Chapter 15

Do Women Perceive Organizational Culture Differently From Men? A Case Study of State Bank of India

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ABSTRACT

With the increasing proportion of women in the workforce, need for effective management of gender-diversity is being felt. While much of the effort in gender-diversity management has been on representation of women in the decision-making bodies and processes, the most fundamental diversity issue for the organization remains practically untouched. Organizational culture has long been shaped and dominated by male orientations and therefore focus on change in the organizational culture can help in addressing the issue of discrimination and isolation of women in organizations. Any intervention strategy in this regard would require understanding of the attributes of organizational culture that give the feeling of discrimination to women employees resulting in their isolation from the mainstream, thereby hampering their performance. The present chapter aims at identifying the attributes of organizational culture in respect of which the perceptions of female employees differ significantly from those of male employees in State Bank of India.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational culture has been projected as the panacea for almost all organizational problems (Ogbbona & Harris, 1998). There is almost unanimity among academicians and business managers on the issue of existence and differences in the strength of organization culture in business organizations (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Schein, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Studies also provide ample evidence in support of impact of organizational culture on business performance (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Collins & Porras, 1994; Collins, 2001; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Shrivastava & Bhola, 2014) and

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business practices (Kim and Wang, 2016, Eskiler1 E. Ekici S, Soyer F., & Sari I; 2016). Moreover, it has been observed that there exists a gap between declared and actual organizational norms as cultural aspects (Hofstetter H. & Itzhak Harpaz I, 2015). Despite the significant amount of research in the area, the construct, in most cases, has not provided the promised solutions. This is partially due to its complexity and the difficulties with defining and measuring it. Adding to the complexity, some studies emphasize that there are differences in the perceptions of sub-groups and underline the need to focus on the differentiation created by various groups in the company, including minorities and informal social groups (Martin & Siehl, 1983; Meyer 1982; Riley, 1983; Van Maanen & Barley, 1984; Bell, 1990). With the increasing diversity in the workforce, the role of such sub-groups in the achievement of organizational goals has significantly increased. It has been argued that there exists significant interrelationship in cultural diversity of individuals interacting in concert to achieve organizational goals (Vargas-Hernandez J.G.; 2017). In diverse workforce, the dominant sub-groups have significantly impacted the organizational culture and minority sub-groups are made to accept the same as they join the organization. This may result in discouragement of minorities to put-in their actual abilities (Ely & Thomas, 2001). For effective engagement of the minority sub-groups, it has become imperative to encourage an organizational culture that is open to diversity. In business organizations, formation of such sub-groups has been on the basis of gender, religion, language, race, etc. (Webster & Hysom, 1998) and gender has been the one the most important basis, with women being the minority group. Effective engagement of women in business processes requires an organizational culture that is non-discriminatory and is open to diversity.

**Organizational Culture and Gender: Prior Studies**

Organizational culture has been described as a set of “shared values (what is important) and beliefs (how things work) that interact with an organization’s structure and control systems to produce behavioural norms (the way we do things around here)” (Uttal, 1983). It is relatively enduring characteristic of an organization which distinguishes it from other organizations and (a) embodies members’ collective perception about their organization with respect to such dimensions as autonomy, trust, cohesiveness, support, recognition, innovation and fairness, (b) is produced by members’ interaction, (c) serves as a basis of interpreting the situation, (d) reflects the prevalent norms and attitudes of the organization’s culture and (e) acts as a source of influence for shaping behaviour” (Moran & Volkwein, 1992). With increasing proportion of women in the workforce, business organizations are facing the challenge of assimilation of women in the organization in order to fully exploit their potential for achieving the common goals. A number of studies focus on the gender issues in business such as managerial styles. For example, Rosener (1990), observed that “women are more likely to use power based on charisma, work record, and contacts, and motivated others by transforming their self-interest into the goals of the organization; whereas, men were more likely to use power based on organizational position, title, and the ability to reward and punish, and were less likely to use transformational leadership practices.” Hughes et al. (2002) observed that female managers’ show greater concern for others, consider how others felt about their influencing tactics, and were more likely than men to act with the organization’s broad interest in mind.

Powell, Butterfield and Parent (2002) found that most men and women still described a good manager as possessing predominantly masculine characteristics. Pierce & Newstrom (2003) found men to be more autocratic or directive than women, and women to be more democratic or participative than men. Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) observed that most organizations have been created by and for men and are based on male experiences.