Culture and Organizational Development

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Abstract
Beliefs about what an ideal organization is like affect the practice of organizational development (OD). Hence, as organizations try to manage change in order to maintain advantage and respond to external pressures, OD consultants realize the vital role that culture plays in successful change and seek to foster strong organizational cultures that meet the challenges of the new workplace. The interest in organizational culture stems from the belief that culture influences behavior, decision-making and organizational performance and development. Globalization has also heightened awareness of the need to not only understand the corporate culture but also to value diversity in the workforce.

Several scholars consider the impact of societal culture and argue that organizations are culture bound and that, managers and organizations are not separable from their indigenous cultures. Ultimately, every manager, one way or another, has been formed by his culture. This means that, individuals working in organizations and the culture they bring with them influence the way organizations are designed managed and developed. Hence, people familiar with organizations in different countries are often struck by the variety of organizational solutions to the same task problem.

This study aims to investigate to what extents do the cultural differences between different societies (such as Arab and Western societies) account for significant variations in the existing organizational culture on the one hand, and the preferred cultures to the employees on the other. This is important because the existing culture is the place where one has to start to foster OD. It is also important because knowledge of the socio-cultural and work related values should be of interest for international comparative management researchers. It also has important implications for the extent to which international and global companies need to take account of national cultures when deciding how much autonomy they should give to units operating in different countries to determine their own culture.