The history of occm theory essay

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Introduction

Thecultureof the organization determines how effective a business is. Peter and Waterman emphasized the importance of organizational culture in 1982 when they gave their theory about how organizational culture affected a business organization. However, it was not the first time that writers and scholars had brought attention to organizational culture as many other philosophers before that time had brought the issue that there was a link between culture and effectiveness of a business. For example, Blake and Mouton had already argued about this issue in 1969 and had claimed that culture was a major factor in determining the organization's success.

Organizational culture

The theory of organizational culture dates back to the 1960s and even earlier when different writers gave different theories of what is culture and how it affects the business. There is no dispute over the definition of culture but there is an on going argument as to how this culture affects the success of an organization.

Organizational culture is a set of beliefs, customs, values and behavior. Drennan, (as cited in Bernard Burnes, p 44) gives the easiest definition " culture is ' how things are done around here'." This definition explains culture in the easiest words. Basically, the organizational culture theory emphasizes that organizations are like normal societies which have their own beliefs, norms and customs.

However, the theory about how culture affects the business is not as simple as the definition. Different writers argue on varied areas of culture and link them to the success and performance of the business. After the Second World War, the rise of Japan was linked to its powerful organizational culture. Studies were carried out to see how, and what cultures led to the success of Japan.

Change in organizational culture

Organizational culture is the main obstacle in introducing a change in the business practices. People's beliefs, their customs and set of values are very difficult to change. For example, a change was introduced to stop genderdiscriminationand to give equal opportunities to both the genders. Even if that change was justified and introduced on a large scale in almost all businesses, still people found it difficult to accept it. They continued to think of women as unable to take on the responsibilities at the higher managerial levels and so, they remained at the low hierarchy levels in many organizations where the culture was strong enough to make room for this change.

Many theories about change in organizational culture and how to manage that change have been developed. The need for such theories arose when many businesses failed because the people did not accept the change they introduced in the organization. It is not easy to change the set of beliefs and norms, which develop over a long time and people get used to following them. This is the reason many businesses failed when they tried to be more effective by changing the way things were done. Thefailurerate was 70% of businesses, which tried to change the culture of their organization.

The components on which a culture is based, like the cultural model made by Cummings and Worley (as cited in study guide, pg46), which shows that the culture comprises of basic assumptions, norms, values and artifacts, are very difficult to alter. The culture of the organization develops over the years with past leaderships and customs and so, changing that culture by introducing some new techniques and work methods lead to de-motivationand dissatisfaction of the employees. Even if the employees accept the change, it is difficult to implement it.

The organizational change management theory explained the different methods of introducing change and managing it so that the failure rate decreases and the firms succeeds in implementing a change and benefiting from it in terms of increased profits performance. The OCCM theory, therefore, was not something the businesses were practicing before. Although many businesses knew the importance of culture and its role in determining the effectiveness of the business, most of them were unable to change the culture successfully to increase effectiveness. OCCM theory helped those firms to introduce change and implement them. This theory

explained the ways of adapting the work force to the change, which had to be introduced. Hence, this was a novel theory, which not just explained what organizations already believed but it also provided them an insight into implementing the change successfully.

Implementing OCCM theory in organizations

The main issue with organizational change is not why it is important and when it has to be implemented but the main issue is how to put the theory into practice. Many writers have written theories and developed models to help businesses implement that change and manage it so that it brings the results they want. However, many of these theories are too complex to actually use in businesses. These theories were of little use for the managers and the people who were responsible for initiating the change.

Different theories of implementing change

The eight-step model given by Kotter is the most famous and it highlights eight simple ways, which can lead to a successful change. With this model, not only it becomes easy to avoid disputes and insurgence in the organization when some sudden huge change in the culture is introduced, but it also makes that change successful. The major concern when introducing change is the work force and their reaction to it. It is highly important to initiate the change in such a way that the work force does not get de-motivated and dissatisfied.

The eight-step theory given by John Kotter says that the person who is initiating the change should do it in the following way:

Communicate the need for change: this says that the manager should explain the various problems the business is facing and the possible causes. When a sense of urgency is created, the people inhabiting the organization will make up their minds for accepting a change.

Coordinate and interact: the next step is to ask the people to suggest different ways in which those problems could be solved. This would give them the chance of suggesting changes in the culture.

Make a vision for the change: after discussion about several methods and changes in the culture, a vision can be created about the change the business has to introduce. This vision will determine what the business wants by introducing the change in the organization.

Communicate: it is crucial to communicate the benefits of the change, the vision and the problems if change is not initiated, so that the people at all levels are satisfied and the risk of resistance is decreased.

Tackle resistance: while you will make sure that all the staff is satisfied, there will be people who will resist the change. Some business processes and structures will also make the change difficult to implement. It is important to tackle them well.

Make short-term targets: instead of making a list of long-term targets, it is better to create short-termgoalsand reward the workforce on the achievement of those short term targets. The short-term goals are achieved earlier and the people will see the result of the change, which will reduce resistance and criticism.

Implement change and try to improve: do not just introduce the change. It is also important to continually look for methods of improvement, which will lead to increased productivity.

Lock the change into the organizational culture: the change you introduce and implement should become the core of the organization and should become a major part of its culture. This is what cultural change is called.

The OCCM theory given by Kotter explains the process of change management in the simplest way. This theory is widely used in businesses and is very useful since almost all people, not just change leaders, can understand and follow the simple steps.

The OCCM theory given by Cummings and Worley (2001) is too complicated to follow. Very few businesses found those complex ideas useful. On the contrary, many other theories of change management explain very simple methods, which are too general. Those theories are of no use to the organization. Moreover, many writers commented on change management that the culture problems may be exaggerated and blamed for poor performance. Those writers pointed out that many managers may blame the culture for the ineffectiveness of the organization while in truth, the problem may be because of other reasons like poorcommunicationor lack of coordination.

Another famous and useful OCCM theory is the planned change approach theory by Kurt Lewis, which was given in 1940s. This theory gained a lot of popularity since it emphasized on planning the change and then implementing it. It was the best theory until the industrial revolution when people criticized that it is not suitable for those people who run businesses in unpredictable surroundings. They argued that in those surroundings, there was no room for planning and they had to introduce sudden changes in their

organizational culture. This is because the planned approach theory took quite a lot of time to introduce and implement change, which many businesses could not tolerate. It was only useful for those changes, which were not urgent. However, the results and the success rate from his theory were high enough as the planning process led to fruitful benefits.

Hence, the OCCM theories were overall useful in reducing the failure rate of businesses, which tried to improve their business performance by changing the organizational culture. Not all the OCCM theories were useful in making the change initiative a success, but there were some like Kotter's model, which proved to be very practical, and a simple theory to follow.

References

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