

Course 04:

Transmission and Maintenance of Organizational 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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1-Context:

- **Introduction**

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast” – Peter Drucker.
Why is culture so powerful inside organizations?

- **Definition of Organizational Culture**

“A system of shared values, beliefs, and behaviors that shape how employees act and think.”

- **Question**

How is organizational culture transmitted to employees and maintained over time?

2-The Importance Of Cultural Transmission

- Cultural transmission plays a vital role in human socialization and in the development of human societies. It is through cultural transmission that we learn the beliefs and behaviors that are important to our cultures and that enable us to participate in our society.
- Cultural transmission also allows us to pass on our accumulated knowledge and wisdom to future generations. It is through cultural transmission that we transmit our history, our art, our literature, and our science. It is essential to the survival and vitality of civilizations.
- Source: <https://helpfulprofessor.com/cultural-transmission-definition-types-examples/>

3-Transmission of Culture

3-1-Key Mechanisms:

- **Socialization:** onboarding, mentoring, informal learning.
- **Leadership example:** managers as cultural role models.
- **Symbols and rituals:** logos, stories, ceremonies, office layout.
- **Communication channels:** internal newsletters, meetings, slogans.

Examples

Example from a known company:

- **Google:** open spaces, innovation rituals, “20% time” culture
- **Toyota:** Kaizen philosophy and continuous improvement.

20% time” culture is a company policy that encouraged employees to spend 20% of their workweek on a passion project of their choice, intended to foster innovation and creativity.

While the official policy has been scaled back or changed over time, the concept is still widely associated with google culture of encouraging side projects that led to major products like Gmail and AdSense).

- **Onboarding** is a process of **organizational socialization**, where new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become productive members of an organization. It involves integrating new hires into the company culture, introducing them to their roles and colleagues, and providing them with the tools and information needed to be successful. A strong onboarding process reduces new hire stress, improves morale and productivity, and ultimately lowers employee turnover.

4- Maintenance of Culture

1. Reinforcement Mechanisms

- **Rewards and sanctions:** employees are rewarded for behaviors that fit culture.
- **Recruitment and selection:** hiring people who share core values.
- **Training and development:** reinforcing values through learning.
- **Performance management:** aligning goals with cultural principles.

2. Adaptation vs. Stability

Explain how organizations maintain culture while adapting to change (e.g. digital transformation, mergers).

5-Other Forms of Cultural Transmission

- **Direct transmission:** This is when culture is passed down from parents to children through direct teaching. For example, a parent may teach their child how to perform a traditional dance or make a specific type of craft.
- **Indirect transmission:** This occurs when culture is absorbed indirectly, without any specific intention to do so. An example of this would be a child picking up the habits and mannerisms of their parents simply by observing them on a daily basis.
- **Observational learning:** This happens when people learn by observing others around them, even if they are not directly instructed to do so. An example of this would be someone who learns how to make a traditional dish by watching someone else prepare it.
- **Imitation:** This occurs when people copy the behavior of others around them. An example of this would be a child who begins to speak with the same accent as their friends or family members.
- **Source:** <https://helpfulprofessor.com/cultural-transmission-definition-types-examples/>

6- Cultural transmission types



Written by [Chris Drew \(PhD\)](#) | September 8, 2023

CULTURAL TRANSMISSION

Cultural transmission refers to the idea that culture is passed down from one generation to the next through means such as language, religion, and education.

THREE TYPES

1. Vertical transmission

When culture is passed down from adults to children.

2. Horizontal transmission

When culture is passed between peers, such as classmates.

3. Oblique transmission

When culture is passed between individuals in different social circles.

FOUR FORMS

- 1 Direct transmission
- 2 Indirect transmission
- 3 Observation
- 4 Imitation

7-Conclusion

- Culture is not only created—it's *transmitted* through people and *maintained* through systems.
- Strong cultures build identity and performance, but too rigid cultures can resist innovation.

2. Discussion Questions

- How can leaders balance maintaining culture and encouraging innovation?
- What happens when new employees reject the existing culture?