceptable, coefficient alpha should be above 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). The value of Cronbach alpha has been found to be more than 0.70 indicating high degree of internal consistency among the items in the questionnaire. Construct validity was assessed by applying Varimax Factor Analysis to all the items of the questionnaire i.e., the 60 items measuring corporate culture were processed for factor analysis, a statistical method used to discover cluster of inter-related variables.

Through factor analysis, 13 factors/ dimensions were extracted for assessing the Corporate Culture. The thirteen factors for corporate culture were defined and labeled as Collaboration, Uncertainty Avoidance, Growth-oriented, Expressive, Autonomy, Experimentation, Contextualism, Openness, Confrontation, Power Distance, Trust, Group Norms and Importance given to merit. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test the hypothesis and to compare the corporate cultures of the four organizations.

Results

In its most basic form, organizational culture can be defined as the shared values and beliefs that enable members to understand their roles and the norms of the organization. The present study is based on the perception of employees towards their beliefs and assumptions regarding the organizational practices within their respective organizations. These organizational practices are observed and evaluated by the employees on thirteen dimensions. By assessing the organizations on these dimensions, the composite picture of their culture will be depicted.

Table 1: Comparison of Corporate Culture of
Four Companies – One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (Sample size (N)=500)

Dimensions of Corporate Culture	Organization A (N=251)		Organization B (N=70)		Organization C (N=119)		Organization D (N=60)		Significant Pairs (*)	F-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Collaboration	3.18	.67	2.59	.24	3.17	.63	3.53	.77	B v/s C A v/s B B v/s C C v/s D A v/s D	25.86**
Uncertainty Avoidance	3.58	.69	3.54	.42	3.66	.76	3.79	.76	A v/s D	1.94
Growth-Oriented	3.12	.74	2.27	.41	2.93	.68	3.00	.84	B v/s C A v/s B B v/s D A v/s C C v/s D	28.98**
Expressive	3.15	.82	2.73	.36	3.26	.59	3.30	.91	A v/s B B v/s C B v/s D	9.29**
Autonomy	3.13	.55	2.59	.41	3.00	.47	3.29	.56	B v/s C A v/s B B v/s D	24.70*
Experimentation	3.45	.87	3.66	.50	3.40	.80	3.37	.90	B v/s C	1.86
Contextualism	3.12	.44	3.14	.33	3.15	.49	3.16	.50	No two groups are significantly different at the .050 level	.242
Openness	3.08	.58	2.80	36	2.93	.46	3.18	.62	A v/s B A v/s C B v/s D C v/s D	7.71**
Confrontation	3.32	.64	3.16	.39	3.14	.60	3.47	.68	B v/s C B v/s D	3.18*
Power Distance	3.53	1.05	3.54	.67	3.59	1.04	3.88	.99	A v/s D	2.13
Trust	2.31	1.02	2.39	.57	2.68	1.07	2.50	1.4	A v/s C	3.93**
Group Norms	3.27	.75	3.19	.37	3.68	.65	3.63	.73	B v/s D B v/s C A v/s D A v/s C	13.85**
Importance given to Merit	3.25	.69	3.36	.43	3.21	.58	3.25	.66	No two groups are significantly different at the .050 level	.82

significant at .05 level
**significant at .01 level*

To test the hypothesis, certain statistical tools can be applied. When the means of more than two groups are to be compared, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the appropriate statistical tool. This is a technique to determine if statistically significant differences in means occur between two or more groups or not (Zikmund, William G., 2009). Hence, ANOVA was used to test the above stated hypothesis. The test statistic for ANOVA is the F ratio or the F-value.

Collaboration

Collaboration means giving help to, and asking for help from others. It means working together as individuals and in groups to solve problems and develop team spirit. The outcome of collaboration includes timely help, team work, sharing of experiences, improved communication and improved resource sharing. The indication could be productivity reports, more meetings, the involvement of staff in more joint decisions, better resource utilization and higher quality of decisions in meetings (Pareek, U., 2005). From Table 1, it can be observed that there was a significant difference among organization A, B, C and D (F-value = 25.86) on the dimension of collaboration. The significant pairs that emerged were organization A & D, A & B, B & C, B & D and C & D. This denotes that on the dimension of collaboration, there were significant difference between A & D, A & B, B & C, B & D and C & D. Thus, there were significant differences in the corporate culture of these pairs with respect to collaboration dimension of culture. Organization D scores the highest mean (3.53), whereas organization B has the lowest mean score (2.59) on this dimension. The mean score was approximately similar for organization A (3.18) and C (3.17). The contributing factors for high mean score for this dimension may be attributed to the favourable environment and better opportunities for decision making provided in organization D in comparison to other organizations.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance is the extent to which people are ready to tolerate ambiguity or take risk. This aspect was first studied by the name of 'ambiguity tolerance'

by Adorno et al. (1950). It has been used by Hofstede (1980), who calls it 'uncertainty avoidance'. The dimension uncertainty avoidance, when compared among the four organizations did not show significant difference among the four organizations. This portrays that all the four organizations had quite a similar approach with respect to avoiding risk. The reason for less variation on this dimension may be attributed to the factor that the companies operating in media industry have to be sure about the reliability of a piece of information before printing it for public, therefore they all do not take the risk to present unreliable information to the public.

