

The culture of creativity and innovation commerce essay



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Creativity and innovation are two inherent qualities human possess that may not be embedded in each and every individual. An organization acquires staff and individual with various different attributes. However, creativity, for one, may not be amongst their major attribute. I believe that it is not easy for an organization to 'create' a culture of creativity and innovation in an organization due to the diversity among members and the organizational identity but it is not impossible either. Depending on the existing organization culture with an evolving organizational identity and using proper language and discursive elements to bring cultural incrementalism, a culture of creativity and innovation in an organization is achievable. A culture of creativity and innovation in an organization can be created by providing staff of the organization proper understanding of the goals and objective and creating an environment to try new ideas and the right to freedom and get support.

I believe that simply implementing theories to an organization won't make it creative or innovative. In order to create a culture of creativity and innovation in an organization, the organization needs to understand the behaviour of the people and needs to be open to new ideas and the changes these ideas generate. In this essay, I have tried to focus on implementing culture of creativity into organizations whilst evaluating existing organizational structure and culture. All the theories discussed and argued will be based upon creativity for an organization. The Weberian Thought and Taylorism along with models of organizational structures have been analyzed to understand how people are provided with authority and how they behave in an organization. HAS and IS approach has been compared alongside

Darwin's Theory of Evolution to put light into the theory of creativity. In order to implement a new concept of creativity and bring change, Kanter, Stein & Jick's Big 3 Model of Change and Lewin's Model for organizational change has been compared and contrasted.

Organizational Culture is an outcome of cultural processes at work in a particular setting and focuses on people and the shared meaning within them. An organization with a strong culture may find it difficult to adapt with changes. If they want to bring a culture of creativity then the organization may find it hard to cope with it. A strong culture will have people with commonalities and may lack diversity which is essential in generating new and different ideas. However, subcultures can exist in such organization with strong culture which may bring creativity as a result of diversity. Such divisions are responsible for giving a different option or a direction to the organization which can result to new frontiers.

Diversity is an integral element of an organization's culture. A manager has to be aware of the differences that exist among various employees working in the organization. People in an organization do not always come from the same background. A manager needs to be aware of the differences between the employees in order to create a friendly working environment.

Organization, today, has come a long way from the classical approach of Max Weber (Bureaucracy and rationality) and F. W. Taylor (Division of Labour and Scientific Management). " Humans are appendage of industrial machines.

Humans can be programmed to perform according to loads, pace and fatigue"-Max Weber. In order to establish a creative culture, people need to

be given freedom to think and work. Weber's theory will bring restrictions on the way people think and work by comparing human with machines. Similarly, Taylor's Scientific Management theory suggests that certain knowledge, belief needs to be predetermined to create a culture. However, creativity can't be moulded by certain rules and regulations. In such a case, the result would not be original and hence, not creative. Darwin's Theory of Evolution states that " culture is a process of cultivation, i. e., the improvement of human condition" which helps create a creative culture as it focuses on betterment of the human condition. Similarly, HAS and IS Approach provides further light towards organizational culture. HAS approach states that culture is constructed by basic assumptions where as IS approach starts from a clean slate where culture is not defined which can help the creativity flourish as there are no boundaries that needs to be met by the people.

In recent times, a symbolic-interpretative approach or a postmodern approach is more popular where people and their behaviour are given importance and actions carried out based on them. A symbolic-interpretative approach would create meaning by associating with human through shared values, traditions and customs whereas the Postmodern approach is where managers are artist in themselves who are open to new ideas and based upon these knowledge and understanding come up with a new perspective with reference to the past.

The diagram below shows different elements which collectively form a culture. In order to create a creative and innovative culture in an

organization, all the elements need to embrace creativity and work
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accordingly. Creativity injected in these elements will eventually exude the creative culture of the organization.

An artifact who would like to be a symbol of the organisation

Organizational structure shows the relationship between members within the organization and the distribution of responsibilities and ultimately power. An organizational structure doesn't necessarily influence the organizational culture. An organization may have a strong, bureaucratic culture or a creative culture regardless of the hierarchical structure. In large organization such as Apple, a creative culture exists despite a hierarchical organizational structure. However, creativity needs to fulfil the goals and objectives of the organization and proper communication is necessary between the staff and the managers. So, a flat organizational structure would help in better communication and instant reaction to any changes even if the organization has a Top-Down hierarchy.

Organizational Control helps to create an order to the activities carried out in an organization but it can affect the creativity of an organization as the essence of creativity is freedom and we know that organizational control is quite the opposite. The level of control needs to be determined in such a way that it won't hamper the creativity of the staff. In order to create a creative environment, the control needs to be decentralized. Even though managers are in charge, the employees need to have space to come up with ideas without being controlled. Page 345, teamwork and a concern with employee creativity.

Language in the form of narrative and storytelling is essential in shaping a culture of an organization. Narration is bringing experience or sequence of episodes coherently into language. “ From stories we derive meaning, knowledge and experience, and as a result, we are able to understand our own and others’ existence”. Narration helps improve communication between the manager and the employee resulting to better productivity. It even helps to improve quality of management and leadership and understand the direction the organization wants to take in the future. Stories can help people understand and get new ideas which will create a creative and innovative environment. People can relate to characters of the narration and learn from the events. For eg, learning about how Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computers, works can inspire people to come up with new ideas and be more innovative.

Organizational Change occurs when a new system is introduced and implemented. It is not easy to bring change to an organization. Changing any functioning of the organization will have to change the perception and attitude of the people as well. Such changes need to be handled delicately without upsetting any party. Cultural Change in organizations can be of three types: Apparent Change, Revolutionary Change and Cultural Change.

