



# Chapter 8

## Social Influence, Socialization, and Organizational Culture

# Social Influence in Organizations

- As a result of social influence, people often feel or act differently from how they would as independent operators.
- This is because in many social settings, and especially in groups, people are highly *dependent* on others.
- This dependence (effect or information dependence) sets the stage for influence to occur.
- One of the most obvious consequences of this dependence is the tendency for group members to conform to established social norms.

# The Social Influence Process and Conformity

- There are three different motives for social conformity:
  - Compliance
  - Identification
  - Internalization

# Compliance

- **Compliance** is the simplest, most direct motive for conformity to group norms.
- It primarily involves *effect dependence*.
  - Relying on others due to their capacity to reward or punish (e.g. give praise or exclude)

# Identification

- **Identification** conformity is prompted by perceptions
- This form of conformity involves *information dependence*.
  - Prompted by perceptions that those who promote the norm are attractive or similar to oneself.
  - If someone is basically similar to you, then you will be motivated to rely on that person for information about how to think and act.

# Internalization

- **Internalization** conformity is prompted by true acceptance of the beliefs, values, and attitudes that underlie the norm.
- Conformity occurs because it is seen as *right*, not because it achieves rewards, avoids punishment, or pleases others.
- Conformity is due to internal, rather than external forces.

# Organizational Socialization

- Simple compliance can set the stage for more complete identification and involvement with organizational norms and roles.
- ***Socialization*** is the process by which people learn the attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours that are necessary to function in a group or organization.
- It is a learning process in which new members must acquire knowledge, change their attitudes, and perform new behaviours.

# Organizational Socialization

- It is the primary means by which organizations communicate the organization's culture and values to new members.
- One of the goals of socialization is to provide new hires with information and knowledge about their role to avoid problems of role conflict and role ambiguity.
- An important objective of organizational socialization is for newcomers to achieve a good fit.



# Organizational Socialization

- There are three kinds of fit that are important for socialization:
- ***Person-job (PJ) fit*** refers to the match between an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities and the requirements of a job.
- ***Person-organization (PO) fit*** refers to the match between an employee's personal values and the values of an organization.
- ***Person-group (PG) fit*** refers to the match between an employee's personal values and the values of his/her work group.

# Unrealistic Expectations and the Psychological Contract

- People join organizations with expectations about what membership will be like and what they expect to receive in return for their efforts.
- Expectations are often unrealistic and agreements between new members and organizations are often breached.
- When they enter an organization they realize their expectations are not being met and they experience a “reality shock.”

# Unrealistic Expectations

- Unrealistic expectations are often the result of the communication of occupational stereotypes in the media and even in the classroom.
- Unrealistic expectations may also stem from overzealous recruiters who paint rosy pictures to attract job candidates to the organization.

# Psychological Contract

- **Contract:** Beliefs held by employees regarding the reciprocal obligations and promises between them and their organization.
- **Contract Breach:** Employee perceptions that the organization has failed to fulfill one or more of its promises or obligations in the psychological contract.
- *Psychological contract breach is a common occurrence and it is less likely to occur in organizations where socialization is intense.*

# Psychological Contract Breach

- Breach results in negative emotions that stem from feelings of violation and mistrust toward management. This happens because:
  - Recruiters often promise more than their organization can provide.
  - Newcomers often lack sufficient information to form accurate perceptions.
  - Organizational changes can cause organizations to knowingly break promises that they are unable or unwilling to keep.

# Methods of Socialization

- Organizations differ in terms of *who* does the socializing, *how* it is done, and *how much* is done.
- Most organizations make use of the following methods of socialization:
  - Realistic job previews
  - Employee orientation programs
  - Socialization tactics
  - Mentoring

# Methods of Socialization

- **Realistic Job Previews:** The provision of a balanced realistic picture of the positive and negative aspects of the job to job applicants.
- **Orientation Programs:** Programs designed to introduce new employees to their job, the people they will be working with, and the organization.
- **Socialization Tactics:** The manner in which organizations structure the early work experiences of newcomers.
- **Mentoring:** A more senior person in the organization who provides guidance through a developmental relationship.

# Socialization Tactics

- The manner in which organizations structure the early work experiences of newcomers and individuals who are in transition from one role to another.
- There are six socialization tactics.
- They can be grouped into two separate patterns of socialization that are called **institutionalized socialization** and **individualized socialization**.



# More on Socialization Tactics

## Institutional

Formal

Collective

Sequential

Fixed

Serial

Investiture

## Individual

Informal

Individual

Random

Variable

Disjunctive

Divestiture

# Formal vs. Informal

- A *formal* and structured program of socialization that reduces uncertainty and encourages new hires to accept organizational norms and maintain the status quo.
  - Segregates newcomers for formal learning
- An *informal* program has an absence of structure that creates ambiguity and encourages new hires to question the status quo and develop their own approach to their role.
  - On the job learning

# Collective vs. Individual

- When using the *collective* tactic, a number of new members are socialized as a group, going through the same experiences and facing the same challenges.
- The *individual* tactic consists of socialization experiences that are tailor-made for each new member.