Growth-Oriented

The growth oriented or expanding cultures emphasize creation of organizations to consolidate and sustain gains and achievements in the culture. There were significant differences (F-value = 28.98) between organization A & C, A & B, B & C, B & D and C & D on the dimension of growth-orientaion indicating variations among the four organization cultures.

Expressive

In the expressive cultures, learning from other sources is highly valued. There is an emphasis on verbal expression and aesthetics as well as there is high verbal activity (talking, debating etc.). (Pareek. Udai, 2005). As it can be seen from Table 1 that there were significant differences (F-value=9.29) between organization A & B, B & C and B & D with regard to dimension of expression. On this dimension, organization D scored a higher mean of 3.30 than the mean score of other organizations. This denotes that in comparison to other organizations, employees are given more freedom to express their ideas and views in organization D. Hence there is high verbal activity in organization D than the other organizations. Whereas, organization B had scored the minimum mean 2.73 on this dimension which indicates that freedom to express was less in organization B in comparison to other organizations.

Autonomy

McCall defines autonomy as "the ability to exercise control over important aspects of life" (2001).

Autonomy is using and giving freedom to plan and act in one's own sphere. There is a significant difference between organization B & C, A & B and B & D on autonomy dimension, of corporate culture. When comparison was drawn the F-value was found to be 24.70. Organization D showed the highest mean 3.29 as compared to organization A, B, and C that showed mean value of 3.13, 2.59 and 3.00 respectively. This lead to the conclusion that freedom to plan and act in one's own work sphere (autonomy) was provided more to employees in organization D in comparison to autonomy provided in organization A, B and C.

Experimentation

Experimentation means using and encouraging innovative approaches to solve problems; using feedback for improving, taking a fresh look at things and encouraging creativity. According to the results given in Table 1, here were no significant variations in the experimentation dimension of corporate culture. The only significant pair that had emerged was organization B and C. The reasons for less variation may be that the key to success in print media industry is to frequently come up with innovative ideas, concepts and offer something new and different to the public. Hence, none of the organization is far behind in experimenting with new ideas and concepts as this is considered an essential requirement to compete for media companies. Earlier researches (Kundu, 2009) have disclosed that when the organizational culture encourages innovation, creativity and new ideas then the process of Institution Building becomes more dynamic.

Contextualism

In a high-context culture, the meaning of events, phenomena and behaviour are interpreted in the context in which they occur. One type of behaviour may be right in one context and not in another. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results in reveals that no two organizations were significantly different at 0.05 level for the dimension contextualism of corporate culture. This means that there were very minor variations in the mean score of all the four organizations or we can say that the mean score of each organization was nearly similar to the mean score

of other organizations. The reason for minor variations in this dimension may be attributed to the practice of acting according to the current situation or as per the context (contextualism) by each organization.

Openness

Openness can be defined as a spontaneous expression of feelings and thoughts, and the sharing of these without defensiveness. Openness may be in both directions, i.e., receiving and giving. Both these may relate to ideas (including suggestions), feedback (including criticism) and feelings. The comparison of openness aspect of corporate culture depicts that organization A & B, A & C, B & D, C and D showed a significant difference with 7.71 F- value. Openness means receiving without reservation and taking steps to encourage more feedback and suggestions from colleagues, customers and others. In other words, we can say giving ideas, information, feedback etc without any hesitation. Higher mean value i.e., 3.18 of organization D indicates that the environment was more open in it than that the other organizations which showed a 3.08 mean in organization A, 2.80 in B and 2.93 in organization C.

Confrontation

Confrontation can be defined as facing rather than shying away from problems. It also implies deeper analysis of interpersonal problems. Organization B & C and B & D were significantly different from each other on the dimension of confrontation and the F-value was 3.18. When compared with each other, organization D depicted a higher mean score 3.47 than others. This signifies that employees in organization D were more involved in taking up challenges and problems in effective manner rather than ignoring or postponing them.

Power Distance

Hofstede (1980) defined power distance as the extent to which members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in Table 1 did not show major significant variations in the power distance dimension of corporate culture. The only significant pair that had emerged was organization A

and D. The reasons for less variation may be that distribution of power within employees may be quite similar in all the four organizations because all the four companies are operating in media industry and usually the companies in this industry have similar hierarchical levels where power and authority is distributed according to the designations in the organizations.

