Course 02:
Elments and Dimensions of culture

by Prof. SOULEH Samah

Lectures for first-year Master's students in Business Management.

Department of Economic Sciences

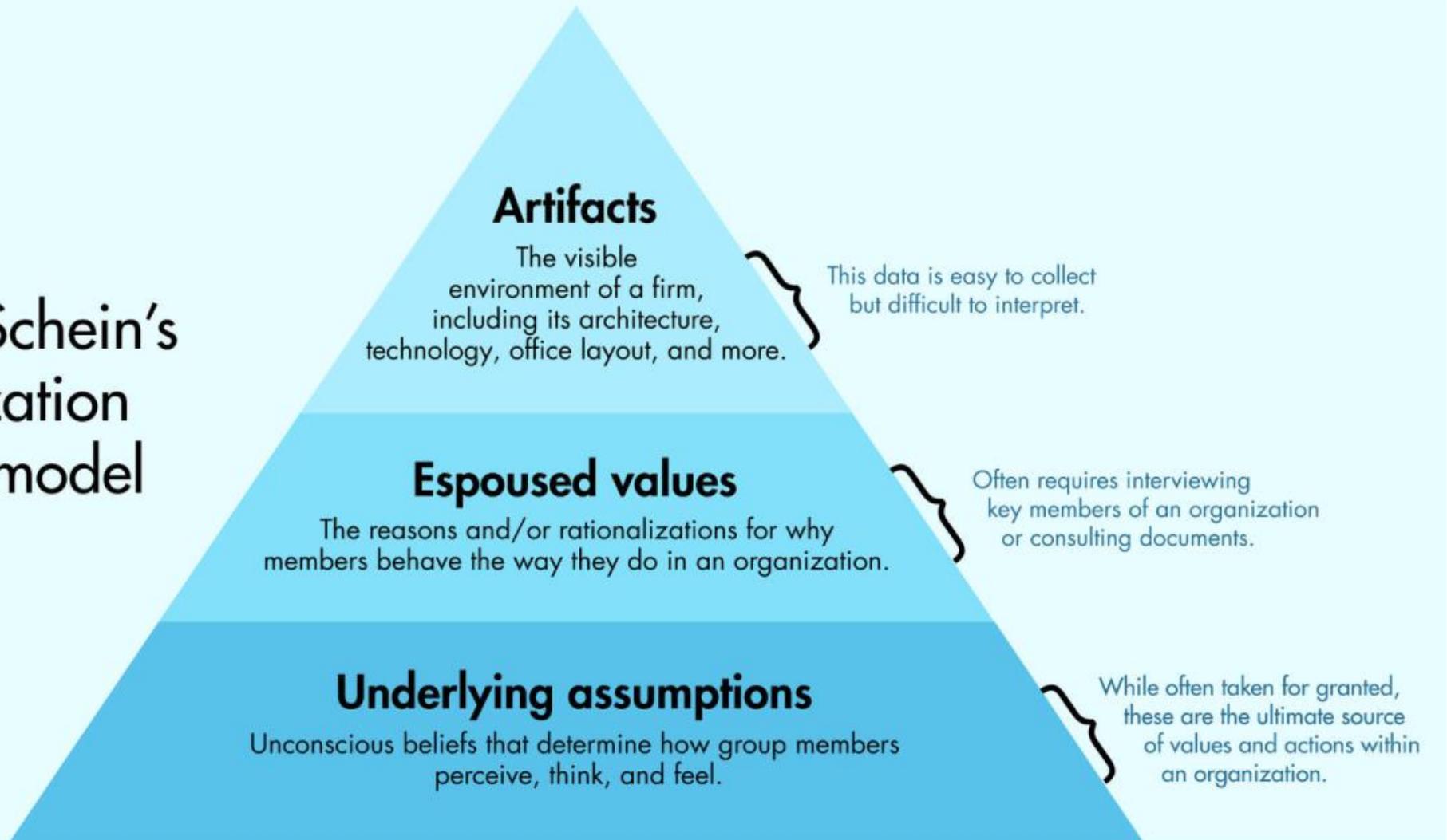– University of Biskra

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Elements of Organizational Culture

Elements of Culture:

- **Symbols** – logos, dress, gestures,office design,
- **Language** – corporate vocabulary, slogans
- **Norms & Rules** – policies, expected behaviors
- **Values & Beliefs** – guiding principles (what is important).
- **Rituals** – meetings, celebrations, recognition events **or Practices** (daily routines, ceremonies).
- **Heroes** – founders, leaders, role models **or Stories & myths** (legends about founders, successes).