# Sequential vs. Random

- With a *sequential* tactic, there is a fixed sequence of steps or stages leading to the assumption of the role.
- With the *random* tactic, there is an ambiguous or changing sequence of events.

# Fixed vs. Variable

- With a *fixed* tactic, there is a timetable for the newcomers' assumption of the role.
- If the tactic is *variable*, there is no time frame to indicate when the socialization process ends and the newcomer assumes his or her new role.

# Serial vs. Disjunctive

- The *serial* tactic refers to a process in which newcomers are socialized by experienced members of the organization.
- The *disjunctive* tactic refers to a socialization process where role models and experienced organization members do not groom new members or “show them the ropes.”

# Investiture vs. Divestiture

- The *divestiture* tactic involves experiences that are designed to humble new hires and strip away some of their initial self-confidence.
- The *investiture* tactic affirms the incoming identity and attributes of new hires rather than denying and stripping them away.

# Socialization Tactics

*\*Usually followed up with some individualized tactics*

## Institutional\*

Promotes loyalty to the broader team and uniformity of behaviour

Lower stress, turnover and more positive fit perceptions

## Individual

Results in a more innovative orientation to role and associated tasks

Promotes attachment to the individual mentor and their way of doing things



# Mentoring

## Career Functions

- Sponsorship
- Exposure and Visibility
- Coaching and Feedback
- Developmental Assignments

## Psychosocial Functions

- Role Modelling
- Providing Acceptance and Confirmation
- Counselling

***Mentor relationships can be formal (organizationally driven), or informal (individually driven).***

# Activity #1

- In groups of 4-6
- Describe how you would design an orientation program. Be sure to indicate the content of the program and what knowledge and information employees will acquire from attending the program. What are some of the outcomes that you would expect from your orientation program?
- Share your ideas with the class

# What Is Organizational Culture?

- The course of socialization both depends on and shapes the culture of the organization.
- Informally, *culture can be thought of as an organization's style, atmosphere, or personality.*
- Culture provides uniqueness and social identity to organizations.
- *Organizational culture* consists of the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions that exist in an organization.

# What Is Organizational Culture?

- These shared beliefs, values, and assumptions determine the norms that develop and the patterns of behaviour that emerge from these norms.

CULTURE → NORMS → BEHAVIOUR

- It represents a true “way of life” for organizational members who often take its influence for granted.
- It tends to be fairly stable over time and once established.

# Characteristics of Organizational Culture

- The content of a culture can involve matters that are internal to the organization or external.
- Culture can have a strong impact on both organizational performance and member satisfaction.
- An organization can have an *espoused culture* (as viewed by external stakeholders) and an *in-use culture* (internal practice)

# Subcultures

- An organization can have several cultures or what are known as subcultures.
- *Subcultures* are smaller cultures that develop within a larger organizational culture that are based on differences in training, occupation, or departmental goals.
- Effective organizations develop an overarching culture to manage differences between subcultures.

# The “Strong Culture” Concept

- A *strong culture* is an organizational culture with intense and pervasive beliefs, values, and assumptions.
- A strong culture provides great consensus concerning “what the organization is about” or what it stands for.
- In weak cultures, beliefs, values, and assumptions are less strongly ingrained or less widely shared across the organization.
- Weak cultures are fragmented and have less impact on organizational members.

# Assets and Liabilities

- Organizations with strong cultures have several potential *advantages*:
  - Coordination
  - Conflict resolution
  - Financial success
- And *disadvantages*:
  - Resistance to change
  - Culture clash
  - A pathology which works against goals



# Socialization

- The precise nature of the socialization process is a key to the culture that emerges in an organization.
- Socialization is one of the primary means by which individuals can learn a culture's beliefs, values, and assumptions.
- Organizations with strong cultures go to great pains to expose employees to a careful, step-by-step socialization process.

# Socialization Steps in Strong Cultures

- Step 1: Selecting Employees
- Step 2: Debasement and Hazing
- Step 3: Training “in the Trenches”
- Step 4: Reward and Promotion
- Step 5: Exposure to Core Culture
- Step 6: Organizational Folklore
- Step 7: Role Models

# Diagnosing a Culture

- One way to grasp a culture is to examine the
  - **symbols** (corporate identity, brand e.g. logo),
  - **rituals** (recognition strategies, awards, perks), and
  - **stories** (folklore, common experiences) that characterize the organization's way of life.
- For insiders, symbols, rituals, and stories are mechanisms that teach, communicate, and reinforce the company's culture.

# Activity #2

- In groups of 4-6
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of developing a strong organizational culture and some socialization practices that you would recommend for building a strong organizational culture.
- Share your ideas with the class