Trust

Caldwell et al. (2003) defined trust as ''the relinquishing of one's personal choice or power in the expectant hope that another party will honor the elements of the social contract between the parties''. It is reflected in maintaining the confidentiality of information shared by others and not in misusing it. There was significant variation between organization A and C on the dimension of trust among employees. The organization C had scored the highest on this dimension with a mean of 2.68. This clearly reflects that there was high level of trust among employees in organization C.

Group Norms

Groups develop common expectations called norms to reinforce the behaviour of people and prevent dysfunctional behaviours. On the group norms dimension, there exists significant difference between organization B & D, B & C, A & D and A & C. The F-value for group norms was 13.85. Organization C scored the highest mean 3.68 on this dimension which clearly specifies that employees generally adhered to group norms on most occasions.

Importance given to Merit

Importance given to merit is that characteristic of an organization which inculcates the confidence in every member of an organization that if they perform as they are being asked, they will achieve the rewards and recognition for their performance. The results did not show significant difference in 'importance given to merit' dimension of corporate culture between any two organizations. The reasons for less variation may be because each organization is aware about the importance that should be given to merit on job. If the efforts and talent of employees is recognized and rewarded by the organization then it leads to high level of motivation among employees. All the four organizations acknowledge this fact and therefore they give appropriate importance to the merit of employees.

Discussion

The results corroborate the null hypothesis for only five dimensions: uncertainty avoidance, experimentation, contextualism, power distance and importance given to merit. There are significant variations in the perceptions of employees with respect to the other eight dimensions: collaboration, growth-oriented, expressive, autonomy, openness, confrontation, trust and group norms. Thus, the hypothesis stands partially validated. The results further portrayed that Organization D had scored highest mean value on nine dimensions of corporate culture which are: collaboration, uncertainty avoidance, growth-oriented, expressive, autonomy, contextualism, openness, confrontation and power distance. Organization A and C were depicting the highest mean scores only for growth-oriented and group norms dimension respectively. However, organization B had scored the lowest mean value on seven dimensions of corporate culture, these were: collaboration, uncertainty avoidance, growth-oriented, expressive, autonomy, openness and group norms. The results can be supported by the fact that Organization D was considered to be more popular and reliable in comparison to organization B.

On the basis of the findings and results, it is recommended that the top management should encourage the employees to bring forward their grievances in open; frequent meetings can be organized for discussing problem areas; employees should be given more freedom to express their viewpoints and take decisions related to their work area. All this would automatically lead to the growth and expansion of the organization as well as it will also help in inculcating trust and ethical conduct among its employees. High trust within a company helps to minimize risks and decrease operating costs whereas low trust, on the contrary, prevents organizations from utilizing available human capital, developing large business networks and structures that can produce

economies of scale, synergy effect and guarantee sustainable development. Both work ethics and trust are social phenomena that result from interactions and interrelations among members of a given profession and organization, which occur during the socialization process. Hence, print media organizations should provide ample opportunities for interactions and socialization to their employees as this would lead to enhancement in interpersonal trust between them which will further lead to an increase in their ethical conduct and compliance.

Conclusion

It was seen that Indian Print Media Organizations are heterogeneous and as such exhibit differences in their corporate culture. The media companies that are lacking in certain cultural dimensions such as expressive, openness, trust, importance to merit etc should look for means and ways for enhancing these measures in their culture so that the print media organizations can promote ethical behavior amongst their employees who will reveal a true picture of the current issues for public. For that reason, media companies should emphasize on such cultural values, beliefs and norms that encourage right behaviour which will reinforce the practice of honesty and fairness amongst its personnel. The organizational culture is considered to be one of the most important influences on employee's behavior in an organization.

In recent years, a number of research studies have attempted to link various attributes of organizational cultures to ethical behavior. Wines William A. & Hamilton III J.B. (2009) have defined that ethical meltdown can be avoided by making significant culture change within the organization. Treviño, Weaver, Gibson, & Toffler (1999) found that cultural factors (leadership and reward systems that support ethical conduct, fair treatment of employees, ethics incorporated in daily organizational decision-making, and a focus on employees) all contributed to positive ethics-related attitudes and behaviors. An important component of the ethical culture was the reward system that supports ethical or unethical conduct (Treviño et al., 1999). The print media organizations can guide the conduct of its employees by embedding ethical values in its dominant culture by forming ethics committee and introducing ethics hotline. These measures would help media practitioners in dealing with ethical dilemmas and coming up with more rational and ethical decisions that may have a long lasting positive effect on their organizations as well as on the society. Further research should be carried out in order to integrate cultural and ethical practices with overall strategies and objectives of the Media organizations. Future research can also look how corporate culture and work ethics can affect the organizational effectiveness and business performance.

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