Example: Apple's "Think Different" symbol.

Edgar Schein's organization culture model

Artifacts
The visible environment of a firm, including its architecture, technology, office layout, and more.

This data is easy to collect but difficult to interpret.

Espoused values
The reasons and/or rationalizations for why members behave the way they do in an organization.

Often requires interviewing key members of an organization or consulting documents.

Underlying assumptions
Unconscious beliefs that determine how group members perceive, think, and feel.

While often taken for granted, these are the ultimate source of values and actions within an organization.

MIT MANAGEMENT SLOAN SCHOOL

- Source: internet

Types of organizational culture

- First, let's take a look at the different types of organizational culture various businesses implement. According to Robert E. Quinn and Kim S. Cameron from Michigan University, organizational cultures are classified based on two types of competing values: flexibility versus stability and an internal versus external focus.

- Here are six examples of how this looks in practice:

- **Adhocracy culture (external and flexible) :** Often referred to as the 'create culture', this culture is dynamic and entrepreneurial. It emphasizes innovation, flexibility, and adaptability, encouraging employees to take risks and think outside the box.

- **Clan culture (internal and flexible) :** Known as the 'collaborate culture', clan culture is people-oriented and friendly. It focuses on teamwork, participation, and consensus, creating a family-like work environment where relationships and loyalty are valued.

- **Hierarchy culture (internal and stable):** The 'control culture' is process-oriented and structured. It prioritizes efficiency, stability, and doing things right, emphasizing formal rules, policies, and hierarchical authority.

- **Market culture (external and flexible) :** Termed the 'compete culture', this culture is results-oriented and competitive. It drives employees to achieve measurable goals and perform at high standards, focusing on outcomes and productivity to outperform competitors.

- **Purpose culture:** This culture is centered on ideals and a sense of mission that surpasses daily business operations. It emphasizes shared values and a commitment to societal or environmental goals to inspire employees and align their efforts with a broader purpose.

- **Learning organizational culture:** Characterized by continuous improvement and adaptability, this culture promotes ongoing education, innovation, and a willingness to learn from mistakes. It nurtures an open-minded environment where knowledge sharing and collaboration are key to meeting new challenges.

- Source: https://www.aihr.com/blog/characteristics-of-organizational-culture/

How to Plan a Positive Organizational Culture?

Communicate Your Values

Provide your employees with a strong code of conduct to work with and clear expectations to meet.

Support Your Employees

Be sure you know about your staff's needs and wants, like their preferences or even career goals.

Feedback and Mentorship

Consistent communication with your team is the key to monitoring performance and motivation, and resolving issues.

Having a strong and positive organizational culture is crucial!

Employee Morale

A positive culture creates a work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and motivated.

Innovation

A culture that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and learning from failures can lead to the development of new ideas and processes.

Productivity

A culture that promotes open communication, collaboration, and a sense of purpose can significantly enhance productivity.

15 characteristics of a healthy organizational culture

- There is no right or wrong company culture. Instead, there are organizational cultures that suit the leadership, mission, purpose, and values of the business and its employees. When the culture and a company's stated mission and values do not align, the environment can become toxic.

- However, if your goal is to create a healthy organizational culture, here are 15 characteristics that contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of a company's culture.

- **Characteristic 1. Shared common values**

- Shared common values refer to the fundamental beliefs and principles that an organization adopts as its foundation.

- These values act as a compass, guiding behaviors, decision-making, and interactions both within the organization and with external stakeholders. They help create a cohesive culture by aligning employees' actions with the company's core mission and vision.

- **Characteristic 2. Clear purpose and direction**

- A clear purpose and direction align the organization's efforts and goals. This clarity helps unite the team, focusing their efforts on achieving specific objectives and guiding [strategic planning](#) and daily operations.

- **Characteristic 3. Transparent and regular communication**

- Transparent and regular communication supports openly sharing information and feedback throughout the organization. This practice fosters trust, helps in early identification of issues, encourages collaboration, and ensures that everyone is informed and aligned with the organization's goals.

15 characteristics of a healthy organizational culture –follow-up

- **Characteristic 4. Collaboration and teamwork**

  Collaboration and teamwork underpin a cooperative environment where groups work together to achieve collective objectives. This approach enhances problem-solving, innovation, and efficiency, while also building a supportive work environment.

- **Characteristic 5. Active involvement and commitment**

  Employees are actively involved and committed to their work and the organization's success. When employees are engaged and committed, they are more productive, contribute ideas, and take initiative, driving the organization forward.