Apparent Change adapts while preserving its identity whereas Revolutionary change is brought about by outsiders by destroying old ones and creating a completely new culture. However, if creative culture needs to be created, Cultural Incrementalism is a good choice. It incorporates the old culture from narratives along with new ideas to come up with a new culture. In our case, changing the way the people work by providing more freedom or

brainstorming and discussion sessions incorporated in an existing culture results to cultural incrementalism and hence, a creative culture.

There are various theories on how change can be managed. Lewin's Model: Unfreezing, Change, Refreezing is one of the most popular theory's for managing change in an organization. However, we are focused on changing the culture into a creative culture. For this purpose, Big 3 Model of Change is appropriate rather than Lewin's Model. Lewin's Model is effective but it focuses more on the manufacturing and operational side of the organization and doesn't take into account the human perspective. It plans and directs change. However, creativity in an organization can't be planned or directed. Big 3 Model of Change focuses on change can be managed by responding, harnessing and provoking change. According to this model, there are three forces of change: Macroevolutionary (Environmental Level), Microevolutionary (Organisational Level) and Political (Individual Level). This model has been criticised to be too broad but due to its inclusion of behaviour of people at different level and responding accordingly, makes it a better option towards managing change than Lewin's Model.

While creating a creative and innovative culture, a manager should not stray away from the identity of the organization. A creative culture may not be suitable for all types of organization. The working environment needs to be understood before changing or creating a culture and the change needs to align with the identity of the organization. For eg, In a Cafe, creativity has very less to do. The employee has to perform task that is routine and there is no room for improvement in terms of creativity. The identity of the cafe is to provide good service to customers. Albert and Whetten believe that <https://assignbuster.com/the-culture-of-creativity-and-innovation-commerce-essay/>

organizational identity has central, distinctive and enduring features. However, Gioia, Schultz and Corley argue that the organizations' identity is fluid and not stable. Balmer emphasises on using evolving rather than enduring because these school of thought believe that even the organizational identity doesn't always remain the same and keeps on evolving with time and environment. Culture and Identity of an organization go hand in hand and Michael Wood has stated, " Identity is not something genetic, safe and secure. It is shaped by history and culture: it is about group feeling; allegiance to the state, but in an open society that can be wide and inclusive. It is always in the making and never made." So, if the organization needs to create an innovative and creative culture, the identity can be moulded accordingly.

Example: Creative Industry of Jewellery Design.

I interviewed a friend, AKG, who assists her father in a family business in Kathmandu, Nepal. The organization is a family business which is basically a jewellery design outsourcing company for various jewellery shops in Kathmandu. The organization was started by her grandfather 34 years ago, to employ people with a passion for their art-jewel crafting while utilising their abilities to their benefits therefore benefitting the organisation. The people hired were people that were fired by her grandfather's friends because they didn't craft the jewellery according to the specified designs. This gave her grandfather the opportunity to bring the best out of his employees in terms of creativity who believed that happy people make better employees.

The organization has AKG's father as in-charge and 14 artisans who were hired by her grandfather. These artisans are responsible for coming up with ideas or working on ideas provided to them by the clients. The designs or ideas from clients are translated to the artisans as some are stories and some are an old piece and brainstorming sessions are carried out to understand the story more deeply. Then this raw idea is given to all 14 artisans along with the old piece or the story. They translate it however they think is best. So, by the end of the time given, AKG and her father along with the 14 artisans come together, discuss and look through all the designs. Then, among the 16 people, voting is carried out and sometimes there is a clear winner. However, at times all the 14 translations are sent to the clients to pick the best which makes it much simpler and the winning craftsman receives 35% of the sales proceeds!

All 14 artisans work in the workshops at their home. They work separately and each idea and design is unique. They joined this family business because they were able to express themselves and not work under any restrictions. Before, they had to design what was told by the client or the owner and their own idea would not be given value. But now, they can use their creativity and imagination and work on the designs providing a style of their own. However, despite giving these artisans freedom to come up with new ideas, the manager says it is important to keep sidelines. AKG says. " When you have such a thing, you got to keep sidelines. They can't just go tinkering around with everything. We do encourage creativity but it's got to be marketable and what we ask of them is to judge for themselves if they would be attracted by the design if they say it in a store."

The above example is based on a family business which is different from regular corporations. This firm can be classified as a creative industry due to the nature of work. The organization has a flat structure with the manager looking after the 14 artisans and dealing with clients. Due to the group of artisans working for the company for more than 30 years, a culture has been set on how tasks are carried out. Artisans were hired due to their skills of creativity and with an agreement of freedom to go beyond boundaries and try out new things. Having said that, goals and objectives are predetermined and a basic criterion is set which will fulfil the basic demand of the client. Creativity is the organizational identity for this company and it is reflected in the organizational culture as well. The artisans are able to use their skills without compromising on their creativity. The opportunity to work at their own workshops gives them freedom. Hence, this is an organization based around creativity of the skilful workers where they are given freedom to come up with new ideas that goes along the story provided by the clients. The added incentive makes the workplace more competitive which will motivate artisans to come up with their best work as per customers' requirement.

This organization depicts an existing creativity culture which was possible due to the identity that was set when the firm was established. The organizational culture of this firm can be seen as IS approach of the organizational culture as the culture was created and it centred on the creation of meaning. Here, the meaning was freedom to creativity for better satisfaction to the workers. This culture of creativity opposes the Classical approach and Weber's Bureaucracy theories. Instead of specialising and

setting formal rules and regulations, the artisans were given the freedom to work at their workshops and be creative. So, for a culture of creativity to exist, the organizational structure needs to be flexible and interactive and creativity needs to be an element of the organizational identity.

‘ The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you’ll discover will be wonderful. What you’ll discover is yourself.’- Alan Alda.