- **Characteristic 6. Opportunities for growth**

  Opportunities for growth refer to the avenues provided by an organization for personal and professional development. This includes training programs, [mentorship](), career advancement paths, and learning resources. Such opportunities increase employee satisfaction, competency, and retention.

- **Characteristic 7. Recognition and rewards**

  Recognition and rewards involve acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts, achievements, and contributions. This can be through formal awards, bonuses, promotions, or simple verbal recognition. It motivates employees, reinforces desired behaviors, and enhances loyalty.

- **Characteristic 8. Welcoming and inclusive atmosphere**

  A welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is one that values diversity, promotes equity, and ensures all employees feel respected and valued regardless of their background.

  An inclusive culture benefits from a wider range of perspectives and experiences, leading to better decision-making and innovation.

15 characteristics of a healthy organizational culture –follow-up

- **Characteristic 9. Credibility and trust:** Credibility and trust are built through consistent ethical behavior, transparent decision-making, and integrity in leadership. This foundation allows for open communication, encourages risk-taking, and strengthens relationships within the organization.

- **Characteristic 10. Clear objectives and strategies:** Clear objectives and strategies provide direction for what the organization aims to achieve and how it plans to get there. This clarity helps prioritize tasks, allocate resources efficiently, and measure progress, ensuring that everyone is working toward the same goals.

- **Characteristic 11. Flexibility and responsiveness:** Everyone within the business has the ability to respond to changing environments and needs quickly and effectively due to high levels of trust and flexibility.
  This agility is crucial for staying competitive and meeting stakeholder expectations in a dynamic business environment.

- **Characteristic 12. Empowerment and initiative:** Employees are empowered and encouraged to take initiative and make decisions that influence their work and the organization positively. This empowerment fosters a sense of ownership, drives innovation, and accelerates problem-solving within the organization.

- **Characteristic 13. Constructive handling of disagreements:** Constructive handling of disagreements means addressing conflicts in a positive manner that respects all parties involved and seeks a solution beneficial to everyone.
  This approach prevents escalation, promotes understanding, and maintains harmony within the team.

- **Characteristic 14. High ethical standards:** Upholding high ethical standards involves conducting business and making decisions in a manner that is fair, responsible, and compliant with legal and moral guidelines. This commitment to ethics protects the organization's reputation and ensures long-term success.

- **Characteristic 15. Community engagement:** Community engagement refers to the efforts made by an organization to contribute to the wellbeing of the communities in which it operates. Engaging in social responsibility initiatives demonstrates the organization's commitment to making a positive impact beyond its business interests.

15 Characteristics of a Healthy Organizational Culture

1 Shared common values have been established that guide behavior and decision-making	**2** A clear purpose and direction aligns the organization's efforts and goals	**3** Transparent and regular communication	**4** Collaboration and teamwork	**5** Employees are actively involved and committed to their work and the organization's success
6 Multiple opportunities for personal and professional growth are available	**7** Employees are recognized and rewarded	**8** A welcoming and inclusive atmosphere that values diverse perspectives and promotes equity	**9** Credibility and trust has been built through ethical leadership and transparent decision-making	**10** Clear objectives and strategies
11 High levels of trust and flexibility	**12** Employees are empowered and encouraged to take initiative	**13** Mechanisms are in place to handle disagreements constructively	**14** Maintaining high ethical standards	**15** Engaging with and contributing to the community beyond the organization

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How to avoid a toxic company culture

- Toxic cultures lead to poor productivity, how employee churn, and high levels of stress and anxiety. The first step to avoiding this kind of culture is being able to recognize it in the first place. Here are some steps HR can take to identify toxic culture and measure organizational culture:

- **Conduct employee surveys:** Regularly distribute surveys that inquire about various aspects of workplace culture, employee satisfaction, and the perceived values of the organization. Keep surveys anonymous to ensure employees are honest, and share the results with a plan of action. Importantly, follow through. Employees should trust they are being heard and that management will make changes based on their experiences.

- **Analyze turnover rates:** High turnover might indicate dissatisfaction and cultural issues. Analyzing the reasons behind turnover can provide insights into the culture. An exit interview is the ideal way to gauge why an employee is leaving the organization.

- **Review employee feedback:** Over and above exit interviews, collect and analyze feedback from performance reviews and any informal channel in place.

- **Observe engagement levels:** Low engagement can be a sign of a toxic culture. Monitoring participation in company activities and initiatives can reveal a lot about how engaged employees are with the organization and each other.